



Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center
at the Israel Intelligence Heritage
and Commemoration Center

News of the Israeli-Palestinian Confrontation November 1-14, 2007

Rocket attacks continue



Cows at Kibbutz Zikim killed by rockets from the Gaza Strip (Photo courtesy of Noam Bedein, Sderot Media Center, November 11)

Killings at the rally for Yasser Arafat in the Gaza Strip



Aerial view of the rally where seven Fatah supporters were killed by Hamas (Al-Ayyam, November 13).

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Overview

■ On the political front, discussions continued between the Israeli and Palestinian negotiating teams to formulate a joint declaration for the meeting in Annapolis planned for the end of the month. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said that the negotiations were based on **Palestinian recognition of Israel as a Jewish state** coexisting side by side with a Palestinian state for the Palestinian people. The formal Palestinian responses to Israel's position were negative. Abu Alaa, for example, said that the Israeli demand that the Palestinians recognize the State of Israel as Jewish was "unacceptable."

■ In the Gaza Strip the Hamas security force opened fire on participants at a mass rally commemorating the third anniversary of Yasser Arafat's death. Seven Fatah-affiliated Palestinians were killed and several dozen wounded. The rally was an impressive show of Fatah strength in the Gaza Strip and a public protest against Hamas.

■ In Nablus 300 members of the Palestinian security services deployed and began security operations to end the city-wide anarchy. The operation was initially successful, but the security services avoided disarming the terrorist organizations and networks, as required of the Palestinians by the road map.

Important Events

Rocket And Mortar Shell Fire

- During the first two weeks of November **45 rockets were fired**, one more than the last two weeks of October.



Dead cows on Kibbutz Zikim (Photos courtesy of Noam Bedein, Sderot Media Cente, November 11)

- At 8:40 a.m. on the morning of November 1 a volley of rockets was fired at Sderot and the western Negev settlements. There were nine identified hits in Israeli territory. Fatah-Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade claimed responsibility for the attack, nicknaming it "Autumn in Gaza," a hint at the Annapolis meeting (Al-Jazeera TV, November 1). On November 11 the Palestinian Islamic Jihad launched an improved rocket which hit the cowshed on Kibbutz Zikim killing six cows and damaging the building.

- Mortar shell fire also continued. During the first two weeks of November 22 mortar shells were fired (compared with 29 during the last two weeks of October).



A Fatah-Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade squad firing rockets into Israel (Al-Alam TV, November 3).

Counterterrorist Activities

The Gaza Strip

Seven tunnels exposed along the Egypt-Gaza border

■ On November 1, the Israeli security forces operating in the Gaza Strip exposed seven tunnels used by Hamas to smuggle terrorist operatives and weapons from Egypt into the Gaza Strip. The area around them was booby-trapped to make approach difficult. The tunnels were detonated in controlled explosions by the IDF (IDF spokesman's Website, November 1).



Exposing tunnels used to smuggle operatives and weapons into the Gaza Strip from Egypt (IDF spokesman's Website, November 1).

Other activities in the Gaza Strip

■ The IDF continued attacking rocket-launching squads throughout the Gaza Strip. Activities to counter attempts to infiltrate and lay side charges along the security fence also continued. Some were the following:

- ✿ **November 10:** The Israeli Air Force struck a rocket launcher after a launch was identified.

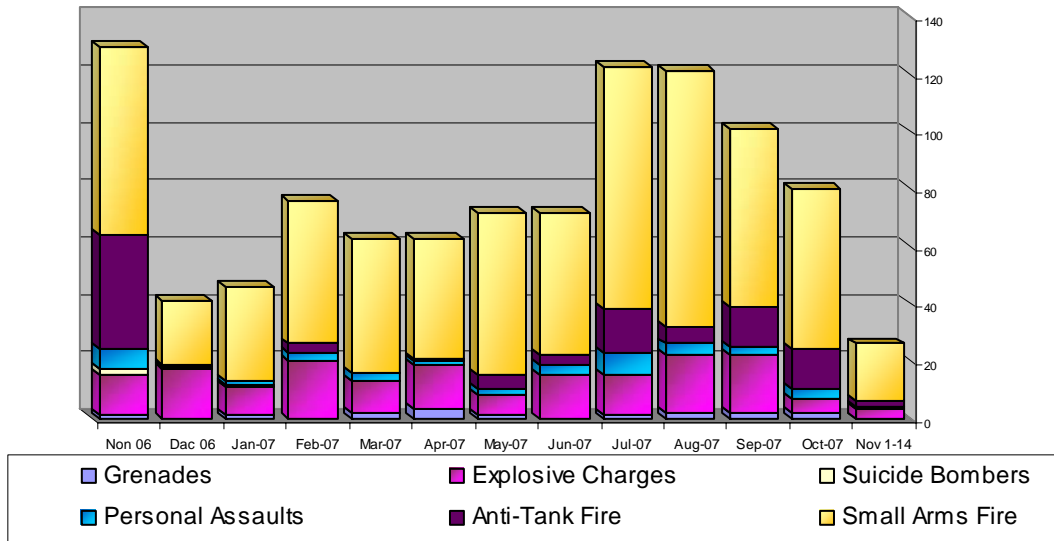
- ✿ **November 9:** An IDF force shot and killed two suspicious figures near the security fence south of the Karni Crossing.
- ✿ **November 4:** The IAF attacked a structure from which three rockets were fired. It later struck four launchers.
- ✿ **November 4:** IDF forces attacked three armed terrorist operatives near the town of Beit Hanoun in the northern Gaza Strip, killing a Palestinian Islamic Jihad operative and wounding another Palestinian.
- ✿ **November 3:** The IAF struck a vehicle carrying two Hamas operatives near the ruins of the former Israeli settlement of Morag on the Gaza coast.
- ✿ **November 1:** An IDF force identified three armed Palestinian terrorist operatives near the security fence and attacked, killing two and wounding one.

Judea and Samaria

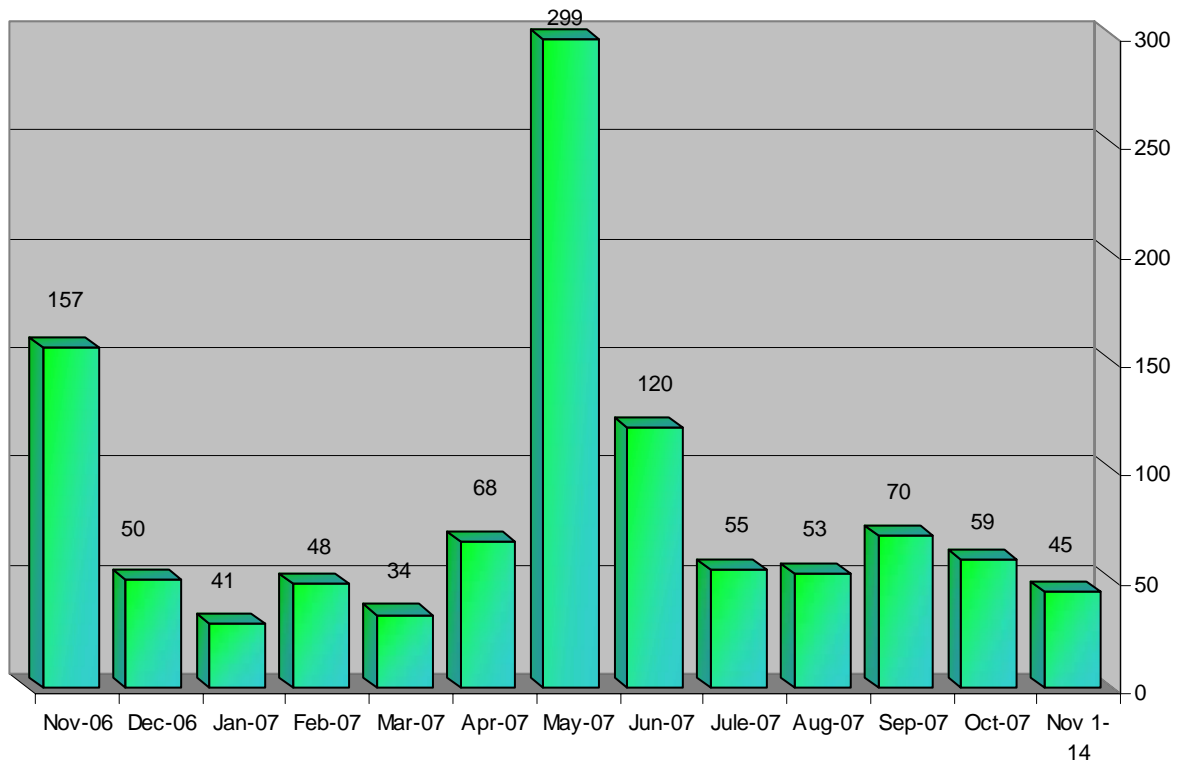
- IDF counterterrorist activities continued in Judea and Samaria. A number of terrorist attacks were prevented and terrorist organization operatives were detained:
 - ✿ **November 12:** In the Jericho area the IDF detained a Fatah-Tanzim operative who had been involved in shooting attacks against IDF forces.
 - ✿ **November 9:** During an IDF operation in Nablus there was an exchange of fire between the IDF and armed terrorist operatives resulting in the wounding of a high-ranking Fatah operative.
 - ✿ **November 5:** IDF forces detained a 17-year old female Palestinian terrorist near an IDF post close to Tel Rumeida in Hebron. She had pulled out a knife intending to stab soldiers.
 - ✿ **November 1:** During IDF activity in the Balata refugee camp in Hebron a high-ranking Hamas operative was detained. He had been involved in shooting at IDF forces and laying side charges. Weapons were found in the building where he was hiding.
 - ✿ **November 1:** IDF forces detained a terrorist at the Hawara roadblock (near Nablus) who was carrying a bag with four explosive devices.
 - ✿ **November 1:** Border Guard forces detained a Fatah-Tanzim operative who was involved in the manufacture of explosives and explosive devices, laying side charges and shooting attacks.

Statistical Data

Monthly distribution of attacks¹

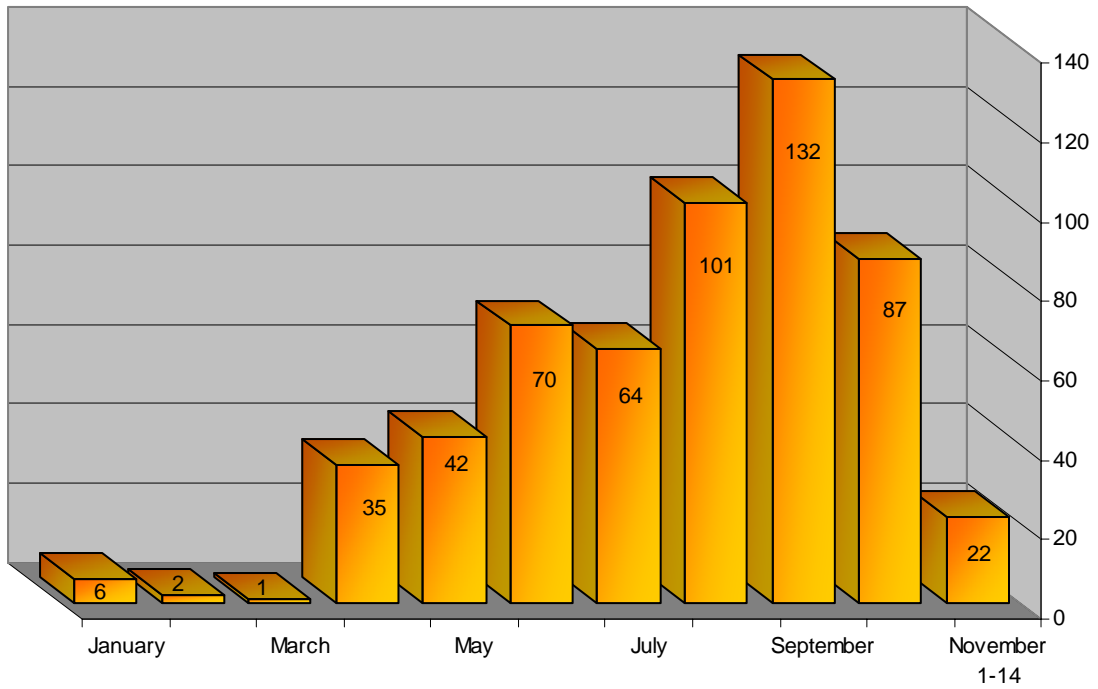


Monthly distribution of identified rocket hits

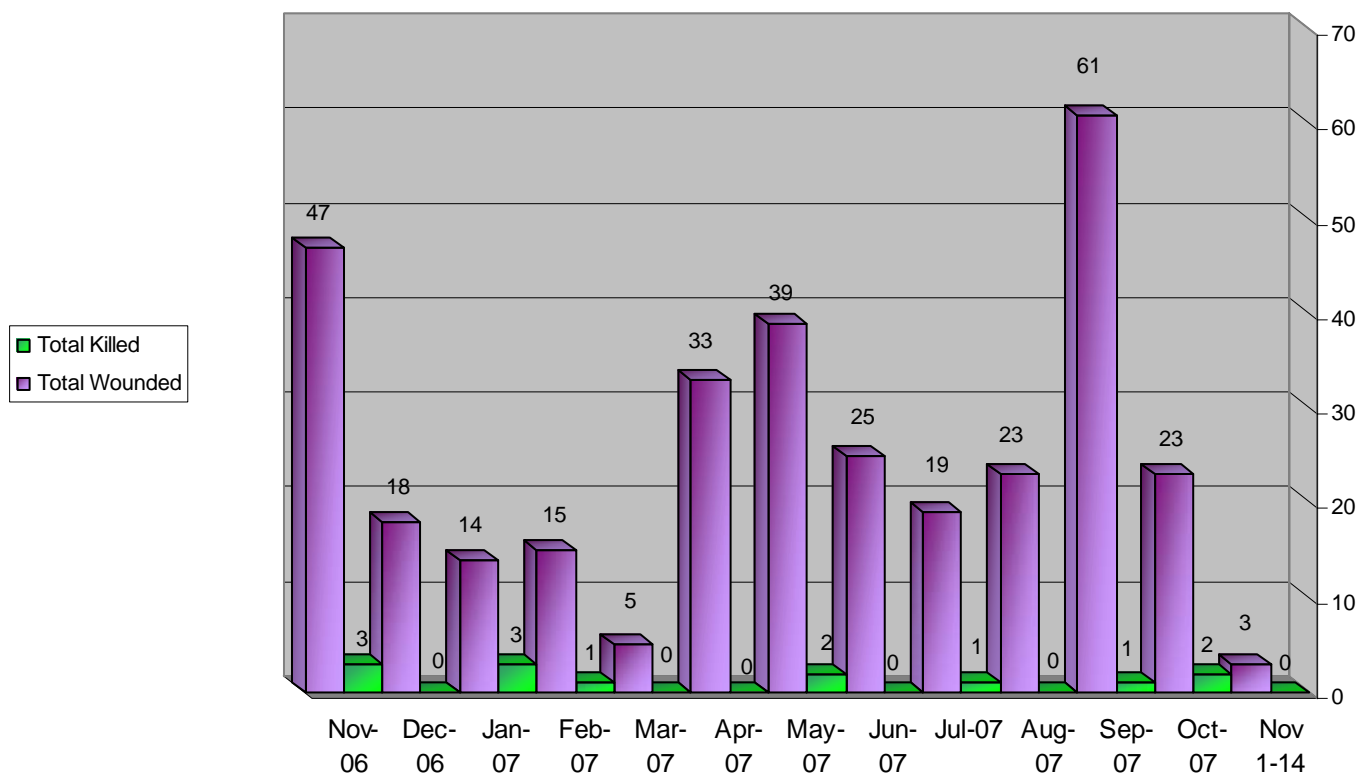


¹ Rocket and mortar shell attacks now appear in separate graphs.

Monthly distribution of identified mortar shell hits



Monthly distribution of Israeli casualties



Preparations for the Annapolis meeting

■ Preparatory sessions between the Israeli and Palestinian negotiating teams continued in an effort to formulate the joint declaration which will be presented in Annapolis. The meeting is slated to take place during the last week of November (according to Israeli and foreign reports, either the 26th or 27th). So far the United States has not officially announced the date or which countries will participate.

■ During the meetings held by the negotiating teams it was agreed that the implementation of any agreement reached would be conditional on **carrying out the first stage of the road map** by both the Palestinians and Israel. It was also agreed that the International Quartet led by the United States would be responsible for authorizing the implementation of the first stage.

■ In a speech before the Turkish parliament, Palestinian Authority Chairman Abu Mazen called upon Israel not to miss the opportunity to achieve a comprehensive peace, which would have to include the problems of the Golan Heights, Syria and “the occupied Lebanese territories.” He said that success in Annapolis would strengthen moderate forces in the region interested in peace, while failure would lead to disappointment, despair and the strengthening of radical forces. He said that East Jerusalem would be the only capital of the Palestinian state and that “thorough measures” had to be taken regarding the problem of the Palestinian refugees, based on international legitimacy (Al-Jazeera TV, November 13).

■ Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, opening the ruling Kadima Party meeting in the Knesset on November 12, restated his positions on Annapolis and the peace process. He said, as reported by Israeli Radio’s second station, “It is a meeting, not a negotiating session, but it is definitely **a meeting intended to enable a peace process between the Palestinians and [Israelis] to get underway**. It is a process we are seriously interested in continuously promoting with the intention of reaching understandings **as soon as possible**. When it comes to actual negotiations we will deal with each issue involved in the possibility of realizing the plan and vision

of a Palestinian state for the Palestinian people, and, it goes without saying, **recognition of the State of Israel as a state for the Jewish people.**”

■ Prime Minister Olmert made it clear to various forums that the starting point of the negotiations would be Palestinian recognition of Israel as a Jewish state (on the basis of two states for two peoples). Israel’s stance on that basic issue was rejected by both the Palestinian negotiating team and Hamas:

✿ **Abu Alaa’**, head of the Palestinian delegation to the negotiations, told a meeting of the heads of the Palestinian security services that Israel’s demand that the Palestinians recognize Israel as a Jewish state was “unacceptable.” He added that the Palestinian side totally opposed an exchange of population with Palestinians “inside” [i.e., within the State of Israel] and refused to waive the Palestinian refugees’ “right to return,” in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 194 (Wafa News Agency, November 14).

✿ **Saeb Erikat**, member of the Palestinian negotiating team, responding to Ehud Olmert said that Israel was trying to obtain “something new.” He said that recognizing the State of Israel could not be discussed in any international framework and in international relations, and that it “is not on the agenda of the international community or of the Palestinian people and its leadership” (Voice of Palestine Radio, November 13).

✿ **Yasser Abd Rabbo**, secretary of the PLO’s executive committee, said that Olmert’s demand of recognition of the State of Israel as a Jewish state meant imposing conditions relating to ideology with the objective of worsening and escalating the conflict. He added that “peace is made between two countries or two sides and it is neither Israel’s nor the Palestinians’ interest to discuss issues relating to international legitimacy and the foundations of the peace process” (Voice of Palestine Radio, November 13).

✿ **Khaled Mashal**, head of Hamas’ political bureau in Damascus, said that “today when people talk about two states, Israeli and Palestinian, that is the kind of recognition that did not exist in the past, that the State of Israel is a Jewish state.” He said that “anyone who talks like that is responsible for giving up the million and a half Palestinians of 1948 and the right to return...That determines the nature of the entity as Jewish and waives the right to return” (Al-Aqsa TV, November 5).

■ During the meetings the Palestinians asked for significant goodwill gestures from Israel before Annapolis. Two of them were the release of **at least 2,000 Palestinian prisoners** and the dismantling of the roadblocks in Judea and Samaria (Minister of Prisoners' Affairs Ashram al-Ajarmi, Voice of Palestine Radio, November 5). According to reports in the Israeli daily newspaper *Haaretz*, the prime minister is considering the release of 300-400 Palestinian prisoners in accordance with existing criteria, that is, no involvement in terrorist attacks killing Israeli citizens (Aluf Benn and Avi Issacharoff, *Haaretz*, November 12).

■ While the negotiating teams continued intensive contacts, the Palestinian populace showed **limited interest** in the Annapolis meeting and **great skepticism about its chances of success**. In our assessment, their low expectations are founded on a basic lack of faith in the ability of Israel and the PA to achieve political progress because of the unending series of failures and disappointments of recent years. Abu Mazen and the Palestinian leadership, although frequently accused by Hamas of caving in to the Israelis, continue to state publicly that their positions are maximalist and that they have a high level of expectations, and are not trying to promote a propaganda campaign to prepare Palestinian hearts and minds for possible compromises regarding the core issues.

The Internal Palestinian Arena

Hamas security forces shot into the crowd at a memorial rally for Yasser Arafat



The memorial rally for Yasser Arafat held in Gaza City (Al-Ayyam, November 13).

■ On November 12 a rally commemorating the third anniversary of Yasser Arafat's death was held in a central square in Gaza City, attended by at least 250,000-300,000 Palestinians. Many of them carried yellow Fatah flags and pictures of Yasser Arafat and Abu Mazen. After the rally confrontations broke out between members of the Hamas security forces and rally participants. **Hamas opened fire** on the crowd, killing seven pro-Fatah Palestinians and wounding 150, some of them critically.²

² For further information see our November 15 Bulletin entitled "A record in Hamas' violent suppression of Fatah in the Gaza Strip During a memorial rally for Yasser Arafat in Gaza City, Hamas security personnel opened fire on the crowd. Seven Palestinians were killed. The rally was a demonstration of Fatah strength and a public outcry against Hamas," at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/html/gaza_121107e.htm or http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/gaza_121107e.pdf.



Evacuating the wounded (Al-Ayyam, November 13).

■ Following the violent events, the Hamas police carried out a wave of arrests of Fatah activists throughout the Gaza Strip. A Fatah spokesman claimed that 400 activists were detained and dozens more were ordered to present themselves at police stations for interrogation (Reuters, November 13). According to the Hamas Executive Force, no more than 250 were detained (Agence France Presse, November 13). According to Fatah sources, among the detainees were high-ranking former members of the security services, senior Fatah members, and important figures affiliated with Fatah such as mayors, journalists, sheikhs and mosque imams (Firas Website and Wafa News Agency, November 13).

■ In our assessment, it was the most serious in the series of continuing confrontations between Fatah and Hamas which began when Hamas took over the Gaza Strip this past June. **A well-organized rally attended by hundreds of thousands of people is an impressive show of strength and was an expression of public protest against the Hamas regime.** Holding the rally showed that despite the severe blow dealt by Hamas, Fatah still has support from large sections of the populace. Fatah activists, encouraged by their success, are likely to continue their protests in an effort to end the Hamas rule in the Gaza Strip. The Hamas movement, embarrassed by the rally's success, will quickly try to suppress signs of resistance and stabilize its security rule over the Gaza Strip.



Participants at the rally commemorating Yasser Arafat in Gaza City (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, November 14).

Palestinian security service activities in Nablus

■ On November 2, three hundred uniformed members of the Palestinian security services deployed in Nablus, **a focal point for terrorism in Judea and Samaria**. Their objective, according to a statement issued by Palestinian Interior Minister Abd al-Razaq Yahya and other high-ranking figures, was **to impose law and order and to end the anarchy in the Nablus** district. Because of the problematical nature of Nablus, they said, it was liable to serve as a model for other locations in Judea and Samaria. Palestinian prime minister Salaam Fayyad said that the deployment in Nablus was his government's top priority and that "the events in Nablus are more important than those in Annapolis" (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, November 12).



The Palestinian security services deployed in Nablus operating during the day (Al-Arabiya TV, November 4).

■ Commanders of the Palestinian security services and IDF officers came to an agreement whereby the Palestinians could operate in Nablus between 6 a.m. and

midnight. Between midnight and 6 a.m. only the IDF would operate (Ma'ariv, November 4). So far, Palestinian security service activity to put an end to the anarchy in Nablus has included a prohibition against carrying arms, preventing the movement of stolen vehicles, preventing shots from being fired from public places, the detention of criminals, etc.

■ Generally speaking, the Palestinian security services operated **without confronting the Palestinian terrorist operative and organizations**. An exception was an incident in the Balata refugee camp on November 5. Palestinian security service members and armed Fatah-Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade operatives clashed as the security service attempted to detain a wanted operative. One member of the security services and eight civilians were injured and 25 others were detained. The Nablus district governor announced that on November 6 the security services would patrol the streets of the Balata refugee camp and that they would be everywhere.

■ Nablus district police chief Colonel **Ahmad al-Sharqawi** announced that Palestinian police sappers had exposed dozens of explosive devices in an abandoned building in the Old City. He added that they would detonate them once they had finished searching the area (Ma'an News Agency, November 10). **However, an Israeli security source said the devices were old and did not belong to a terrorist organization network.**



Ahmad al-Sharqawi, Nablus district police chief (Al-Arabiya TV, November 4).

■ According to reports from Nablus, the Palestinian security service operations **improved security and Nablus residents' sense of safety**. On November 13 a reporter for Agence France Presse described the situation by saying that “the armed

men in the city who imposed a reign of fear have melted away... The army of street merchants who formerly choked the city square has disappeared... People move about freely... After years of recession, business is slowly improving...”

■ In response to the Palestinian security service activity Hamas spokesmen said that they support the restoration of law and order to Nablus, but emphasized that Hamas weapons were legitimate because they were aimed at Israel (“the Israeli occupation”). Salah al-Bardawil, Hamas spokesman in the Palestinian Legislative Council, said that Hamas “will not turn its weapons over to the PA or anyone else” (Al-Quds Al-Arabi, Ramallah, November 1).

■ High-ranking officials in the PA, among them Prime Minister Salaam Fayyad, represented the activities in Nablus as successful and complained about the IDF’s continued counterterrorist activities in Nablus and the West Bank. However, the Palestinian security services only dealt with imposing law and order and ending anarchy, as stated by the PA, and **not with disbanding the terrorist organizations and their networks**, as the PA is required by the road map. So far the Palestinian security services have not established the PA’s authority and the terrorist networks, especially Hamas, have not been disbanded.

Exposing Hamas weapons in Hebron

■ **Samieh al-Saifi, commander of national security for Hebron**, held a press conference where he announced that the security services had found substantial amounts of weapons. They were in a large mosque in Beit Ummar (north of Hebron) and in the building of a Hamas charitable society affiliated with the mosque. He said that on November 13 weapons, ammunition, daggers, axes, types of explosive belts and anti-PA propaganda had been found in the mosque. He also said that based on intelligence information, Hamas operatives suspected of storing the weapons had been detained (Palestinian TV and Qudsnet Website, November 13).

Legislative Council meeting in Gaza City

■ On November 7 the Legislative Council met in Gaza City headed by acting chairman Ahmad Baher and attended by Hamas prime minister Ismail Haniya. According to reports in the Palestinian media there were 29 representatives from the Gaza Strip present. Six Hamas representatives live in Judea and Samaria and attended via telephone link. Thirty-five representatives detained by Israel sent proxies. Fatah refused to participate, as did other factions.

■ **Fatah spokesmen rejected the legality of the meeting.** Fahmi al-Za'arir said that "the meeting is not legal or constitutional..." (Ramattan News Agency, November 7). Ibrahim Kharisha, general secretary of the Legislative Council, said that "what the Hamas members of the council have done is to perpetuate the coup their militias carried out in the Gaza Strip..." Abdallah Abdallah, a Fatah representative said that "it is an attempt to destroy the Legislative Council, because it cannot be said that there is a sufficient number of representatives to hold a meeting where there are only 29 out of 132..." (Al-Jazeera TV, November 7).