



# News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (October 13-19, 2021)

## Overview

► **Judea and Samaria:** This past week a Palestinian carried out a vehicular ramming attack in Qalandiya, wounding an Israeli Border Police fighter. In Judea and Samaria Palestinians continued throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails at Israeli vehicles driving on the roads. A Palestinian who had thrown Molotov cocktails at vehicles on the Tunnel Road near Beit Jala, endangering them, was shot and killed.

► **The Gaza Strip:** The Gaza Strip remains relatively quiet. **Mohammed al-Emadi, chairman of Qatar's National Committee for the Reconstruction of Gaza**, and his second in command arrived in the Gaza Strip and met with the Hamas leadership. The Gaza Strip marked the tenth anniversary of the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal, and the Palestinian media, especially those affiliated with Hamas, gave extensive coverage to the anniversary. There were promises that another prisoner exchange deal with Israel would take place in the near future, conducted according to the conditions of the "resistance" [i.e., the Palestinian terrorist organizations]. A video was produced covering the developments of the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal, giving the names of the Israelis still in Hamas captivity.

► **The Palestinian Authority (PA): Mahmoud Abbas and Muhammad Shtayyeh** have been urging the American administration to advance the Palestinian cause, including keeping promises made to the PA, among them the reopening of the American consulate in east Jerusalem and promoting "trust building" measures. This past week Muhammad Shtayyeh stressed the need to preserve the Palestinian narrative to counter Israel's attempts to Judaize Jerusalem.

► **The Palestinian terrorist prisoners:** Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) terrorist prisoners in Israeli jails began a hunger strike to protest the sanctions imposed on them after six prisoners escaped from Gilboa Prison. The leaders of the Palestinian terrorist organizations threatened a confrontation with Israel. The PIJ's military-terrorist wing announced a general mobilization and stated they were fully prepared, calling to increase the "resistance" [i.e., terrorist activities] against Israel.

►**The coronavirus:** The number of active cases declined in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip.

## Judea and Samaria

### Attacks and attempted attacks

#### Vehicular ramming attack

►**At 01:00 on August 14, 2021**, during a Border Police operation to evacuate illegal structures near Qalandiya, north of Jerusalem, a Palestinian drove to the site. He increased his speed and rammed into a Border Police fighter, injuring him; he was evacuated to a hospital. Other fighters shot at the vehicle as the Palestinian tried to escape and he drove into a wall. The Palestinian terrorist was evacuated to a hospital (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, October 14, 2021). The Palestinian media reported the Palestinian was **Salah al-Din Nizal**, 22, originally from Qalqilya but currently living in al-Bireh. His uncle, **Muhammad Nizal**, who was a terrorist operative in the military wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), was killed in an exchange of fire with IDF forces in 2002 (Khabar News Agency, October 14, 2021).



**The vehicle involved in the attack (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, October 14, 2021).**

#### Attempt to attack women IDF soldiers

►On **October 15, 2021**, a bus carrying IDF soldiers stopped at a gas station near Jerusalem, and several women soldiers got off the bus. A group of men armed with clubs approached and threatened them. A male soldier got off the bus and tried to drive them away. They attacked him and threw him on the ground. Two officers, who had seen the Palestinians approaching the bus, fired their weapons into the air, and the attackers retreated. The event is under investigation (IDF spokesman, October 15, 2021).

## Counterterrorism activities

►On **October 18, 2021**, IDF surveillance identified a Palestinian woman armed with a knife approaching a gate pedestrians from Judea and Samaria used to enter Israeli territory; the crossing was closed at the time. Border Police fighters were alerted, who arrived and detained the woman, 37, from Suriq. She threw the knife on the ground (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, October 18, 2021).



**The knife found in the Palestinian woman's possession  
(Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, October 19, 2021).**

►On **October 14, 2021**, two Palestinians threw Molotov cocktails at the Tunnel Road near Beit Jala, northwest of Bethlehem, endangering traffic on the road. IDF forces waiting in ambush at the site shot at the Palestinians, wounding one who later died. The other Palestinian was detained (IDF spokesman, October 14, 2021). The Palestinian killed was reported as **Amjad Usama Abu Sultan**, from Bethlehem. **Hamas spokesman Abd al-Latif al-Qanua** condemned his death (Telegram, October 15, 2021).

►On **October 14, 2021**, in an undercover Israel Police Force activity near Ma'aleh Adumim a Palestinian vehicle was searched and parts for an M-16 assault rifle and other weapons were found. A large amount of money was also confiscated, apparently intended to be used to buy weapons. A Palestinian suspect was detained (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, October 14, 2021). On **October 19, 2021**, an M-16 assault rifle was confiscated in Hebron, and several Palestinians were detained (Rescue Without Borders in Judea and Samaria, October 19, 2021).



**Right: Some of the weapons confiscated in a counterterrorism operation near Ma'aleh Adumim (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, October 14, 2021). Left: M-16 assault rifle confiscated in Hebron (Rescue Without Borders in Judea and Samaria, October 19, 2021).**

## Rocks, Molotov cocktails and other events

► In Judea and Samaria Palestinians continued throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails mainly at Israeli vehicles driving on the roads. There were also instances of IEDs placed at the side of the road. The more prominent events were the following:<sup>1</sup>

- ◆ **October 19, 2021:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus near Bayt Umar, north of Hebron. No casualties were reported. The front windshield of the bus was damaged.
- ◆ **October 18, 2021:** Molotov cocktails were thrown at an open field near Ofra, northeast of Ramallah. No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **October 18, 2021:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle on the Gush Etzion-Hebron road near the al-Aroub refugee camp. No casualties were reported. The front windshield of the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **October 17, 2021:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus on route 55 between Funduq and Kedumim, southwest of Nablus. No casualties were reported. The front windshield of the bus was damaged.
- ◆ **October 17, 2021:** A Molotov cocktail was thrown at an Israeli bus on the Husan bypass road near Beitar Illit, west of Bethlehem. No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **October 17, 2021:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle on the Gush Etzion-Hebron road between Bayt Umar and al-Aroub. No casualties were reported. The vehicle was damaged.

<sup>1</sup> All information and reports are from Rescue Without Borders in Judea and Samaria unless otherwise noted.

◆ **October 17, 2021:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near the northern entrance to Jericho. A window was shattered.



**The shattered bus window**

**(Security department of the Jordan Valley regional council, October 17, 2021).**

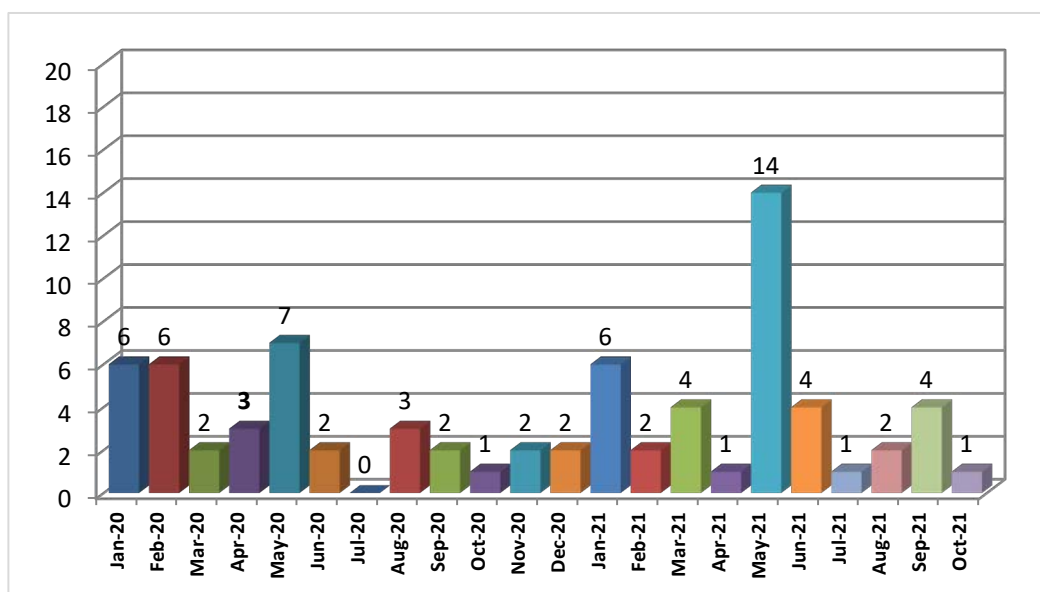
- ◆ **October 16, 2021:** A Molotov cocktail was thrown at the community of Beit El, north of Ramallah. No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **October 16, 2021:** Molotov cocktails were thrown at the Husan bypass road near Beitar Illit, west of Bethlehem. No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **October 14, 2021:** A suspicious vehicle drove westward to the Tapuah Junction, east of the Ariel Junction. An IDF soldier motioned for it to halt, but the driver continued driving toward Ariel without stopping. The soldier shot at the vehicle.
- ◆ **October 14, 2021:** An IED exploded near the vehicle of a civilian security guard west of Ariel. No casualties were reported. The vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **October 14, 2021:** Three Molotov cocktails were thrown at the community of Migdal Oz in Gush Etzion. The perpetrator fled south in the direction of Bayt Fajjar. No casualties were reported.
- ◆ **October 14, 2021:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus between the communities of Mevo Dotan and Reihan, west of Jenin. No casualties were reported. The bus was damaged.
- ◆ **October 14, 2021:** A Molotov cocktail was thrown at an Israeli vehicle at the Halhul Junction, north of Hebron. No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **October 12, 2021:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near the village of Azun, east of Qalqilya. A IDF force securing the site shot at the rock throwers. A Palestinian was wounded and evacuated to a hospital.

◆ **October 12, 2021:** Rocks were thrown at Israeli security forces near the village of Silwad, northeast of Ramallah. A Palestinian wounded by IDF fire was evacuated to a hospital.

◆ **October 12, 2021:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus near the village of Turmus Aya, northeast of Ramallah. No casualties were reported. The front windshield of the bus was damaged.

## Significant Terrorist Attacks in Judea and Samaria since January

2020<sup>2</sup>



## Armed terrorist activity in and around Jenin

► According to an article from the Hamas-affiliated Safa News Agency, armed "resistance" activity in the Jenin area has increased. The article stated that until recently Palestinians fired only a limited number of shots at IDF forces in the region of Jenin and the Jenin refugee camp, but today Palestinians in the other towns and villages, who had previously only thrown rocks, were now also shooting at the Israeli forces. The Palestinians have adopted a kind of early warning system, and when operatives in a village see an approaching IDF force they alert armed Palestinians who rush to the site and shoot at the soldiers. They come wearing masks and usually use Carlo improvised machine guns. The article also mentioned an

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<sup>2</sup>A significant attack is defined by the ITIC as involving shooting, stabbing, a vehicular attack, the use of IEDs, or a combination of the above. Stones and Molotov cocktails thrown by Palestinians are not included.

increasing active collaboration of the military wings of Hamas, the PIJ and Fatah (Safa, October 13, 2021).

## Israel's South

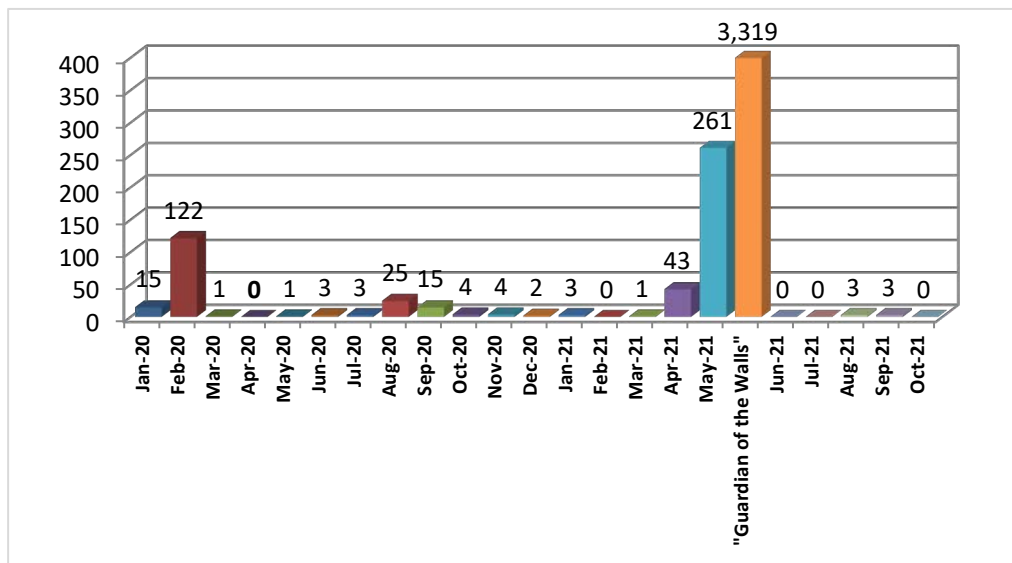
### Rocket and mortar shell fire into Israel

►Palestinian sources alleged that on **October 18, 2021**, a mortar shell was fired at an IDF force that had penetrated a few meters into the Gaza Strip (al-Akhbar, October 18, 2021). No report was received of the incident, and during the past week no rockets or mortar shells were fired into Israeli territory.

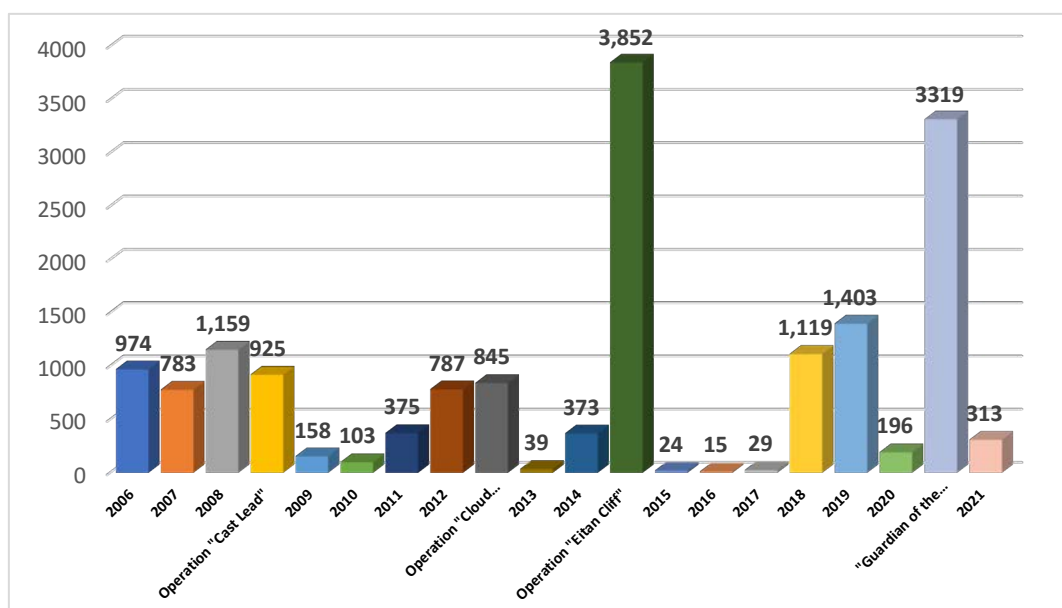
►On **October 19, 2021**, the IDF spokesman announced that after a security assessment of the situation, a number of sites and roads near the border security fence along the Gaza Strip border would be closed (IDF spokesman, October 19, 2021). Apparently there was concern there would be shooting from the Gaza Strip. Shortly thereafter, the limitations were lifted.

### Monthly Distribution of Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire since January

2020



## Annual Distribution of Rocket Hits



### Attempt to infiltrate Israeli territory

►On **October 15, 2021**, IDF surveillance identified two Palestinians trying to cross the border security fence in the southern Gaza Strip. They placed an IED which exploded a short time later. IDF fighters were dispatched to the site and detained the two Palestinians (IDF spokesman, October 15, 2021).

## Developments in the Gaza Strip

### The Qatari aid for the Gaza Strip

►On **October 17, 2021**, **Mohammed al-Emadi, chairman of Qatar's National Committee for the Reconstruction of Gaza**, and his second in command, arrived in the Gaza Strip and are expected to remain for several days (Shehab, October 17, 2021). Mohammed al-Emadi met with **Yahya al-Sinwar, head of the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip**. He told al-Sinwar that Qatar was making efforts to achieve a ceasefire and would continue supporting the Palestinians (website of Qatar's National Committee, October 18, 2021). According to the ministry of housing in Gaza, el-Emadi's visit will lead to a breakthrough in rebuilding the Gaza Strip (Sabaq24, October 17, 2021).

► Hamas is still looking for ways to use funds from Qatar to pay the salaries of its employees. According to "a knowledgeable source," Hamas gave Israel an ultimatum, telling Israel it had until Tuesday, October 19, 2021, to allow the money from Qatar for Hamas salaries to enter the Gaza Strip (allegedly \$8 million). The "source" added that Egypt told Hamas that



"everyone" with ties to the Israeli issue and the Middle East wanted to preserve Naftali Bennett's government, giving it a chance in the coming months to institute measures to restore the status quo ante in the Gaza Strip, among them the delivery of the money from Qatar and permits for Gazans to work in Israel (al-Ayam, October 16, 2018).

## Rebuilding the Gaza Strip

► **Musa Abu Marzouq, a member of the Hamas political bureau**, said in an interview that the meetings in Cairo had dealt with Jerusalem, the situation in the Gaza Strip, internal Palestinian issues and the Palestinian prisoners. He claimed no long-term ceasefire with Israel had been discussed, and that Hamas was continuing its efforts to break the [so-called] "siege" Israel had "enforced" on the Gaza Strip. He also claimed that the construction of three new cities in the Gaza Strip had been agreed on, and that building new streets and junctions was also planned. He added that in the near future projects financed by Qatar costing \$50 million would begin, and that Egypt had promised to speed up the reconstruction (al-Andalou News, October 14, 2021).

► **Khalil al-Haya, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, said in an interview that following the talks held with the Hamas leadership in Cairo, in the near future Egypt would begin programs and projects for the rebuilding of the Gaza Strip. He said commercial activity had already begun between the Gaza Strip and Egypt (al-Aqsa, October 15, 2021).



**Palestinian workers extract steel pipes from the rubble of the al-Johara Building in Gaza City, hit by the IDF during Operation Guardian of the Walls (QudsN Twitter account, October 17, 2021).**

## The issue of the release of the Palestinian terrorist prisoners

► **Khalil al-Haya** said in an interview that Hamas would do everything in its power to secure the release of the Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, and warned Israel not to harm them, especially those who were on a hunger strike. He said the issue had not yet been resolved,

and that while Israel talked about it to the news media, it had actually not done anything (al-Aqsa, October 15, 2021).

►"Egyptian sources" claimed **Mahmoud Abbas** had played a role in preventing a prisoner exchange deal between Israel and Hamas because the PA opposed putting the name of **Marwan Barghouti**, Mahmoud Abbas' bitter political rival, on the list of prisoners to be released. According to report, Mahmoud Abbas exerted pressure on a number of actors involved in the deal to reach an agreement, one of which was Egypt. One of his conditions was that he remain PA chairman indefinitely, receiving assurance before any negotiations were held for a prisoner exchange deal between Israel and Hamas that would include the release of Marwan Barghouti. Mahmoud Abbas views Hamas' inclusion of Barghouti as an attempt to embarrass him and represent him as having failed to deal with the issue. Hamas has already insisted that Barghouti's name be included in any future prisoner exchange deal with Israel (al-Araby al-Jadeed, October 15, 2021).



**Mahmoud Abbas fears Marwan Barghouti will be released in a Hamas prisoner exchange deal (Palestinian cartoonists' Facebook page, October 16, 2021).**

## Tenth anniversary of the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal

►**October 18, 2021**, was the tenth anniversary of the **Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal**. The Palestinian media, especially those affiliated with Hamas, gave it extensive coverage. A video was produced to mark the date, covering the events leading to the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal and giving the names of Israeli prisoners still in Hamas captivity (Shehab, the Telegram channel of Hamas' military-terrorist wing, October 18, 2021). Hamas issued a statement claiming that in the near future there would be a new prisoner exchange deal with Israel, carried out according to conditions imposed by the "resistance" [i.e., the terrorist organizations]. The statement stressed that the prisoners were Hamas' top priority and the

price for releasing the Israeli captives would be the release of [all] the Palestinian prisoners ( Hamas Telegram channel, October 18, 2021).



Hamas notice for the tenth anniversary of the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal. The Arabic reads, "[To our] prisoners. The date of your release is close" (al-Aqsa TV Twitter account, October 18, 2021). The pictures on the wall behind the terrorist are the Israelis in Hamas captivity.



Right: Hamas rally in the northern Gaza Strip (Palinfo Twitter account, October 18, 2021). Left: Cartoon by Hamas-affiliated Omayya Joha claiming a Hamas victory in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal (Palestinian cartoonists' Facebook page, October 18, 2021).

## New studios for Hamas' al-Aqsa TV

► Hamas' al-Aqsa TV held a festive ceremony to mark the opening of its new studios, attended by **Yahya al-Sinwar**. One of the people present claimed the new studios sent the message to Israel ("the enemy") that it did not matter what Israel tried to destroy, it would not silence the Palestinians or keep them from issuing information about the Palestinian people to the entire world (al-Aqsa TV Twitter account, October 18, 2021). **Note:** During Operation Guardian of the Walls (May 2021) Israel attacked the building where al-Aqsa TV had its offices.



Yahya al-Sinwar launches al-Aqsa TV's new studios (al-Aqsa TV Facebook page, October 18, 2021).

## Criticism of PA meetings with Israel

► **Hamis spokesman Abd al-Latif al-Qanua** issued a press release attacking the Palestinian leadership for holding "normalization meetings" in Ramallah with representatives of Israel ("the occupation") through what was known as "the committee for discourse with Israeli society." According to al-Qanua, the move was absurd, especially now while Israel continued its "crimes" against the Palestinian people and prisoners. The Palestinian leadership, he claimed, was the epitome of deterioration and demonstrated the depths to which it had sunk. The very fact that such a committee was part of the PLO showed, he claimed, the urgent need for far-reaching reforms in the PLO, so that instead of normalization with the enemy, emphasis would be put on the "struggle" against the occupation (Hamis website, October 15, 2021).

## Conference in the Gaza Strip to discuss keeping Israeli students from studying abroad

► Gaza Strip academics, in collaboration with members of the Palestinian establishment, held a meeting in Gaza on October 16, 2021, to discuss "ways to exert pressure on universities abroad to prevent the acceptance of Israeli students who had served in the occupation's army." They agreed to draft a legal document based on international legal principles which would be presented to universities and other agencies to prevent the universities from accepting Israeli students who had served in the IDF. **Issam Yunis, head of the al-Mayadeen human rights organization**, said they had to focus on Israel's "apartheid activity", which, he claimed, given recent developments in international law, the Palestinians could exploit to their own advantage (Ma'an, October 16, 2021).

## The Palestinian Authority (PA)

### PA appeal to the United States

►At a meeting of Palestinian businessmen, **Mahmoud Abbas** criticized the new American administration, claiming that since the inauguration of Joe Biden no progress had been made to ameliorate the PA's desperate economic situation. Mahmoud Abbas appealed to the United States to "turn words into action" and keep the promises made to the PA, among them reopening the American consulate in east Jerusalem and promoting "trust building" measures. He also threatened that without progress regarding the end of the "occupation" he would be forced to take the steps he mentioned in his speech before the UN General Assembly, such as appealing to the International Court of Justice and **favoring the one-state solution over the two-state solution** (Wafa, October 18, 2021). At the weekly government meeting, **PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh** said that reopening the American consulate in east Jerusalem was an important matter and he hoped it would occur in the near future. He said the Palestinians could not accept the argument that the consulate could not be opened because the regime in Israel was "fragile" (Wafa, October 18, 2021).

### American aid

►**Muhammad Shtayyeh** met in his office in Ramallah with **USAID mission director Aler Grubbs** to examine the possibility of increased cooperation in implementing projects in the PA and Gaza Strip. Muhammad Shtayyeh thanked her for the renewal of American financial aid to the PA, saying he regarded it as a step forward towards renewing PA-United States relations and support for the two-state solution, as had been announced by President Biden. However, he said, an improvement in the humanitarian situation in the PA was not a replacement for a political solution, and without a political framework for ending the "Israeli occupation" and establishing an independent Palestinian state, the PA's economic problems could not be solved (Wafa, October 12, 2021).



**Muhammad Shtayeh meets with USAID mission director Aler Grubbs (Wafa, October 12, 2021).**

►**Note:** In September the American embassy in Israel announcement the United States had transferred \$10 million in humanitarian assistance to the hospitals in east Jerusalem serving the Palestinian population from Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip. The aid was transferred through USAID, which has supported the Palestinian public health sector for years (USAID website, September 28, 2021).

### **Palestinian terrorist prisoners go on hunger strike**

►Since the escape of the six terrorist prisoners from the Gilboa Prison and dispersing the recaptured fugitives to various jails throughout Israel, PIJ prisoners have clashed with the prison authorities. Since **October 13, 2021**, the clashes have escalated and several dozen PIJ prisoners have begun a hunger strike. According to **Qadoura Fares, chairman of the Palestinian prisoners' club**, as of October 18, 2021, 270 Palestinian prisoners were on a hunger strike, 250 of them PIJ operatives.

►**PIJ spokesman Da'ud Shehab** said the objective of the strike was to put an end to the "revenge" taken by the Israeli prison services against the PIJ prisoners after the six had escaped, five of whom belonged to the PIJ. He said they were monitoring the events and would give full support to all the measures taken by the prisoners. He warned Israel not to delay in responding to the prisoners' demands, because extending the hunger strike would endanger the prisoners' health (al-Mayadeen, October 12, 2021).

►**Abd al-'Al al-Anani, secretary of the Palestinian institution for prisoners and released prisoners affairs**, said that after the escape from the Gilboa Prison the Israeli prison service authorities imposed very strict conditions, part of a "clear" policy of revenge of the Israeli leadership. The policy, he claimed, was implemented against prisoners in general and PIJ prisoners in particular, of whom there were about 4,000. The measures included solitary confinement, interrogation, not allowing prisoners to meet with family members, making it

difficult for prisoners to meet with their lawyers, and not allowing them to live in cells with other PIJ prisoners (al-Ghad, October 13, 2021).

► **PIJ spokesman in Judea and Samaria Tareq Izz al-Din** said the hunger strike was a deliberate act of escalation intended to stop the [alleged] "harassment" of the prisoners by the prison service authorities, and he demanded the prisoners be returned to their previous wings and with the same conditions they had before the prison break. **Qadoura Fares** said the strike would intensify, in a few days the hunger-striking prisoners would stop drinking water and would be joined by other prisoners (al-Mayadeen, October 13, 2021).

► Following the outbreak of the hunger strike, the Palestinian terrorist organizations, headed by the PIJ, issued threats to Israel. The PIJ's military-terrorist wing called for a general mobilization, claiming they were prepared for any eventuality. **PIJ leader Ziyad al-Nakhalah** said they would not leave their members in Israeli jails as victims and would support the prisoners with all the means at their disposal, even if it meant declaring war (al-Mayadeen, October 13, 2021). In response to al-Nakhalah, **Zaher Jabarin, who holds the prisoners portfolio in Hamas**, said the prisoners' movement was united in directing the struggle and would not permit one organization to deal with only its own prisoners. He added that all the prisoners, together with the "resistance," were prepared to defend the decisions made by the prisoners' leadership in response to the measures taken against them in the [Israeli] jails (saw, October 14, 2021).

► **PIJ spokesman Da'ud Shehab** said the organization was prepared to take far-reaching steps to support the prisoners and would escalate the situation to the point of a military confrontation. **PIJ spokesman in Judea and Samaria Tareq Izz al-Din** warned Israel not to waste time with negotiations and delays in meeting the prisoners' demands. He called on the Palestinian people to raise the level of the [so-called] "popular activities" in support of the hunger-striking prisoners (al-Mayadeen, October 18, 2021).

► A Hamas delegation headed by **Saleh al-'Arouri, deputy chairman of Hamas' political bureau**, met with a **PIJ delegation headed by its leader, Ziyad al-Nakhalah**, to discuss various matters, especially the prisoners. Hamas and the PIJ issued a warning to Israel regarding the consequences of its activities in the prisons, and said Israel would be responsible for the prisoners' welfare. They called on the Palestinian people to escalate "resistance activities" against Israel wherever possible (Hamas Telegram channel, October 15, 2021).

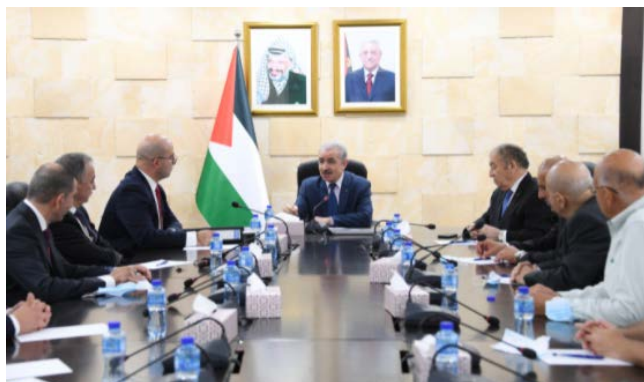


(Alaa' al-Laqta's Facebook page, October 14, 2021).

## Muhammad Shtayyeh calls for strengthening the Palestinian narrative to combat the "Judaization" of Jerusalem

- ▶ **Muhammad Shtayyeh** held two meetings where he called for a struggle against "Israeli's attempts to Judaize Jerusalem" and to strengthen the Palestinian narrative.
- ▶ Meeting with **Adolfo Tito Yllana, the new Papal Nuncio to the PA**, he called for concentrating and uniting efforts to combat the "Israeli war" against the sites holy to Christianity and Islam, especially in Jerusalem, and to struggle against attempts to Judaize Jerusalem and change the status quo. He reiterated the importance of strengthening the Palestinian narrative in the face of Israel's attempts to [allegedly] "falsify facts," and to preserve the Christian presence in Jerusalem and the Church's assets (Wafa, October 13, 2021).
- ▶ Meeting with the chairman and members of the chamber of commerce in east Jerusalem, and with **Fadi al-Hindi, PA minister for Jerusalem affairs**; and **Khaled al-Asili, the PA minister of economy**, Shtayyeh said Jerusalem was the Palestinian leadership's top priority and they would continue to reinforce their activities, presence, the Palestinian narrative and the firm stance of the residents of east Jerusalem in the face of Israel's ongoing attempts to Judaize the city (Wafa, October 17, 2021).

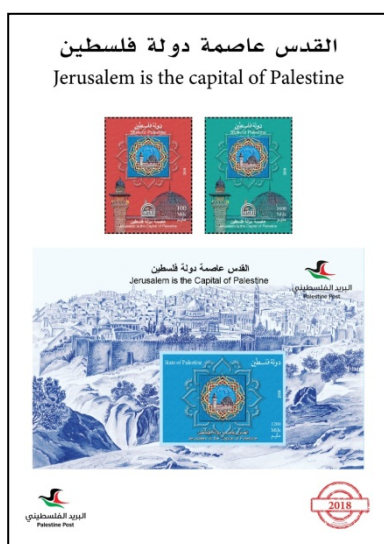




Right: Muhammad Shtayyeh meets with Adolfo Tito Yllana, the new Papal Nuncio to the PA (Wafa, October 13, 2021). Left: Muhammad Shtayyeh meets with Palestinian businessmen from east Jerusalem (Wafa, October 17, 2021).

## PA issues new postage stamp

► **Ishaq Sider, PA minister of telecommunications and IT**, participated in the reopening of the newly renovated post office in the town of Bitunia. The opening took place on World Post Day, and the Palestinian post office issued a new stamp, "Jerusalem is the capital of Palestine." The stamp had originally been issued in December 2018 when Trump declared Jerusalem the capital of Israel and relocated the American embassy from Tel Aviv. However, at the time Israel objected to the stamp. The ceremony in Bitunia was also attended by **Mu'ad Draghma, general director of the Palestinian post office; and the head of the Bitunia municipality** (Facebook page of the PA ministry of telecommunications and IT, October 12, 2021).



The new stamp (Facebook page of the PA ministry of telecommunications and IT, October 12, 2021).

## The Coronavirus

### Judea and Samaria

► **The ministry of health in Ramallah** reported the coronavirus statistics for October 19, 2021. The number of active cases was 2,071, down from 2,907 on October 12, 2021. There were 57 ICU patients, ten of them on ventilators. So far 2,816 Palestinians in the West Bank have died of coronavirus-related causes. Two doses of the vaccine have been given to 916,126 Palestinians, up from 884,855 on October 12, 2021 (ministry of health in Ramallah Facebook page, October 19, 2021).

► **Khalil al-Shqaqi's Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PCPSR)** issued a public opinion poll covering the period between December 2020 and September 2021. According to the poll results, there was an increase in the number of people in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip stating they had been vaccinated against the coronavirus, with a parallel decline in people who were completely opposed to the vaccine. The percentage of those stating they had been vaccinated stood at 55% in Judea and Samaria and 39% in the Gaza Strip; 27% expressed a desire to be vaccinated when it became possible, 24% were opposed (PCPSR website, September 21, 2021).

### The Gaza Strip

► **The ministry of health in Gaza** reported the coronavirus statistics for October 19, 2021, stating that the number of active cases had declined to 9,867 from 12,710 on October 12, 2021. Of the 2,471 tests administered during the 24 hours between October 18 and 19, 2021, 519 were positive, a positive rate of 21%. So far 1,515 Gazans have died, up from 1,479 on October 12, 2021. There were 194 hospitalized patients, 127 in serious or critical condition. Regarding vaccination, 466,286 Gazans have been vaccinated, up from 459,428 on October 12, 2021 (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, October 19, 2021).