



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (February 23 – March 1, 2022)

Overview

- ▶ This past week the Israeli security forces carried out counterterrorism activities throughout Judea and Samaria. During activities in the Jenin refugee camp Palestinians opened fire on the forces, who returned fire, killing two Palestinians, one a Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) terrorist operative. Another PIJ operative was mortally wounded. A Palestinian was killed while throwing Molotov cocktails. Palestinians in east Jerusalem rioted, attacking Israeli police forces.
- ▶ In view of the decision by Palestinian terrorist prisoners in Israeli jails to go on a hunger strike to protest "recent events," March 1, 2022 was declared a "day of rage." The Palestinian public was asked to demonstrate and to confront Israeli security forces at the traditional friction points. Hamas called for the day of rage to be turned into an intifada.
- ▶ The Israeli defense minister signed an order for the seizure of tens of thousands of dollars worth digital currency. The currency was held in 12 digital accounts of businesses supporting the al-Mutahidun money-changing company, owned by the Shamlakh family in the Gaza Strip. The funds were to be transferred to Hamas, notably to finance its military terrorist wing. According to the Israeli defense ministry, it was the third time Israel prevented digital funds from being transferred to Hamas.
- ▶ Senior Palestinian Authority (PA) figures have almost completely abstained from publicly relating to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and have not taken a position on the events, despite the extensive media coverage. When the invasion began, the PA foreign ministry issued an announcement warning Israel not to exploit the international situation to "escalate its activities against the Palestinian people." **PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh** announced they would do everything possible to rescue the Palestinians currently found in Ukraine. **Musa Abu Marzouq, a member of the Hamas political bureau**, exploited the events to criticize the United States. Commentaries in the Hamas-affiliated media outlets reflect their confusion and embarrassment in dealing with the events. Some are pro-Putin, some are anti-Putin and some praise Ukrainian President Zelensky.

► **French Prime Minister Jean Castex** said in a speech that Jerusalem was the eternal capital of the Jewish people, earning him a series of condemnations from Hamas and the PIJ.

► A Hamas delegation visited Lebanon and met with Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah.

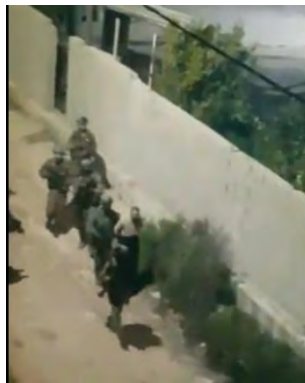
► **Coronavirus infection:** In Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip the number of active coronavirus cases continues to decline.

Judea and Samaria

Counterterrorism activities

► This past week Israeli security forces carried out counterterrorism activities in a number of locations in Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem, during which a number of Palestinians were killed and wounded. Several members of the Israeli security forces were wounded during the events.

► On the night of **February 28, 2022**, Border Police fighters operated in the **Jenin refugee camp** to detain a Palestinian wanted for terrorist activity. As they left the house with the terrorist, Palestinians attacked them, opening fire from several directions. The forces fired back. As they reached their vehicles, Palestinians again shot at them, and as they left the refugee camp Palestinians rioted and threw rocks and an improvised hand grenade at them (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, March 1, 2022). The wanted terrorist was **Imad Abu al-Hija**, son of a senior Hamas terrorist operative from Jenin currently serving nine consecutive life sentences in an Israeli prison (Khabar Press, March 1, 2022).



Israeli security forces detain Imad Abu al-Hija in the Jenin refugee camp (Khabar Press, March 1, 2022).

► The Palestinians reported two deaths during the events, and the serious wounding of **Abdallah al-Ghoul**, a PIJ operative. The two slain terrorists were:

- ◆ **Abdallah al-Hasri**, 23, an operative in the Jerusalem Brigades, the PIJ's military terrorist wing, who was a released prisoner. He was seen in a video on the Palestinian

social media shooting at IDF forces a few minutes before he was shot and killed. The PIJ's military terrorist wing issued a mourning notice for him, threatening that Israel would pay a "very high price for its crimes" and warning that "the hand of the resistance" [i.e., Palestinian terrorism] would reach it in every location (Ma'an, March 1 2022).



Abdallah al-Hasri (al-Risalah, March 1, 2022)

◆ **Shadi Najem**, 18, who belonged to the one of the "band of fire" groups affiliated with Fatah's al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades in Jenin (Ma'an, al-Risalah Twitter account, March 1, 2022).



Shadi Najem (Twitter account of journalist Hassan Aslih, March 1 2022)

► At the weekly PA government meeting, **Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh** condemned the killing of the two and offered his condolences to the families (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, March 1, 2022). Hamas also posted its condolences, while noting that the detentions and "murders" carried out by Israel would only strengthen the adherence of the Palestinian people to the general "resistance" (Hamas website, March 1, 2022).

► In the **Halhul region near Hebron** IDF forces identified three Palestinians throwing Molotov cocktails at Israeli vehicles. They shot and wounded one of the three, who received medical care and was transferred to a hospital (IDF spokesman, February 28, 2022).

►During an Israeli security force activity to detain a wanted Palestinian in the east Jerusalem neighborhood of **Abu Dis** riots broke out. Palestinians threw rocks at the fighters and an IED, which hit and damaged an armored vehicle. As the vehicle was being removed Palestinians threw rocks and IEDs, injuring four Border Police fighters (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, February 25, 2022).

►On **February 22, 2022**, during an IDF activity near **al-Khader, west of Bethlehem**, the fighters identified three suspicious Palestinians who arrived at a location where recently Molotov cocktails had been thrown at Israeli vehicles several times. As one of the Palestinian was throwing a Molotov cocktail the fighters shot and wounded him. He received medical care but later died (IDF spokesman, February 22, 2022).

►The Palestinian ministry of health in Ramallah reported the death of **Muhammad Rizaq Shehadeh Salah**, 14, who was mortally wounded while rioting against Israeli security forces and later died. Following his death Palestinians rioted, attacking IDF forces. A general strike was called in Bethlehem, and a military-style funeral was held for him on February 23, 2022).

►Following his death several strongly-worded condemnations of Israel were issued alleging a "cold-blooded murder." **Fatah spokesman Usama al-Qawasmeh** claimed the Palestinians were discussing the issue with all the countries in the world so that Israel would pay for its "crimes" (Sawa, February 24, 2022).



Right: Muhammad Rizaq Shehadeh Salah (al-Risalah Twitter account, February 23, 2022). Left: The military-style funeral held for him (Ma'an, February 23, 2022).



Right: General strike in Bethlehem (Shehab Twitter account, February 23, 2022). Left: Palestinians throw Molotov cocktails at Beitar Illit in the wake of the event (Shehab Twitter account, February 22, 2022).

► On **February 25, 2022**, IDF forces operating on the **Jordanian border** identified two suspicious vehicles near the border fence. The vehicles were halted and found to be carrying 12 Kalashnikov assault rifles, magazines and ammunition (IDF spokesman, February 25, 2022). Note: During a joint activity of IDF forces and police from the Jerusalem district the smuggling of 25 hand guns was prevented.



Weapons seized (IDF Twitter account, February 25, 2022)

Rocks, Molotov cocktails and other events

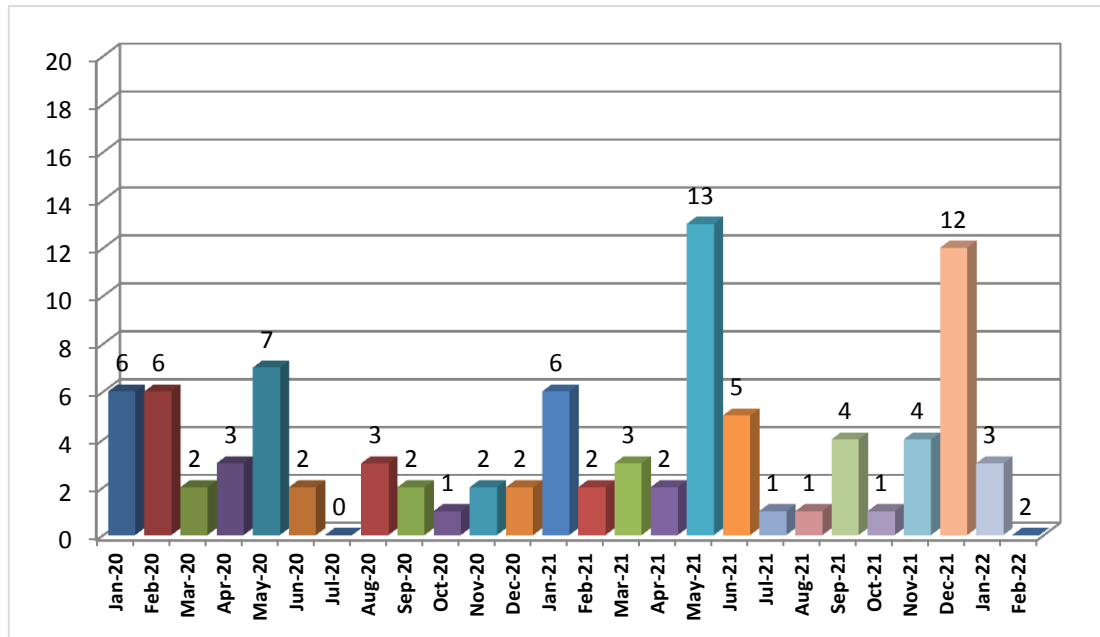
► In Judea and Samaria Palestinians continued throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails at Israeli vehicles driving on the roads, IDF posts and the fences of Israeli communities. On **February 24, 2022**, an IED was thrown from a passing car at an IDF force near the **Jalameh Crossing**, near Jenin. The force shot and hit the vehicle. No Israeli casualties were reported. On **February 28, 2022**, a woman was wounded when Palestinians threw rocks in the **Luban al-Sharqia** area. Other prominent events were the following:¹

¹ All information, pictures and reports are from Rescue Without Borders in Judea and Samaria unless otherwise noted.

- ◆ **March 1, 2022:** Molotov cocktails were thrown at an IDF post near the fence of Psagot, east of Ramallah. No casualties were reported.
- ◆ **February 28, 2022:** Rocks and a Molotov cocktail were thrown at an Israeli bus near Efrat, between Bethlehem and Hebron. No casualties were reported.
- ◆ **February 28, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus near the al-Aroub refugee camp north of Hebron. No casualties were reported; the bus was damaged.
- ◆ **February 28, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near the Ma'aleh Amos Junction, northeast of Hebron. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **February 28, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus near Luban al-Sharqia, south of Nablus. No casualties were reported; the bus was damaged.
- ◆ **February 27, 2022:** A Molotov cocktail was thrown at an open area between Beit Fajjar and Migdal Oz, south of Bethlehem. No casualties were reported.
- ◆ **February 27, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near al-Fawwar, southwest of Hebron. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **February 27, 2022:** Molotov cocktails were thrown at an Israeli bus and vehicles near Givat Assaf, east of Ramallah. No casualties were reported.
- ◆ **February 27, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle in Hawwara near Einabus Square, south of Nablus. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **February 27, 2022:** Molotov cocktails were thrown at the fence of the settlement of Beit El, east of al-Bireh. No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **February 27, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at two Israeli buses on the Gush Etzion-Hebron road, near Bayt Ummar. No casualties were reported; the buses were damaged.
- ◆ **February 27, 2022:** A Molotov cocktail was thrown at an Israeli vehicle near the Abud bypass junction. No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **February 27, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Deir Abu Mishal, west of Ramallah, and an IED hidden in a burning tire exploded. No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **February 25, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near the Karnei Shomron Junction, east of Qalqilya. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.

- ◆ **February 25, 2022:** A bottle of paint was thrown from a passing car at an IDF post near the Halhul Bridge, north of Hebron. No casualties were reported; the post was damaged.
- ◆ **February 24, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus at the Zif Junction in Hebron. No casualties were reported; the bus was damaged.
- ◆ **February 24, 2022:** Rocks and Molotov cocktails were thrown at an Israeli bus near Ofra, northeast of Ramallah. No casualties were reported; the bus was damaged.
- ◆ **February 24, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus at the Zif Junction in Hebron. No casualties were reported; the bus was damaged.
- ◆ **February 24, 2022:** A Molotov cocktail was thrown at an Israeli vehicle on the Jerusalem-Gush Etzion road near al-Khader. No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **February 24, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle in Tuku', south of Bethlehem. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **February 23, 2022:** Molotov cocktails were thrown at an IDF post near Karmeit Zzur, north of Hebron. No casualties or damage were reported. IDF forces pursued the terrorists.
- ◆ **February 23, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Tekoa, south of Bethlehem. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **February 22, 2022:** A Molotov cocktail and a bottle of paint were thrown at an Israeli bus near the settlement of Neguhot, southwest of Hebron. No casualties were reported; the bus was damaged.
- ◆ **February 22, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus north of Sa'ir, north of Hebron. No casualties were reported; the windshield of the bus was damaged.

Significant Terrorist Attacks in Judea and Samaria since January 2020



Palestinians riot during events marking the night ride of Muhammad

► On the night of **February 27, 2022**, according to Arabic tradition, the Palestinians marked the night ride of Muhammad from Mecca to al-Aqsa mosque and his ascension to heaven (*al-isra wal-miraj*). The PA declared February 28, 2022 a holiday. On the morning of February 28, 2022, a mass prayer was held on the Temple Mount (Wafa, February 27 and 28, 2022). In the afternoon a mass event was held near the Damascus Gate, after which riots developed and Palestinians threw rocks and Molotov cocktails at Israeli police forces. Four policemen were injured; dozens of Palestinians were detained.

² 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



Right: Mass prayer on the Temple Mount. Left: A crowd gathers near the Damascus Gate (Shehab Twitter account, February 28, 2022)

Day of rage declared

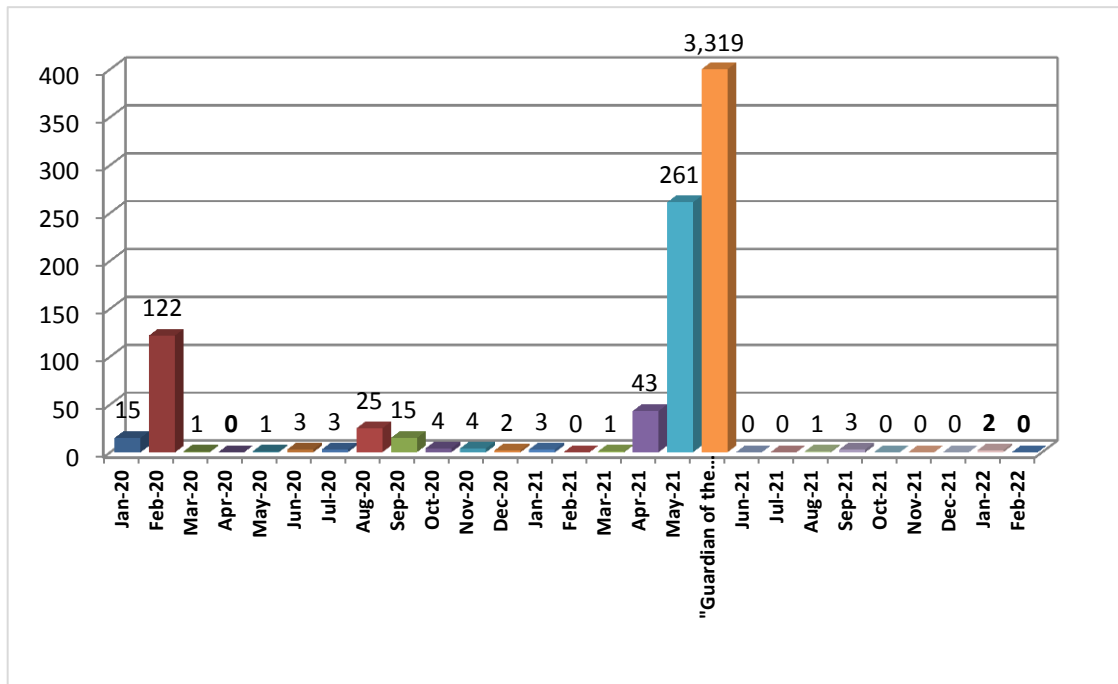
►The prisoners and national and Islamic forces' institutions in the Ramallah region declared Tuesday, March 1, 2022 as a day of rage in support of the Palestinians imprisoned in Israeli jails. They called on the Palestinian public in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip to join. The day of rage was accompanied by a one-day hunger strike of Palestinian prisoners (Filastin al-Yawm, February 24, 2022). Following the events in Judea and Samaria, **Fatah spokesman Usama al-Qawasmeh** called on the Palestinian public to join the day of rage protest. Hamas called for the day of rage to be turned into an intifada and an uprising in Judea and Samaria for the sake of the prisoners and holy sites (Hamas Telegram channel, March 1, 2022).

Israel's South

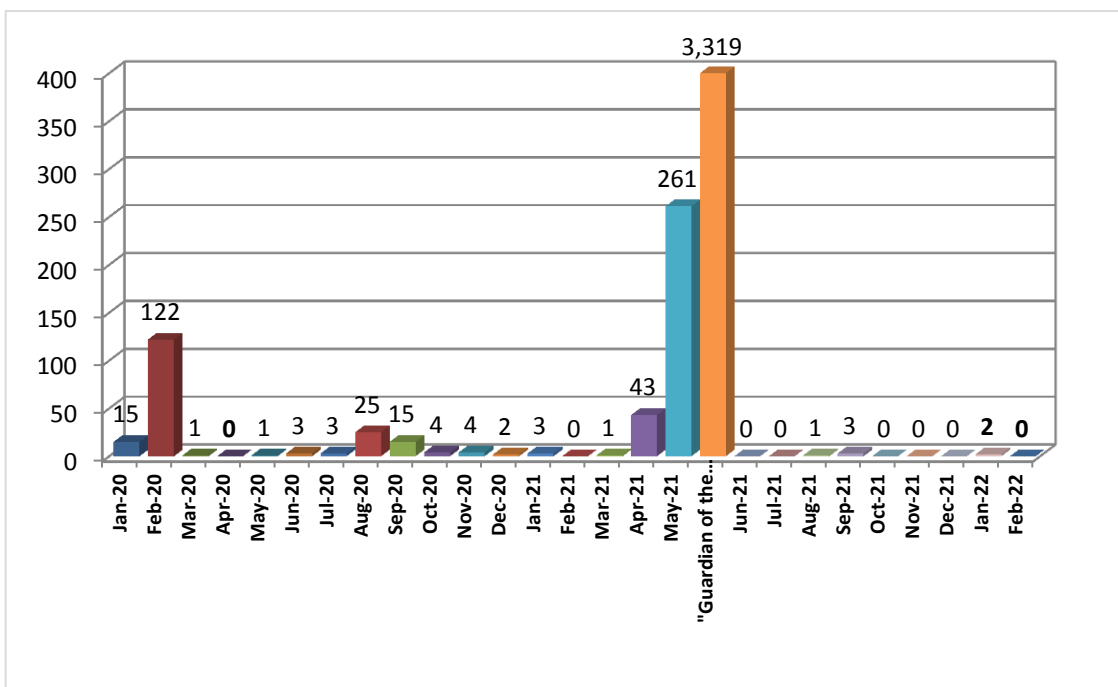
Rocket and mortar shell fire into Israel

►This past week no rocket or mortar shell hits were identified in Israeli territory.

Monthly Distribution of Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire since January 2020



Annual Distribution of Rocket Hits



Seizure of digital currency donations for Hamas

► **Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz** signed an order seizing tens of thousands of dollars worth of digital currency from 12 accounts, including about 30 digital wallets, of businesses supporting the al-Mutahidun money-changing company, owned by the Shamlakh family in the Gaza Strip. Some of the funds belonged directly to the family, which, along with its money-changing companies, supports Hamas, especially its military terrorist wing, transferring tens of millions of dollars to it every year. The order designated the business as a terrorist organization (the Israeli National Headquarters for Economic Warfare against Terrorism, February 28, 2022). The defense ministry reported it was the third time Israel prevented digital currency from being transferred to Hamas.

Developments in the Gaza Strip

Hamas delegation to Lebanon

► This past week a delegation of senior Hamas figures led by **Saleh al-'Arouri, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau**, and including **Khalil al-Haya, a senior Hamas figure** in the Gaza Strip and a member of Hamas' political bureau, visited Lebanon and met with **Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah**. They discussed recent developments in the Palestinian arena, especially events in Sheikh Jarrah and other east Jerusalem neighborhoods (Radio Nur, February 26, 2022). The delegation also met with **PIJ leader Ziyad al-Nakhalah**, and expressed support for the residents of Sheikh Jarrah and the measures taken by Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. They warned Israel not to be aggressive towards them (Dunia al-Watan, February 25, 2022).



Saleh al-'Arouri meets with Hassan Nasrallah (Hamas website, February 26, 2022)

Condemnation of French prime minister's declaration regarding Jerusalem

► **French Prime Minister Jean Castex** gave a speech to representatives of the CRIF, an umbrella organization representing the interests of French Jews. Representing **French President Emanuel Macron**, he said Jerusalem was the eternal capital of the Jewish people, but that did not prevent other religions in the city from being recognized and respected (Jerusalem Post, February 28, 2022). **Hamas** condemned the declaration, claiming such a statement expressed the adoption of a racist agenda and colonial policy against the Palestinian people and was contrary to the position of the EU, to which France belonged (Hamas Telegram channel, February 26, 2022). The **PIJ** condemned the declaration and warned the French authorities of the consequences of such a statement (PIJ information bureau, February 26, 2022).

Ziyad al-Nakhalah gives speech

► **PIJ leader Ziyad al-Nakhalah** gave a speech to mark the date of Muhammad's night ride. He said that while Israel ("the Zionist enemy") had all sorts of weapons it was weaker now than ever. He claimed that Israel, which in the past had invaded Lebanon and the Gaza Strip, had now withdrawn and built a fence to protect itself (PIJ Telegram channel, February 28, 2022).

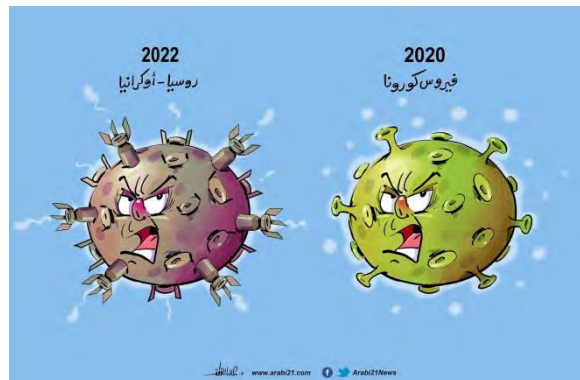
The Palestinian Authority (PA)

The PA relates to the Russian invasion of Ukraine

► Most official Palestinian sources did not publicly relate to or take a stand on the Russian invasion of Ukraine, although the Palestinian media have given it extensive coverage. When the invasion began the Palestinian foreign ministry warned Israel not to exploit the international situation to escalate its "aggression and crimes" against the Palestinian people and expand the settlements, especially in Sheikh Jarrah (Wafa, February 23, 2022).

► At the PA weekly government meeting, **Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh** said they were monitoring the situation of the Palestinians in Ukraine and cooperating with friendly European countries to reach them (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, March 1, 2022). He also spoke on the phone with **Hashem al-Dajani, the Palestinian representative** in Ukraine, and asked about the approximately 2,500 Palestinians living there. He said the PA

was prepared to help them in any way necessary (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, February 25, 2022).



**Public discourse now focuses on the war in Ukraine rather than the coronavirus
(Alaa' al-Laqta's Facebook page, February 27, 2022)**

►Regarding Hamas' reaction, the media reported **Khaled Mashaal, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, as calling on Putin to stop the invasion, stop killing civilians and withdraw his forces. **Hashem Qassem, a senior figure in Hamas "abroad,"** denied the reports, claiming Khaled Mashaal had not issued any statements to any media outlet regarding the crisis in Ukraine (Hamas website, February 26, 2022).

►**Musa Abu Marzouq, a member of the Hamas political bureau**, who was one of the few who did relate to the issue, exploited the situation to criticize the United States. He claimed the events indicated the end of the United States' global hegemony because it was unable to reach a decision regarding fighting against Russia. He claimed the United States would no longer be in charge of global politics, and that raised questions about Israel's future (Sabaq24, February 26, 2022).

►Reactions from **Hamas-affiliated commentators** reflected their confusion. Some sided with Putin, such as **Fayiz Abu Shamala**, who asked Allah to grant a Putin a decisive victory and encourage him to invade other European countries (Fayiz Abu Shamala's Twitter account, March 1, 2022). Others praised Ukrainian President Zelensky, such as **Dr. Saleh al-Na'ami**, who wrote that Zelensky deserved to be admired for choosing to stand with his people against Putin's barbaric aggression (Dr. Saleh al-Na'ami's Twitter account, March 1, 2022). Palestinian media op-ed pieces expressed satisfaction that the weakness of the United States would lead to weakening Israel on the one hand, and concern that Jewish Ukrainian immigrants would be settled in Judea and Samaria on the other.

Meeting with the Egyptian foreign minister

► **Azzam al-Ahmed**, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, met with **Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry**. They discussed the "activities of Israel and the settlers" against the Palestinian people and the demolishing of houses in Jerusalem, especially in Sheikh Jarrah (Sabaq24, February 23, 2022).

Hussein al-Sheikh's political activities

► Ever since **Hussein al-Sheikh** was appointed to the PLO's Executive Committee he has been increasingly involved in politics: on **February 26, 2022**, he met with a delegation of Palestinian activists from east Jerusalem. They discussed Israel's activities and ways of helping the residents of east Jerusalem (Hussein al-Sheikh's Twitter account, February 26, 2022). On **February 23, 2022**, he met with the regional Fatah secretaries to update them on recent developments. He said they also discussed other matters, but did not reveal them (Hussein al-Sheikh's Twitter account, February 23, 2022).



Right: Hussein al-Sheikh meets with a delegation of Palestinian activists from east Jerusalem.
Left: Hussein al-Sheikh meets with regional Fatah secretaries
(Twitter account of journalist Hassan Aslih, February 26, 2022).

Muhammad Shtayyeh blames Israel for the PA's financial crisis

► In a video conference with the International Monetary Fund representative in the PA, **PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh** again claimed Israel was the primary cause of the PA's financial crisis. He claimed the difficult financial situation the PA had to cope with, was the result of Israel's ongoing withholding of funds from the Palestinians and preventing them from exploiting Area C. He claimed Israel also raised obstacles to the transportation of goods and the movement of civilians. He called on the International Monetary Fund to exert

pressure on Israel to release the funds it held so the PA could meet its commitments to the Palestinian people (Wafa, February 28, 2022).

►It was not the first time Muhammad Shtayyeh blamed Israel for direct responsibility for the PA's financial crisis, while completely ignoring the PA's stubbornness to continue paying stipends to prisoners, released prisoners and the families of shaheeds [the reason Israel deducts funds from the taxes it collects for the PA and the loads Israel transfers to it] as well as public claims of the leadership's corruption. In recent months the PA was publicly criticized for delaying the construction of an oncological hospital in Ramallah. According to public claims, the enormous sums of money donated abroad for its construction disappeared and senior PA figures were accused of responsibility for the money's disappearance. To reduce the level of criticism the PA appointed a committee to investigate. The committee found a number of reasons for the delay and "denied" claims of financial corruption.

Qatar refuses to cancel program on al-Jazeera about the killing of Nizar Banat

►**Qatar** rejected the PA's request to delay the airing of a program on al-Jazeera TV about Nizar Banat, who was killed in 2021 while being detained by the Palestinian security forces. The government of Qatar explained its refusal by saying it did not intervene in the al-Jazeera TV's programming decisions (Dar al-Hayat, February 22, 2022).

Senior PIJ figure shot at in Nablus

►On February 26, 2022, shots were fired at **senior PIJ figure Khader Adnan**, a released prisoner, in Nablus. He was on his way to pay a condolence call to the families of slain al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades operatives.³ He was unharmed, but his escort was wounded. Palestinian sources accused Israel of shooting at him. **Hamas'** department of national relations in the West Bank called it a "crime that needs to be strongly condemned." **Ziyad al-Nakhalah** called the incident a "crime" for which Israel intelligence was responsible. The PIJ said in an announcement that it regarded the attack as an attack against the organization and its operatives and would respond accordingly (PIJ Twitter account, February 26, 2022).

³ On **February 8, 2022**, the Israeli security forces killed three Palestinians, operatives of an al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades terrorist squad in Nablus, who were responsible for a series of shooting attacks against IDF forces and Israeli civilians.

The Coronavirus

Judea and Samaria

▶According to data from the ministry of health in Ramallah, on **February 28, 2022**, there was a decrease in the number of active cases, 3,473, down from 5,764 on February 21, 2022. Of the 4,227 tests administered during the 24 hours between February 27 and 28, 199 new cases were detected, a 5% positive rate. There were 90 Palestinians in ICUs, 31 of them on ventilators. So far 3,319 Palestinians have died of coronavirus-related causes (ministry of health in Ramallah Facebook page, February 28, 2022).

The Gaza Strip

▶On **March 1, 2022**, the ministry of health in Gaza reported 11,031 active cases in the Gaza Strip, down from 23,642 on February 22, 2022. Of the 544 tests administered during the 24 hours between February 28 and March 1, 2022, 1887 new cases were detected, a 29% positive rate. So far 1,916 Gazans have died of coronavirus-related causes, up from 1,888 on February 22, 2022. There are 116 hospitalized Gazans, 75 in serious or critical condition. So far 657,1151 Gazans have been vaccinated, up from 634,821 on February 22, 2022 (Ma'an, March 1, 2022).