



Spotlight on Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(May 3 – 9, 2023)

Overview

- ▶ This past week there was a stabbing attack near Hawwara (south of Nablus) in which an IDF soldier was wounded. Two other stabbing attacks, one near Hawwara and the other in the Old City of Jerusalem, were prevented. Israeli security forces' counterterrorism activities focused on Nablus and Tulkarm, where five terrorists who had been involved in critical attacks were killed. IDF forces demolished the houses of two Palestinian terrorists near Salfit and Qalqilya. Since the death of Khader Adnan in an Israeli jail the Palestinians, especially the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), have been trying to have his body returned to the Palestinian Authority (PA) for burial. In the meantime, the PA's security services have been working to enforce the rule of law, detaining PIJ terrorist operatives.
- ▶ In the early morning hours of May 9, 2023, Israel began Operation Shield and Arrow¹ with the targeted killing of three senior PIJ terrorist operatives in the Gaza Strip. In response to Khader Adnan's death, 79 rockets were fired at Israel, 65 falling inside Israel and 14 inside the Gaza Strip. The smuggling of loaded handguns and ammunition was prevented at the Kerem Shalom Crossing; the contraband was hidden inside a shipment of furniture for Judea and Samaria. **Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi** met with members of the leaderships of the various Palestinian terrorist organizations during a visit to Damascus and expressed Iran's support for their "struggle" against Israel.
- ▶ On May 3, 2023, a meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) of the countries which donate to the PA was held in Brussels. The PA treasury minister discussed the PA's budget deficit and called for the international community to exert pressure on Israel to stop it from deducting money from the tax funds it collects for the PA. In the meantime, the PA prime minister displayed data reflecting an improvement in the Palestinian economy, a decline in unemployment and a rise in income.

¹ Separate report.

Terrorist Attacks

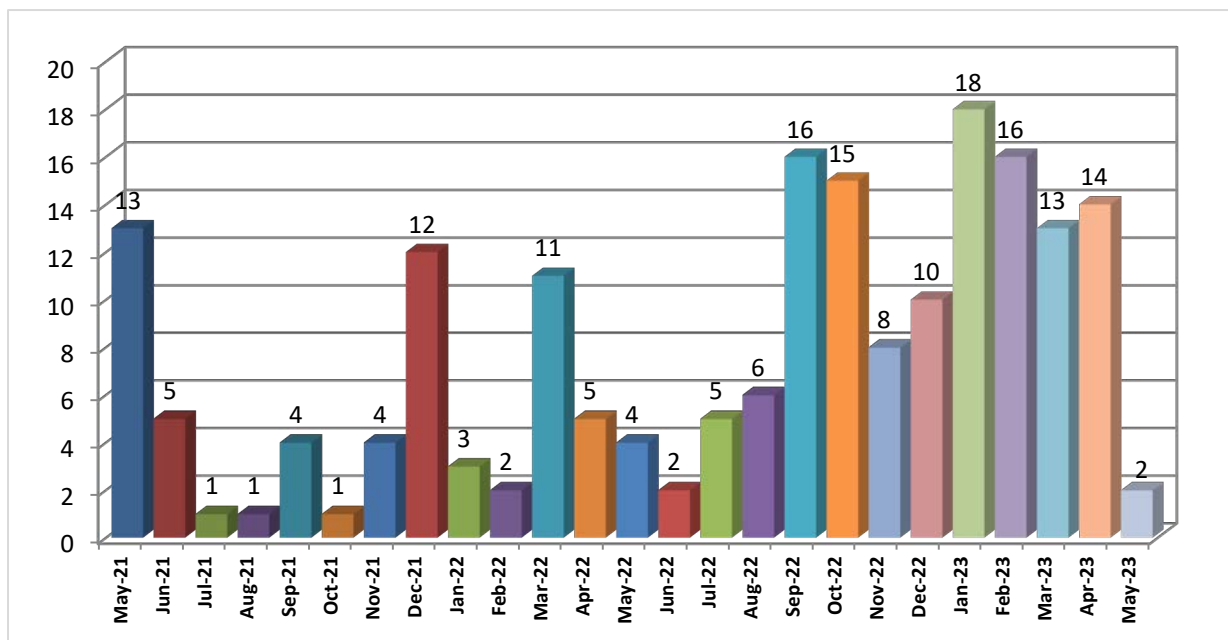
Stabbing attack in Hawwara

► On the morning of May 4, 2023, a Palestinian woman used a knife to stab an IDF soldier. The attack took place at the Einabus roadblock to the south of Hawwara (south of Nablus). IDF soldiers at the site shot and wounded her; she was evacuated to a hospital in Nablus for medical treatment; she was declared dead on arrival (IDF spokesman's Twitter account and Israeli media, May 4, 2023). The Palestinian media reported she was **Iman Ziyad Ahmed Awda, 26 years old, from Hawwara** (Wafa, May 4, 2023).



The knife used in the attack (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, May 4, 2023).

Critical Terrorist Attacks in Judea and Samaria since May 2021²



² A critical 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.

Judea and Samaria

Stabbing attack prevented in Hawwara

► On May 8, 2023, Border Police fighters near Hawwara detained a suspicious Palestinian. He was found to have two concealed knives and a letter to his parents asking for forgiveness and promising them they would receive large sums of money for his future actions. The 21-year-old suspect, a resident of the village of Arraba (southwest of Jenin), was taken for interrogation (Israeli media, May 8, 2023).

Stabbing attack prevented in the Old City of Jerusalem

► On May 8, 2023, Border Police fighters in the Old City of Jerusalem detained a suspect who had concealed a pair of scissor in his clothing and said he planned to carry out a stabbing attack. He was taken for interrogation (Israeli media, May 8, 2023).

Counterterrorism Activities

► This past week the Israeli security forces continued intensive counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria, detaining Palestinians suspected of involvement in terrorism and confiscating large quantities of weapons. Activities focused on Tulkarm and Nablus:

Activity in the Nur Shams refugee camp

► On the morning of May 6, 2023, Israeli security forces operated in the Nur Shams refugee camp (east of Tulkarm) to detain the terrorists who carried out the shooting attack at Avnei Hefetz on May 2, 2023, in which an Israeli civilian was wounded. During the activity the terrorists attempted to flee the house they were hiding in and were killed in an exchange of fire with Israeli security forces. Two other Palestinians were detained on suspicion of involvement in the shooting attack. An m-16 assault rifle, military vests and ammunition magazines were found in the hideout (Israeli media, May 6, 2023).



Right: Weapons found in the terrorists' hideout (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, May 6, 2023).

Left: An armed terrorist tries to escape (Israel Police Force Facebook page, May 6, 2023).

► The ministry of health in Ramallah reported the deaths of **Hamza Jamil Kharyoush, and Samer Salah al-Shaf'i, both 22 years old**. Also reported were the detentions of Muhammad Balidi, 23 years old, and Ibrahim Shalash, 20 years old (Wafa, May 6, 2023).

► **The al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades (AAMB)** issued a mourning notice claiming the two as AAMB operatives in Tulkarm. According to the notice, they carried out the shooting attack near Avnei Hefetz on May 2, 2023, in response to the death of Khader Adnan (AAMB Telegram channel, May 6, 2023). The AAMB's Tulkarm Battalion rapid response network issued a mourning notice claiming the two as operatives, calling Kharyoush the "Battalion lion" and responsible for the "revenge action" at Avnei Hefetz, and elaborating on terrorist attacks he and al-Shaf'i had carried out (Tulkarm Battalion – rapid response Telegram channel, May 6, 2023). They included:

- ◆ At attack on Avnei Hefetz at 1:50 a.m. on April 21, 2023.
- ◆ Shooting a hand gun at an Israeli soldier while driving through an IDF roadblock without stopping on April 30 2023. According to reports, they abandoned the vehicle in which a picture of Amir Abu Khadija was found (the network commander, who died in an Israeli security force targeted killing on March 23, 2023), along with a threat to avenge his death.
- ◆ Shooting at three Israeli vehicles on the Avnei Hefetz road on May 2, 2023.

► **Hamas** also issued a mourning notice **claiming the two as operatives of the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military-terrorist wing**. According to the notice, they were killed during an armed confrontation with "a Zionist force which invaded the Tulkarm refugee camp." "The blood of the shaheeds," continued the notice, "which was spilled on the ground of Tulkarm, will fuel the revolution against Israel" (Hamas website, May 6, 2023). **Their bodies**

were wrapped in Hamas flags for burial, and Hamas flags were carried during the funeral (QudsN Twitter account, May 6, 2023).



Right: and center, Tulkarm Battalion mourning notices for al-Shaf'i (right) and Kharyoush (left) (Tulkarm Battalion rapid response Telegram channel, May 6, 2023). Left: Hamas mourning notice (Hamas Telegram channel, May 6, 2023).



The funeral held for the two terrorists, their bodies wrapped in Hamas flags. Armed Palestinians and Hamas flags were in evidence (Right: QudsN Twitter account, May 6, 2023. Left: al-Fajr TV from Tulkarm YouTube channel, May 6, 2023).

- ▶ **PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh** claimed the "occupation regime" was fully responsible for their deaths ("the terrible crimes") and that Israel continued its "crimes" because there were no uniform international standards and Israel sensed it was immune to punishment (PA government spokesman Ibrahim Melhem's Facebook page, May 6, 2023).
- ▶ **Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem** claimed the "crime" in Tulkarm would not go without a Palestinian response and they would continue the battle to "defend" the holy places and "fight for their freedom." He claimed the deaths would not stop the "rising revolution" but instead would fuel it (Hamas website, May 6, 2023). The PIJ in Judea and Samaria said in a statement that the blood of those killed would "ignite greater revenge against the enemy and its terrorist government" (PIJ website, May 6, 2023).

Activity in Nablus

- ▶ On the morning of May 4, 2023, Israeli security forces operated in Nablus to detain Palestinians suspected of terrorist activity. The forces raided a hideout in the Old City and in a short firefight killed two Palestinians hiding there. The two had carried out the shooting attack at the Hamra Junction on April 7, 2023, killing an Israeli mother and her two daughters. A Palestinian who helped them hide was also killed. Two M-16 assault rifles and a Kalashnikov were found in the hideout (Israeli media, May 4, 2023).
- ▶ The Lion's Den network, the Nablus Battalion of the PIJ's military-terrorist wing and the AAMB all issued mourning notices, reporting they had revealed the presence of Israeli security forces as they entered the al-Yasmina neighborhood of the Old City of Nablus and that their operatives had clashed with the forces (Lion's Den, Nablus Battalion and AAMB Telegram channels, May 4, 2023)



Smoke rising from the area of the IDF activity in the Old City of Nablus (Wafa, May 4,2023).

- ▶ The ministry of health in Ramallah reported the deaths of three Palestinians (Wafa, May 4, 2023). They were known Hamas terrorist operatives from the Askar refugee camp in the eastern part of Nablus. According to relatives, they were good friends and had grown up together and studied the Qur'an together at the Musab bin Amir mosque in the refugee camp. They also taught the young Palestinians from the camp at the mosque. They joined Hamas in their youth, after which they were often detained and summoned for interrogation by the PA security services (Islamic Bloc in Judea and Samaria website, May 4, 2023).
- ▶ Addition biographical information:
 - ◆ **Mu'ad Sa'ad Nabih Masri, 35 (or 36) years old**, married, second born of five brothers. His brother is journalist and political commentator Amer al-Masri. He was detained in Israel for several months. He studied at al-Najah University, receiving a BA in physical

education, and was an activist in Hamas' student cell. He taught Qur'an classes to children at the mosque in the Askar refugee camp.

◆ Hassan Suleiman Hassan Qutnani, 35 years old, married and father of two. He was a released prisoner who spent two and a half years in Israeli and PA jails. He studied at al-Najah University but did not get a degree. During his studies he was an activist in Hamas' student cell. His sister is married to Husam Badran, a member of Hamas' political bureau, and he was a cousin of Uthman Qutnani, a journalist who was killed in a 2001 Israeli attack in which Hamas leaders Jamal Mansour and Jamal Salim were also killed. A relative, Ashriqat Qutnani, stabbed IDF soldiers at a Hawwara roadblock several years ago, and all his brothers and cousins have been detained by Israel.

◆ Ibrahim Ahmed Muhammad Jabarin (also appearing in the media as Ibrahim Ahmed Jabr), 47 (or 45) years old, was a cancer patient and confined to his bed. He lived alone in his parents' house after they died. According to the Lion's Den announcement he was one of their activists and provided shelter for their operatives (Lion's Den Telegram channel, May 4, 2023; Nidal Ahmed's Facebook page, May 4, 2023). Fatah-affiliated websites claimed him as a Fatah operative (@fateh_pal65 Twitter account, which represents itself as Fatah's official Twitter account; PNN, May 4, 2023).

► Hamas' military-terrorist wing said in a statement that the three had carried out the shooting attack at the Hamra Junction in the Jordan Valley on April 7, 2023, as a swift response to the "aggression" against worshippers in al-Aqsa mosque (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website, April 7, 2023).



Notice from Hamas' military-terrorist wing. Right to left, Hassan Qutnani, Mu'ad al-Masri and Ibrahim Jabr, "The heroes of the 'valley action' carried out in response to the aggression against the worshippers and dragging women out of al-Aqsa mosque during Ramadan" (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades Telegram channel, May 4, 2023).



Right: The body of Hassan Qutnani wrapped for burial in Hamas and Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades flags. Left: The body of Mu'ad al-Masri, wrapped for burial in the Hamas flag and with an Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades headband ("Palestine" Post Twitter account, May 4, 2023).

► **Ibrahim Ramadan, the governor of the Nablus district**, was quoted by the Israeli media and the social networks as saying that killing them was the "natural result of their refusal to obey the Palestinian security services and hand over their weapons to the PA." He said that several weeks ago Palestinian preventive security had tried to convince them to surrender and hand over their weapons, but they refused (Ynet and the Twitter account of Dr. Hazifa Abdallah Azzam, May 4, 2023). Later, Ramadan's office denied he had made the statement (Facebook page of the Kashef Center for the Struggle against Misleading Information in the Palestinian Media, May 4, 2023).

► The activity in Nablus led to condemnations in the Palestinian media and threats against Israel:

◆ **Nabil Abu Rudeineh, spokesman for Mahmoud Abbas**, condemned the ongoing "invasion of Palestinian cities" and the daily killing of Palestinians, the most recent of which was in the Old City in Nablus. He warned that Israel's "escalation" against the Palestinians, their lands and holy places, would "detonate" the situation in the Middle East and bring it to a pitch which would be difficult to control. He claimed the government of Israel was fully responsible for the "policy of escalation" (Wafa, May 4, 2023).

◆ **PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh** condemned the "aggression" in the Old City of Nablus and blamed the government of Israel. He demanded the international community stop using a double standard and demand accountability from Israel for "its terrible crimes" against the Palestinians (Wafa, May 4, 2023). He posted his condolences for those killed and their pictures to his Facebook page (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, May 4, 2023).

- ◆ **Hamas** said in a statement that it was committed to the "path of jihad and resistance" [anti-Israeli terrorism] to "defend" Jerusalem and al-Aqsa mosque until the "liberation of 'Palestine' " and the full restoration of the Palestinians' "national" rights (Hamas website, May 4, 2023). **Izzat al-Rishq, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, called on "the forces of the Palestinian resistance inside and outside 'Palestine' " to escalate the response to the "occupation" and make it pay for its crimes (headquarters, May 4, 2023).
- ◆ **The PIJ in Judea and Samaria** said in a statement that "the crime of assassination" would "strengthen the 'resistance' " (PIJ website, May 4, 2023).



Operatives of the PA security services and members of the Fatah branch in Nablus offer their condolences (PA security services Telegram channel, May 4, 2023).

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) terrorist attacks prevented

- ▶ The Israeli security forces recently exposed a PFLP terrorist network in the Bethlehem region which carried out the IED attack in a bus in Beitar Illit on March 9, 2023, and planned additional attacks. Six PFLP terrorist operatives were detained in the Dheisheh refugee camp, Batir and Bayt Jala in the Bethlehem region, along with operatives of a PFLP student cell. Also detained was the female Israeli resident who drove the terrorist to Israel on the day of the attack. During interrogation it became clear that she was not aware of his intentions, and she was charged with driving a Palestinian into Israeli territory who did not have permission to enter.
- ▶ The interrogation of the six revealed their involvement in the IED attack in the bus in Beitar Illit, including making preparations and assigning roles such as recruiting the terrorist who would carry out the attack, renting hideouts (one of which was used as an explosives laboratory), manufacturing the explosives for the IEDs and acquiring a getaway vehicle. Some of the members planned other attacks on behalf of the PFLP.

► Following the interrogations and the gathering of intelligence, an extensive PFLP terrorist network was exposed which was directed by members of the organization's leadership imprisoned in Israeli jails and the PFLP leaderships in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon. A high-ranking figure in Lebanon was directly responsible for handling the squad which carried out the attack in Beitar Illit and other squads in Judea and Samaria.

► The network recruited operatives throughout Judea and Samaria and planned to carry out attacks in the immediate future under the direction and with the support of the organization leadership. The recruits were asked to enlist their friends, acquire weapons, manufacture IEDs and carry out shooting and IED attacks in Judea, Samaria and inside Israel (Israeli Security Agency media information unit, May 8 2023).

Demolishing the houses of terrorists in Salfit and Qalqilya

► Before dawn on May 3, 2023, Israeli security forces demolished the house of **Muhammad Suf³** in the village of Hares (northwest of Salfit). During the activity Palestinians threw rocks at the forces, who responded with riot dispersal measures (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, May 3, 2023).

► **Abdallah Kamil, the governor of the Salfit district**, who visited the Suf family, claimed demolishing the house was "a crime against humanity" and "collective punishment" in contravention of international law. He praised the "sacrifice and firm stance" of the village residents, saying that Mahmoud Abbas was monitoring the events and acting with various agencies to stop Israel's activities (Hares Facebook page, May 3, 2023).



**Right: The demolition of the terrorist's house (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, May 3, 2023).
Left: The governor of the Salfit district visits the family of Muhammad Suf (Hares Facebook page, May 3, 2023).**

On November 15, 2022, he carried out a combined stabbing and vehicular ramming attack in the Ariel³ industrial zone and on the cross-Samaria highway, murdering three Israelis and wounding four others.

► Before dawn on May 3, 2023, Israeli security forces operating in the village of Hajjah (east of Qalqilya) demolished the house of **Yunes Hilan**.⁴ Local Palestinians rioted and several suspects were detained (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, May 3, 2023). Several hours after the house had been demolished, concrete was poured for a new foundation.



Right: The ruins of the house. Left: The new foundation (QudsN Twitter account, May 3, 2023).

Reactions to Khader Adnan's death continue

► This past week reactions to the death of Palestinian prisoner Khader Adnan continued, with the PA trying to have his body returned to the family. On May 6, 2023, the PIJ in Judea and Samaria and the National Islamic Forces held a demonstration in front of Khader Adnan's house in Arraba, southwest of Jenin, to demand the return of his body and the bodies of 132 other Palestinians held by Israel. **Jaffar Izz al-Din, a released prisoner and PIJ leader in the Jenin district**, said it was necessary to act seriously, in every way and using all means, to have the bodies returned so they could be buried "in Palestine." Khader Adnan's wife also gave a speech (Wafa, May 6, 2023; Paltoday, May 7, 2023). Released prisoner Atef Alian⁵ declared she would be on a hunger strike in front of Red Cross headquarters in al-Bireh until Khader Adnan's body was returned (Paltoday, May 7, 2023).

► **Da'ud Shehab, member of the PIJ leadership**, related to the efforts to return Khader Adnan's body but refused to reveal the names of the mediators or agencies dealing with the matter. He denied the PIJ had sent an ultimatum to the Egyptian mediator with a time frame for the return of his body, after which "there would be a response" (Shehab, May 3, 2023).

⁴ On October 25, 2022, he stabbed an Israeli civilian to death in the village of Funduq.

⁵ She is a high-ranking PIJ operative who planned to carry out a suicide attack with a car bomb in Jerusalem in 1987. She spent ten years in an Israeli jail and was released in 1997.



Right: The demonstration in Arraba (Wafa, May 6, 2023). Left: Atef Alian on a hunger strike (Paltoday, May 7, 2023).

The PA works to impose the rule of law and detains terrorist operatives

► While the Israeli security forces carry out operations, the PA security services are making an effort to impose the rule of law on the cities in Judea and Samaria. To that end **Akram al-Rajoub, the governor of the Jenin district**, and the heads of the Palestinian security services in the Jenin district met with **Isma'il Jabr**, both Mahmoud Abbas' advisor for district matters and the aide to the commander of the Palestinian security services, and with other high-ranking members of the security services for a briefing on the general situation in the district, especially the security situation, and to learn firsthand about the security services' needs. Jabr said Mahmoud Abbas' instructions were to continue acting to ensure the safety and welfare of civilians wherever they lived (Akram al-Rajoub's Facebook page, May 6, 2023).



Isma'il Jabr meets with the governor of the Jenin district and the heads of the Palestinian security services (Akram al-Rajoub's Facebook page, May 6, 2023).

► The PIJ reported that the PA's security services continue harassing its operatives in Judea and Samaria, summoning and detaining them. The organization claimed the security services in the Ramallah district had detained three PIJ operatives in the Jilazoun refugee camp, one of whom, Omar Ghawanmeh, was the son of released prisoner Mahmoud Ghawanmeh Abu

Uthman, whose uncle, Muhammad Abd al-Fateh Ghawanmeh, was one of the PIJ's founders and leaders. In the Tulkarm district, Palestinian general intelligence detained released prisoner 'Aqab Zair 'Atili. The security services are also holding 16 year-old Abdallah Sabaa Ramadan, from the village of Tal in Nablus, in custody. He is the son of PIJ figure Sabaa Ramadan, who was one of Khader Adnan's entourage when he visited the families of shaheeds and prisoners in Nablus (Safa and the Daffa_media Telegram channel [the PIJ Telegram channel in Judea and Samaria], May 7, 2023).

Israel South

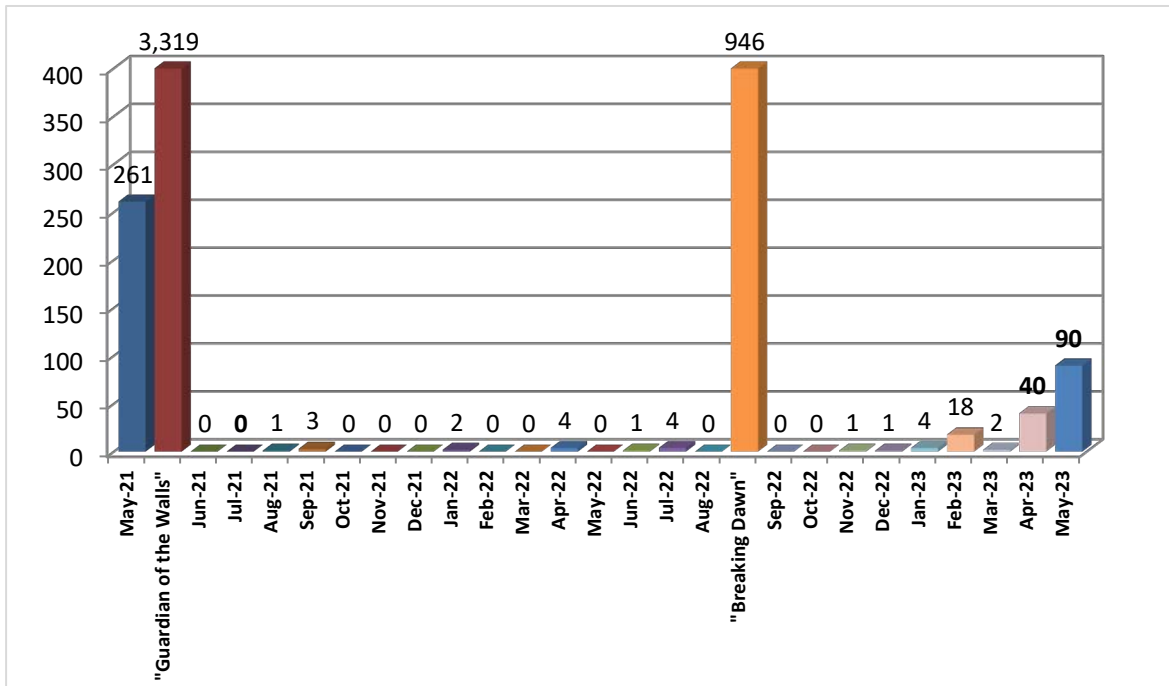
Rocket and mortar shell fire into Israel

► On May 2 and 3, 2023, 79 rockets were fired at Israel in reaction to the death of leading PIJ figure Khader Adnan, 65 of them falling in Israeli territory. The rocket fire ended two hours after a ceasefire was declared at 3:30 a.m. on May 3, 2023 (IDF spokesman, May 2 and 3, 2023). A 58 year-old Palestinian from the northern Gaza Strip was killed in one of the attacks. Over the week a total of 104 rockets were fired, 90 of them falling in Israeli territory and 14 in the Gaza Strip.

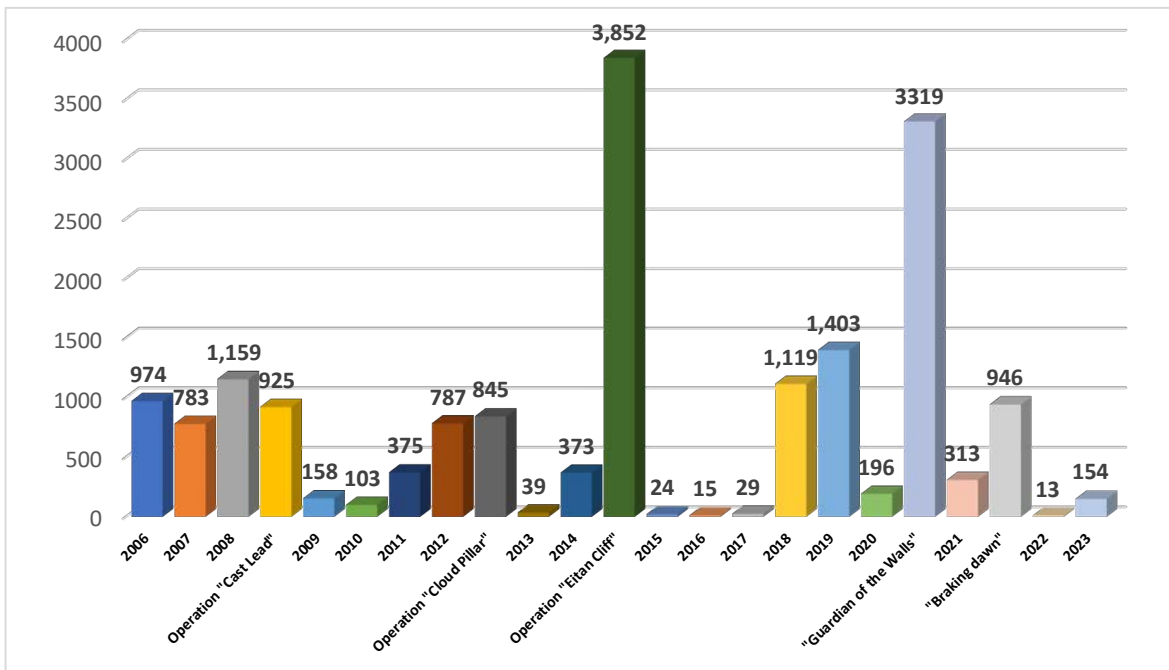


A rocket hit in the southern Israeli city of Sderot (Twitter account of photojournalist Hassan Aslih, May 2, 2023). Left: Israeli Air Force attack in the Gaza Strip (QudsN Twitter account, May 2, 2023).

Monthly Distribution of Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire since May 2021



Annual Distribution of Rocket Hits since 2006



Arms smuggling prevented

► On May 3, 2023, an examination at the Kerem Shalom Crossing of a shipment of furniture from the Gaza Strip for Judea and Samaria found handguns, loaded ammunition magazines, bullets and silencers. The weapons were suspected of being consigned to terrorists in Judea and

Samaria. They were confiscated and further investigation into the affair was transferred to Israeli security (Israeli defense ministry media information unit, May 3, 2023).



The weapons hidden in furniture (Israeli defense ministry media information unit, May 3, 2023).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

Jabr Amer returns to the Gaza Strip

► Sheikh Jabr Amer, 84 years old, one of the historical leaders of the Islamic Movement in "Palestine," returned through the Rafah Crossing to the Gaza Strip from Sudan on May 3, 2023, as part the evacuation of Palestinians because of clashes in Sudan. Amer was one of the fighters of the "Palestinian liberation forces" (established by Ahmed Shukeiri, the PLO's first chairman, in the 1960s) and was detained by Israel in 1969. After his detention Amer established the first Islamic Movement organization in Israeli jails. He was sentenced to life imprisonment, of which he served 14 years, released in 1983 as part of a prisoner exchange deal with the PFLP-General Command. He was exiled to Lebanon, went from there to Algeria, to Tunisia, and finally settled in Sudan (Palestine Online, May 3, 2023).

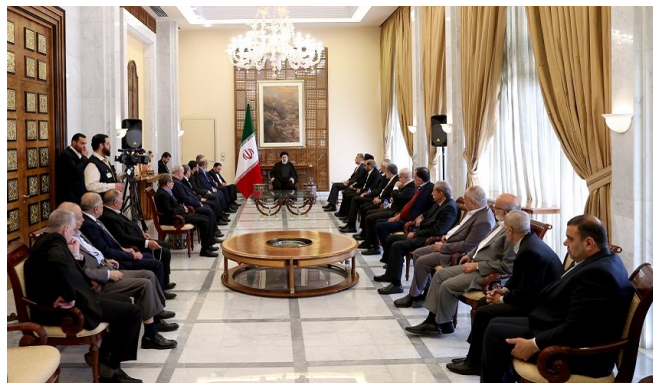
► Hamas welcomed Amer and many members of the Hamas leadership gave him a reception at the Rafah Crossing (Palestine Online, May 3, 2023). **Isma'il Haniyeh** called to welcome him back to "the homeland" (Hamas website, May 3, 2023). The Hamas movement and its Wa'ad Association for Prisoners and Released Prisoners held a reception for him in the al-Bureij refugee camp (Filastin al-A'an, May 7, 2023). On May 7, 2023, **Yahya al-Sinwar, head of the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip**, and Rawhi Mushtaha, a member of Hamas' political bureau, went to the al-Bureij refugee camp to welcome him personally (al-Aqsa TV Twitter account, May 7, 2023).



Right: Hamas reception for Jabr Amer in the al-Bureij refugee camp (Filastin al-A'an, May 7, 2023). Left: Yahya al-Sinwar welcomes Jabr Amer (al-Aqsa TV Twitter account, May 7, 2023).

The Iran president meets in Syria with the heads of the Palestinian terrorist organizations

► Ebrahim Raisi, the president of Iran, who was visiting Syria, met with the heads of the Palestinian terrorist organizations and with Palestinian intellectuals. Raisi assured them that the "resistance" [anti-Israeli terrorist activities and organizations] was the only way to deal with "the Zionist entity," and that today more than ever, the regional and global Islamic "resistance" forces had to be united. He added that the Palestinian issue was Iran's top priority, and that in Iranian opinion the Zionist regime would shortly collapse (IRNA, May 4, 2023).



Ebrahim Raisi, president of Iran (next to the flag) meets in Damascus with the heads of the Palestinian terrorist organizations (al-Alam TV website, May 4, 2023).

The second anniversary of Operation Guardian of the Walls

► In preparation for the second anniversary of Operation Guardian of the Walls,⁶ **Bassem Na'im, head of Hamas' political department**, held a press conference to review the achievements of the operation, boasting that the "equations" put in place during Operation Guardian of the Walls had been used in every following confrontation and were the guidelines for the next step in every "resistance" arena and front. The achievements he claimed were the following (Safa, May 7, 2023):

- ◆ They laid the foundation for a new phase in the history of the "struggle" against Israel. During and after the operation the "resistance" established a new "equation" according to which there were no red lines regarding targets that could be attacked in Israel. Moreover, the rockets they fired during Operation Guardian of the Walls covered the entire area of Israel and paralyzed the movement of planes, an additional achievement in light of Israel's "siege" of the Gaza Strip.
- ◆ The "resistance" changed after the Operation Guardian of the Walls and is no longer what it was, for a variety of reasons. It was the "resistance" which initiated the action. He claimed Operation Guardian of the Walls had created a deterrence for the Israeli leadership which was on the table before any decision was made.
- ◆ In addition to military achievements, there were national achievements. While the previous rounds [of confrontation] concentrated on the Gaza Strip, the "siege" and the humanitarian situation, today strategy concerned Jerusalem, al-Aqsa mosque and the issue of the prisoners.
- ◆ The operation contributed to the easing of the "siege" of the Gaza Strip and made Israel give Gaza unprecedented economic privileges, although not to the extent that would allow the Palestinians to live a life of respect.
- ◆ The operation laid the foundation for the unity of the arenas, a strategic vision opposed to the division of the arenas which Israel always worked to create.
- ◆ The activity inside Israeli territory during the operation surprised Israel, after many years during which it had carried out "Israelization" activities which it thought were effective.

⁶ Operation Guardian of the Walls in the Gaza Strip, which began with Hamas rocket fire targeting Jerusalem, was waged between May 10 and 21, 2021. Hamas called it "Sword of Jerusalem."



Bassem Na'im holds a press conference (Safa, May 7, 2023).

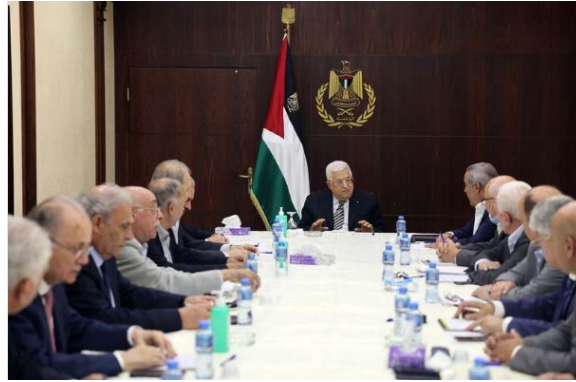
Hamas announcement regarding the fight in Gan Ner

► On May 6, 2023, Diar Omari, a 20 year-old from the Arab village of Sandala in the Jezreel Valley, was killed during an argument with a resident of Gan Near on the road near the entrance to the town. After his death Hamas issued an exceptional mourning notice for him claiming he had been "shot and killed by a Zionist settler in the village of Sandala in the internal occupation territory [i.e., inside Israel]." According to the announcement, the Palestinians "will not permit such events to take place without a response," and would intensify the "resistance" to avenge the blood of the shaheed Omari and all the Palestinians, the most recent of whom were those killed in Nablus and Tulkarm. Hamas called on Israeli Arabs to confront [Israel] and avenge Omari and the other shaheeds, and to continue to go to al-Aqsa mosque, which was under "a Zionist Judaization attack" (Hamas website, May 6, 2023).

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

The PLO's Executive Committee holds a meeting chaired by Mahmoud Abbas

► On May 4, 2023, the PLO's Executive Committee held a meeting chaired by Mahmoud Abbas and discussed the Israel's government's "escalation and aggression" against the Palestinian people in general and the activity in Nablus in particular. The committee also assigned Israel full responsibility for the death of Khader Adnan, and called in the international community to impose sanctions on Israel and intervene immediately to protect the Palestinian people. The committee had a favorable mention for the UN's marking Nakba Day in the presence of Mahmoud Abbas, who also gave speech (Wafa, May 4, 2023).



The PLO's Executive Committee meets in Ramallah, chaired by Mahmoud Abbas (Mahmoud Abbas' Facebook page, May 4, 2023).

The PA's economy

- ▶ On May 3, 2023, a meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC), representatives of the countries which donate to the PA, was held in Brussels. **Shukri Bishara, the PA treasury minister**, briefed the meeting on the PA's economic situation and called on the international community to exert pressure on the government of Israel to release the Palestinian tax funds it has been deducting since 2019, which amount today to about \$800 million. He warned that the PA's budget deficit threatened the Palestinian economy and influenced the stability of its society (Wafa, May 3, 2023). Norway, which chaired the meeting in Brussels, called on Israel and the PA to agree on measures to improve the financial situation, strengthen the Palestinian's institutions and renew efforts to reach a peace agreement (Twitter account of the Norwegian foreign ministry, May 3, 2023).
- ▶ In the meantime, on May 3, 2023, Bezalel Smotrich, the Israeli finance minister instructed the Israeli tax authority to deduct 3.2 million shekels (about \$873,000) from the tax funds collected by Israel for the PA and transfer them to the victims of Palestinian terrorism. Muhammad Shtayyeh condemned the decision, calling it a "new theft" of Palestinian money. He appealed to the donor countries meeting in Brussels to exert pressure on Israel to stop deducting funds. He reiterated that **the deductions would not make them waive their commitments and loyalty [or stop giving monthly sums of money] to the families of the shaheeds, the wounded and the prisoners** (Wafa, May 3, 2023).
- ▶ In the meantime, at the weekly government meeting Muhammad Shtayyeh said that in 2022 the Palestinian economy had grown by 3.9%, although it would be lower this year because of "Israel's actions" (Wafa, May 2, 2023).

Appendix

Rocks, Molotov cocktails and other attacks

► **In Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem Palestinians continued throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails at Israeli vehicles driving on the roads.** The more prominent events were the following:⁷

- ◆ **May 8, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle in Mevo Dotan (southwest of Jenin) No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **May 8, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle south of the Karmeit Junctions (north of Hebron). No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **May 8, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle in Uja (near Jericho). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **May 8, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus and other vehicles between Karnei Shomron and Azzun (east of Qalqilya). One passenger was injured.
- ◆ **May 8, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle in Hawwara (south of Nablus). No casualties were reported.
- ◆ **May 7, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Mikhmash (east of Ramallah). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **May 7, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Yitav (north of Jericho). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **May 5, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near the Zif Junction (south of Hebron). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **May 5, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near the Migdalim Junction (southwest of Nablus). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **May 5, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle in Hawwara (south of Nablus). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **May 4, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus near Ma'aleh Amos (southeast of Bethlehem). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **May 3, 2023:** Molotov cocktails were thrown at the fence around the settlement of Qiryat Netafim (northwest of Salfit). No casualties or damage were reported.

⁷ Information and pictures from Rescue Without Borders in Judea and Samaria unless otherwise noted.