



Spotlight on Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (June 21-27, 2023)

Overview

- ▶ This past week terrorists carried out four attacks. The most lethal was a shooting at a restaurant and gas station near the settlement of Eli (north of Ramallah), in which four civilians were killed and four wounded. Hamas military-terrorist operatives in northern Samaria launched a rocket at the Israeli communities over the border in the Gilboa region; the rocket misfired.
- ▶ On June 21, 2023, three terrorist operatives who had carried out many shooting attacks died in a targeted killing when their vehicle was attacked by an IDF UAV. Several Palestinians were killed in clashes with Israeli security forces in Jenin, Husan and the Askar refugee camp in Nablus. Israeli security forces operating in Nablus demolished the house of one of the terrorists who shot and killed an IDF soldier near the settlement of Shavei Shomron on October 11, 2022. Palestinians rioted during the operation, throwing IEDs and shooting at the forces.
- ▶ In the wake of the shooting attack at Eli, groups of Jewish settlers went to Palestinian villages and towns to avenge the deaths of the four victims. They blocked roads, threw rocks, set buildings and vehicles on fire and vandalized property. The events were widely covered by the Palestinian media outlets, which documented the damages, including pictures of burned Qur'ans. The reports and statements were accompanied by claims the settlers' activities had been sponsored and supported by IDF forces. IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi, Israeli Security Agency Director Ronen Bar and Israel Police Chief Yaakov Shabtai issued a joint statement calling attacks by Israeli civilians against innocent Palestinians in Judea and Samaria "national terrorism" which had to be combatted.
- ▶ The Jordanian authorities detained four Hamas operatives who attempted to smuggle arms into Judea and Samaria for Hamas.
- ▶ The Gaza Strip remained relatively quiet. A test rocket was fired towards the sea. Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) delegations ended their visits to Iran, where they had met with senior Iranian government and Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) figures. Three Hamas military-terrorist operatives were killed: an operative and his son were murdered in the

northern Gaza Strip, and another operative was killed in an accident during training. A delegation of the Hamas leadership arrived in Saudi Arabia for a pilgrimage to Mecca. It was the delegation's second visit to Saudi Arabia in recent months.

►Palestinian Authority (PA) Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh arrived in Saudi Arabia. Qatar sent \$1 million to the Palestinians for institutions and associations in Jenin and the Jenin refugee camp. According to reports, the money is to be used to reinforce the firm stance of the Jenin residents.

Judea and Samaria

Shooting at the gas station and restaurant near the settlement of Eli

►On June 20, 2023, two Palestinians drove a vehicle with Israeli license plates to the gas station near the settlement of Eli, north of Ramallah. They entered the restaurant next to the gas station and shot at patrons sitting there, killing three and wounding three. A civilian in the restaurant unsuccessfully returned fire. They left the restaurant and shot at people in the gas station, killing one. A civilian who realized what was happening shot and killed one of the terrorists. The other stole a vehicle at a gas pump and drove off towards the Jordan Valley. Abandoning it with his weapon inside, he hailed a Palestinian taxi. He was pursued for two hours, after which he was located by Israeli security forces near Tubas (northeast of Nablus); he was shot and killed. The attack was widely publicized. The Palestinian media noted it was carried out the day after the events in Jenin, where five Palestinians were killed in exchanges of fire with IDF forces.¹ Four Israeli civilians were killed in the attack, two of them adolescents.



**The scene of the terrorist attack near the settlement of Eli
(Magen David Adom spokesman's unit, June 20, 2023).**

¹ For further information about the events in Jenin, see the June 20, 2023, report, "Spotlight on Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict – June 14-20, 2023".

►The two terrorists who carried out the attack came from the village of Urif (between Nablus and Ramallah) (Wafa, June 20, 2023). **Hamas claimed both of them as operatives of the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, its military-terrorist wing** (Hamas website, June 20, 2023):

◆**Muhannad Falah Abdallah Shehadeh**: 26 years old, one of four brothers; his father works in Israel. After graduating from the high school in Urif he enrolled in the physical training department of al-Najah University in Nablus. While a student, he headed the Hamas cell in the department; he graduated four years ago. Not finding work in his chosen field, he worked at various jobs. In the past he was imprisoned in Israel for three months. He was also detained for 17 days by the PA security services. He was a practicing Muslim, religiously observant, and a Qur'an memorizer (aljazeera.net and Shehab, June 20, 2023).

◆**Khaled Mustafa Abd al-Latif Sabah**: 24 years old, the middle sibling of seven brothers and sisters. He did not finish high school. He recently worked in a store in the village and married a year ago. Three years ago he was shot by IDF forces during a clash with settlers and his leg was badly damaged. Like Muhannad, he was a practicing Muslim, religiously observant, and a Qur'an memorizer. In the past he was detained by Israel. He was also detained by the PA's security services during Operation Guardian of the Walls (aljazeera.net and Shehab, June 20, 2023).



Right: Muhannad Falah Abdallah Shehadeh. Left: Khaled Mustafa Abd al-Latif Sabah (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website, June 20, 2023).

► Hamas welcomed and praised the attack, claiming it was "the natural reaction to the slaughter in Jenin and the plans to divide al-Aqsa mosque." **However, Hamas did not issue a claim of responsibility.** Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau, called it "the first drops of rain, and what comes next will be stronger and more humiliating [sic]" (Hamas

website, June 20, 2023). The Lion's Den network Telegram channel issued a video documenting the terrorists putting on their green Hamas headbands. The pictures were also made public a short time later by Hamas-affiliated media outlets such as al-Aqsa TV and al-Risalah, Hamas' online magazine. The other terrorist organizations also welcomed and praised the attack and the attackers. The PIJ in Judea and Samaria claimed the "blessed heroic act" was the "natural reaction to the enemy's crimes" in Gaza and Jenin (PIJ website, June 20, 2023).



Right: PIJ operatives distribute baklava after the attack in Eli (@RbhyMhmwd Twitter account, June 20, 2023). Left: Demonstration held in al-Najah University in Nablus in solidarity with the terrorists who carried out the attack in Eli (Islamic Bloc Telegram channel in al-Najah University, June 21, 2023).

Shots fired at Avnei Hefetz

- ▶ On the afternoon of June 23, 2023, reports were received of shots fired at the settlement of Avnei Hefetz (between Tulkarm and Nablus). No casualties or damage were reported. An IDF force searched the area and found a number of shell casings (IDF spokesman, June 23, 2023).
- ▶ A network calling itself the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades' (AAMB) "Tulkarm Battalion – rapid response squads" claimed its operatives had carried out a double attack, shooting at Avnei Hefetz and hitting buildings in the settlement, and shooting at a group of settlers who had erected a tent near Ras al-Masad, between the villages of Kafr al-Labad and Danaba (east of Tulkarm). The network claimed the attacks were carried out as part of reactions to the settlers' activities (Tulkarm Battalion – rapid response squads Telegram channel, June 23, 2023).

Shots fired at the Qalandiya Crossing

- ▶ At around 3:00 a.m. on June 24, 2023, a Palestinian armed with an M-16 assault rifle walked to the Qalandiya Crossing (north of Jerusalem) and opened fire on the security guards. Two security guards were wounded; the Palestinian was shot and killed. He was **Ishak Hamdi Amin al-Ajalouni**, 17 years old, from Kafr 'Aqab, who had an Israeli ID card (Wafa, June 24, 2023).

Fatah claimed him as one of its operatives (Fatah's media information and cultural commission Facebook page, June 24, 2023). **Hamas spokesman Muhammad Hamada** praised the "heroic action" at the Qalandiya Crossing (Hamas website, June 24, 2023). The PIJ in Judea and Samaria issued an announcement claiming the "shaheeds' pure blood will become a curse and hell for the enemy" (PIJ website, June 24, 2023).

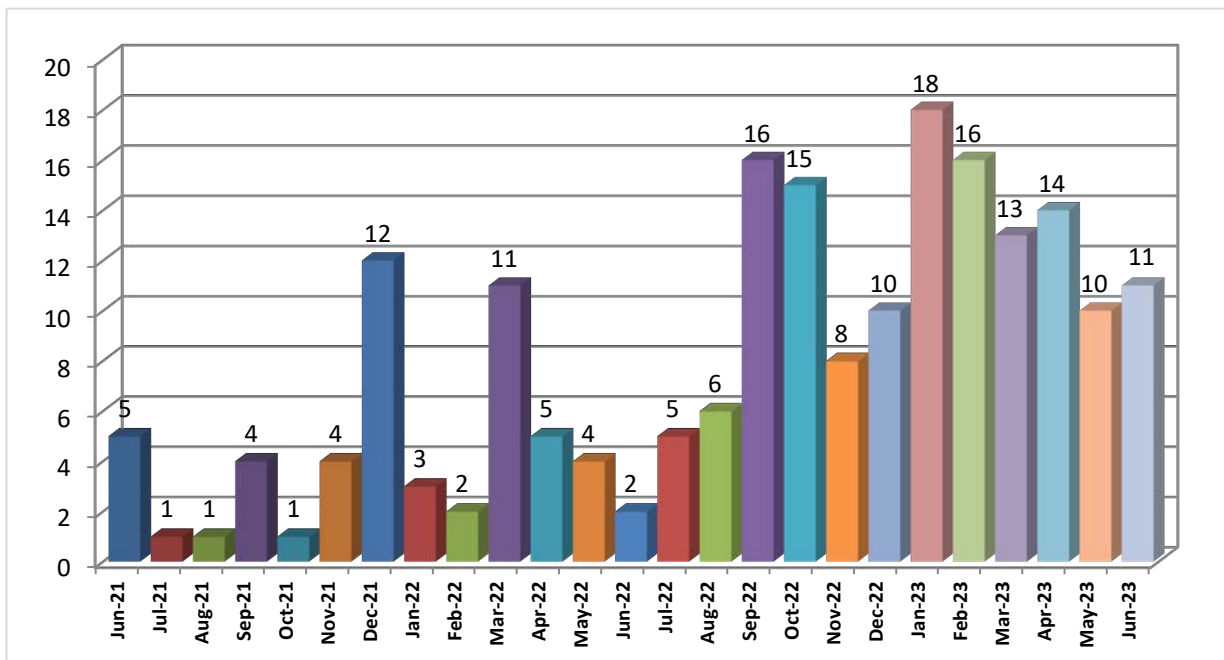


Ishak al-Ajalouni (Wafa, June 24, 2023).

Shots fired near Nablus

►On June 25, 2023, shots were fired from a moving vehicle at an IDF force at a military post near Nablus. The force returned fire and hit the vehicle as it drove away. No casualties were reported; the post was damaged (IDF spokesman, June 25, 2023).

Critical Terrorist Attacks in Judea and Samaria since June 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.

Failed rocket launch

►On June 26, 2023, Palestinian terrorists attempted to fire a rocket from the Jenin area at the Israeli communities over the border in the Gilboa region; the rocket misfired. No casualties were reported. Israeli security forces investigated the event and searched the area (IDF spokesman, June 26, 2023). A short time later, the "al-Ayash Battalion," a network in the western part of Jenin affiliated with Hamas' military-terrorist wing, issued a statement claiming its operatives had "successfully launched" two Qassam 1 rockets at the "settlement" of Ram-On (al-Ayash Battalion Telegram channel, June 26, 2023). A video documenting the rocket launch was also issued. On June 14, 2023, the network also issued a video of a Qassam 1 launch, fired from the western part of Jenin at communities over the border in Israel (al-Ayash Battalion Telegram channel, June 14, 2023).



Left: The rocket launcher. Center: Sign attached to the rocket launcher. The Arabic reads, "The al-Ayash Battalion; the attack on the settlements near Jenin in Marj bin 'Amer [was carried out] with Qassam 1 rockets; Monday, June 26, 2023, and the next one will be bigger; #the West Bank defends Jerusalem." Left: The rocket launch (al-Ayash Battalion Telegram channel, June 26, 2023).

►According to the IDF, the rocket was improvised and amateurish, and did not pose a danger. On June 25, 2023, it was revealed that a rocket had been located in an open area near Beit Hanina in east Jerusalem. That was followed by the detention of **Abd al-Hakim Muhammad Bawatna**, 20 years old, from the village of Ajoul, suspected of planning to launch the rocket during the Flag March on Jerusalem Day (May 18, 2023). Interrogation revealed that he did not belong to any organization and had constructed the rocket himself after having learned from the Internet how to manufacture explosives and rockets (Israeli media, June 25, 2023).

Counterterrorism Activities

Targeted killing of terrorists near Jenin

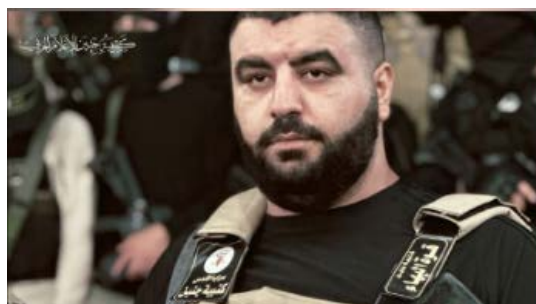
► On June 21, 2023, following intelligence information, an IDF UAV was used to attack three terrorist operatives who were riding in a vehicle near Jenin. The three had been under surveillance after carrying out a shooting attack near Jalameh (north of Jenin). They had recently been responsible for several shooting attacks in Judea and Samaria and had shot at Israeli communities in the Gilboa region (IDF spokesman, June 21, 2023). According to Palestinian sources, the UAV fired a rocket at the vehicle near the town of Jalameh, north of Jenin, killing the three Palestinians (Wafa, June 21, 2023). It was the first aerial targeted killing in Samaria since the end of the second intifada. The three terrorists killed were:

► **Suheib Adnan al-Ghoul (Abu Falah):** 27 years old, born in the al-Jabariat neighborhood of Jenin. Studied at the elementary and junior high schools in the Jenin refugee camp, and then went to the UNRWA's Qalandia Vocational College. The Jerusalem Brigades' Jenin Battalion issued a mourning notice for him, stating he was a Jenin Battalion field and unit commander (Jenin Battalion alternative Telegram channel, June 21, 2023). An article in al-Quds claimed he commanded a Jenin Battalion rapid response squad (al-Quds, June 23, 2023).

► Two of his brothers were detained by Israel and the PA security services. His brother Jumaa was imprisoned in Israel for six years. A source in the Jenin Battalion reported that Suheib spent five years in an Israeli jail, where he met Tareq Izz al-Din, and joined him after he founded the Jenin Battalion. Al-Ghoul was in contact with Izz al-Din for two years, during which they established the Battalion. According to the source, al-Ghoul believed in the tactic of shooting, and was determined to turn shooting attacks into routine, everyday occurrences, and himself carried out dozens of such attacks using armor-piercing bullets, forcing the IDF to construct concrete walls instead of barbed-wire fences (al-Akhbar, June 23, 2023). The Jenin Battalion revealed that on May 9, 2023, al-Ghoul carried out a revenge attack for the death of Tareq Izz al-Din, attacking an Israeli vehicle near the settlement of Dotan (Jenin Battalion alternative Telegram channel, June 23, 2023).



Suheib Adnan al-Ghoul (al-Akhbar, June 23, 2023).



Right: al-Ghoul wearing a bulletproof vest with Jenin Battalion and al-Bahaa Force3 tags on the straps. Left: al-Ghoul wearing a PIJ Jerusalem Brigades headband (Jenin Battalion alternative Telegram channel, June 22, 2023).

► **Ashraf Murad al-Sa'adi**, 17 years old (his brother said he was 15 years old, born on April 14, 2008) and named for his uncle, Ashraf al-Sa'adi, a Jerusalem Brigades commander who fought in the battles in the Jenin refugee camp in Operation Defensive Shield and died in a targeted killing on July 28, 2007. The Jenin Battalion issued a mourning notice for him, claiming him as a Jenin Battalion fighter (Jenin Battalion alternative Telegram channel, June 21, 2023). He was an al-Bahaa Force operative (Jenin al-Qassam Telegram channel, June 21, 2023). He was a friend of Amjad al-Fayid,⁴ aka "the guard of the Jenin refugee camp." After his death Ashraf al-Sa'adi became the new "guard," closing barriers and monitoring the movements of Israeli forces around the camp (al-Quds, June 23, 2023).

³ The Bahaa Force is Jenin Battalion unit whose establishment was announced on December 4, 2022.

⁴ Amjad al-Fayid, 17 years old, was a PIJ terrorist operative in the Jenin refugee camp, and killed on May 21, 2022, while rioting against Israeli security forces.



Right: Ashraf al-Sa'adi (Jerusalem Brigades website, June 22, 2023). Left: al-Sa'adi at Amjad al-Fayid's grave (Jenin al-Qassam Telegram channel, June 21, 2023).

► **Muhammad Bashar Awis**, 28 years old, was Suheib al-Ghoul's friend (al-Akhbar, June 23, 2023). The Jenin Battalion issued a mourning notice for him, claiming he was an AAMB commander (Jenin Battalion alternative Telegram channel, June 21, 2023). According to several reports he was a commander of the AAMB's Shaheed Brigade in the Jenin refugee camp (Shabiba movement in Hebron University Twitter account, June 21, 2023; AAMB Panthers Telegram channel, June 22, 2023). His father is an officer in Palestinian general intelligence. His uncles, Abd al- Karim and Husan Awis, both important AAMB operatives, were detained in 2002 and are currently serving life terms in Israeli prisons. Another uncle, Samer Awis, was killed in an aerial attack on the al-Am'ari refugee camp on March 10, 2002 (arabi21 website, June 7, 2023).



Muhammad Awis (Right: Shabiba movement in Hebron University Twitter account, June 21, 2023. Left: Fatah's media information and cultural commission's Telegram channel, June 21, 2023).



Muhammad Awis and Suheib al-Ghoul, from a video about Muhammad Awis issued by the Jenin Battalion (Jenin Battalion alternative Telegram channel, June 22, 2023).

►The targeted killing of the terrorist operatives led to a wave of reactions. Many claimed the change in the IDF's operations and the return to targeted killings were an indication of Israel's military weakness when challenged by the development and increase in the Palestinians' deterrent power:

◆The **PIJ's military-terrorist wing** issued a mourning notice claiming that the "cowardly killing of Jenin Battalion heroes" would not impair the determination of the "resistance" fighters [terrorist operatives], who would avenge them. The blood of the shaheeds, according to the notice, would fuel the "resistance" and the continuation of the armed intifada (Jerusalem Brigades' Telegram channel, June 22, 2023). The PIJ in Judea and Samaria claimed Israel was delusional if it thought that by killing jihad fighters it could stop the intifada, which was spreading in all the arenas. The notice added that the use of aircraft "proved" Israel's helplessness in the face of the "resistance" [Palestinian terrorism], and the failure of its desperate effort to rehabilitate its image, which had collapsed after the ambush in Jenin and the "action" in Eli (PIJ website, June 21, 2023).

◆**Hamas** also harped on the "cowardly killing" in Jenin, stating it would not pass by in silence, and the targeted killings would not stop the "resistance," but rather provide it with opportunities for revenge (Hamas website, June 21, 2023). **Hamas spokesman Abd al-Latif al-Qanua** said the "Zionist occupation's" [Israel] return to using aircraft for targeted killings would not break the "resistance" and "proved" Israel's failure to cope with the "resistance heroes" on the battlefield, who had taught Israel a lesson with its "upgraded ambush" and IEDs in Jenin (Hamas website, June 22, 2023).

◆**Fatah spokesman Munther al-Hayek** said the "occupation" [Israel] deluded itself with its targeted killings, thinking they would bring the Palestinians to their knees. The

Palestinians, he claimed, were able to respond in kind and continue the confrontation (Fatah's media information and cultural commission Facebook page, June 21, 2023).

Palestinians killed in Jenin

►On June 20, 2023, the PIJ reported the death of **Amjad 'Aref Ja'ss**,⁵ who was critically wounded in the Israeli security force activity in Jenin on June 19, 2023. He was the father of Wasim Ja'ss, a PIJ terrorist operative who was killed on January 26, 2023, during an IDF activity in the Jenin refugee camp (PIJ website, June 20, 2023). His body was wrapped for burial in a PIJ flag.



Amjad 'Aref Jass's body, wrapped for burial in a PIJ flag (Shehab, June 20, 2023).

►On June 21, 2023, the death of Sadil **Ghassan Naghnghya Turkman**, 15 years old, from the Jenin refugee camp was reported. She was a 9th grade student and died after having been wounded by Israeli security forces on June 19, 2023 (Wafa, June 21, 2023). The PIJ issued a mourning notice for her stating she was an organization operative, the niece of Usama Naghnghya (a PIJ terrorist operative killed on March 4, 2001, in a clash with IDF forces) (PIJ website, June 21, 2023). Her Facebook page profile picture shows her wearing a black hijab and holding an M-16 assault rifle, with an inscription that reads, "Allah, I will end my life according to your wishes, and after that there is only paradise (Jenin refugee camp, V sign and black heart emojis). Her body was wrapped for burial in a PIJ flag and her head was adorned with a Jenin Battalion headband.

⁵ He also appears in the media as Amjad 'Aref Fayas Abu Ja'ss.



Right: PIJ mourning notice issued for her (Daffa_media Telegram channel [the PIJ Telegram channel in Judea and Samaria], June 20, 2023). Left: Her body wrapped for burial in a PIJ flag (Wafa Facebook page, June 21, 2023).



Right: Her Facebook page profile picture. Left: Her post from April 22, 2022. The Arabic reads, "We don't love death as martyrs, death as martyrs love us...#Jenin_mother_of_shaheds" (Filastin al-A'an, June 21, 2023).

► On June 20, 2023, the ministry of health in Ramallah reported the death of **Nasser Saleh Muhammad Senan**, 55 years old, married and father of six, who was wounded on May 22, 2023, during an Israeli security force activity in Jenin (Wafa, June 20, 2023). The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) issued a mourning notice for him stating he was one of its operatives and a released prisoner (DFLP central media bureau Telegram channel, June 21, 2023).



Nasser Senan (Yara Senan's Facebook page, June 21, 2023).

Palestinian killed in clash in Husan

►The PIJ reported the death of "jihad fighter" **Zakariya Muhammad Zakariya al-Zawl**, shot and killed by Israeli security forces on June 19, 2023, during clashes in the village of Husan (west of Bethlehem). According to the announcement he was a PIJ operative (PIJ website, June 20, 2023).



PIJ and Jerusalem Brigades mourning notice for Zakariya al-Zawl (Daffa_media Telegram channel, June 20, 2023).

Palestinian killed in the Askar refugee camp

►The ministry of health in Ramallah reported the death of **Tareq Musa Khalil Idris**, 39 years old, who was critically wounded in a clash with Israeli security forces in the Askar refugee camp in Nablus on June 23 2023 (Wafa, June 24, 2023). The **AAMB's Askar Battalion** issued a mourning notice for him, claiming him as one of its operatives (AAMB Telegram channel, June 24, 2023). He was reported as "the Askar Battalion's commander and founder" (AAMB Panther's

Telegram channel, June 24, 2023). According to local sources, he was one of the founders of the military network in the Askar refugee camp. He was wounded in the clash in which he lost one of his fingers and Wadia al-Houh was killed. He was also wounded in an IDF action in the Balata refugee camp (QudsN, June 24, 2023).



Right: Tareq Idris (AAMB Telegram channel, June 24, 2023). Left: The military funeral held for Tareq Idris (Palestinian preventive security apparatus Telegram channel, June 24, 2023).

Terrorist's house demolished

- On the night of June 21, 2023, Israeli security forces operated in Nablus to demolish the apartment of **Kamal Jouri**, who, together with **Usama Tawil**, killed an IDF soldier near the settlement of Shavei Shomron on October 11, 2023. During the Israeli security force activity Palestinians rioted, throwing IEDs and shooting at the soldiers, who employed riot dispersal measures against them; an IDF vehicle was damaged (IDF spokesman, June 22, 2023). Palestinian sources stated the apartment was located on the second floor, was 130 sq.m. (1400 square feet) and home to five people. After the building was surrounded and residents were evacuated from two neighboring buildings, riots broke out. Ahmed Jibril, Palestinian Red Crescent emergency director, reported that 165 Palestinians were treated for teargas inhalation (Wafa, June 22, 2023).
- The AAMB reported that its operatives clashed with the IDF forces (AAMB Telegram channel, June 22, 2023). The AAMB's Revenge and Liberation network in the Balata refugee camp also reported its operatives had participated in the rioting (AAMB's Revenge and Liberation network Telegram channel, June 22, 2023).



The apartment demolished by Israeli security forces
(Right: @J7Rahaf Twitter account. Left: Wafa, June 22, 2023).

Two Palestinians killed in the Balata refugee camp

►Local sources reported that on the evening of June 20, 2023, an IED accidentally exploded in the Balata refugee camp, killing two young Palestinians and critically wounding a third individual. The two fatalities were **Muhammad Jamal Hashhash, 19 years old**, and **Alaa Mahda al-Falah, 20 years old** (also called Alaa Hafnawi by the media).



Right: The AAMB mourning notice issued for the deaths of Hashhash (right) and Falah (AAMB Telegram channel, June 21, 2023). Left: The military funeral held for Hashhash and Falah (Palestinian preventive security apparatus Telegram channel, June 21, 2023).

►The AAMB issued a notice stating the two were AAMB operatives in the Balata refugee camp and killed in a freak explosion while preparing an IED (AAMB Telegram channel, June 21, 2023). The AAMB's Revenge and Liberation network issued a mourning notice for the two, who were network operatives at the time of their death. They were referred to as "the knights of [IED] preparations," and their devices had "sown death among the soldiers, turned their military vehicles into scrap and exposed Israeli security forces' infiltration attempts."

►The notice stressed that because specialists were responsible for the manufacture of IEDs and military equipment, they requested the matter be left to those with knowledge and experience. It also called on local residents not to approach locations where IEDs were stored or placed,

because they had been prepared for the purpose of attacking IDF armed vehicles (AAMB's Revenge and Liberation network in the Balata refugee camp Telegram channel, June 21, 2023).

Jewish settler activity against Palestinians

► In the wake of the terrorist attack near Eli groups of Jewish settlers went to Palestinian villages and towns to avenge the deaths of the four Israelis. They blocked roads, threw rocks, set buildings and vehicles on fire and vandalized property. The events were widely covered by the Palestinian media, which documented the damages and broadcast interviews with local residents, who expressed their anger and anxiety. The reports and interviews stressed the narrative that the settlers had acted with the sponsorship and support of IDF forces. **The PA foreign ministry** said in a statement that the attacks had been incited by extremist Israeli government ministers such as Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir. The ministry called for immediate international and American intervention to force Israel to defuse the situation and stop the escalation (Wafa, June 20, 2023).

► **PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh** claimed the "barbaric attacks" of the settlers reflected "Israel's mentality of burning and killing." He said they were "united" in dealing with the ongoing aggression, which began with al-Aqsa mosque and spread to the Gaza Strip, Jenin, Nablus and Hawwara. **Hussein al-Sheikh, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee**, called for the International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor to move forward with the files sent to the Court dealing with "the crimes of the occupation and the settlers against the Palestinian people." He also said that the time had come to confront the "racist right-wing" government, which allowed itself to do whatever it pleased without international deterrence (Wafa, June 21, 2023).

► A joint statement was issued by IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi, Israeli Security Agency Director Ronen Bar and Israel Police Chief Yaakov Shabtai calling the recent attacks carried out by Israeli civilians against innocent Palestinians in Judea and Samaria "national terrorism" which had to be combatted (IDF spokesman, June 23, 2023).

In Hawwara (south of Nablus)

► **Ghassan Daghlas, who holds the PA Settlements in Northern Samaria Portfolio**, said the settlers had attacked Palestinian houses, shot at young Palestinians who confronted them and burned one local resident's vehicle. **Ahmed Jibril, Palestinian Red Crescent emergency director in Nablus**, reported that during the settler activity in Hawwara 30 Palestinians had inhaled teargas and were treated on site. A Red Crescent ambulance was allegedly partially

burned after being hit with a teargas canister, and another ambulance was attacked at the military roadblock in Hawwara. He claimed a child had been taken to the Rafidia Hospital after being attacked by settlers (Wafa, June 20, 2023).



Damage to Palestinian vehicles in Hawwara (Wafa, June 20, 2023).

In Luban al-Sharqiya (south of Nablus)

► **Yakub Awis, head of the village council**, reported that dozens of settlers had used rocks to attack the houses and stores of local residents at the entrance to the village. They burned scores of acres of crops and olive trees, and set fire to a used vehicle enclosure and a gas station. Local residents clashed with the attackers (Wafa, June 20, 2023). He said dozens of vehicles had been burned to the ground, dozens of houses had been destroyed or partially burned, and stores had been vandalized. He claimed five residents had been injured, one of them a child, who was seriously wounded (al-Andalou News, June 21, 2023).



Settler damage in Luban al-Sharqiya (Wafa Facebook page, June 21, 2023).

In Turmus Aya (northeast of Ramallah)

► On June 21, 2023, Israeli civilians set fire to Palestinian property. Israeli security forces entered the village to extinguish the fires, prevent friction and collect evidence. The Israelis left the village and the police began an investigation of the events. The IDF announced it condemned the use of violence and the destruction of property, adding that such events prevented the

army and security forces from focusing on their central mission, to protect civilian security in the State of Israel and prevent terrorism (IDF spokesman, June 21, 2023).



Damages in Turmus Aya (Wafa, June 20 and 21, 2023).

►The ministry of health in Ramallah reported the death of **Hashem Omar Abdallah Jabara Abu al-Qutin**, 25 years old, from Turmus Aya (Wafa, June 21, 2023). **Hamas** issued a mourning notice for him, claiming him as an operative (Hamas website, June 21, 2023). **Fatah's media information and cultural commission** also issued a mourning notice for him, claiming Omar Jabara⁶ as a Fatah operative (Fatah's media information and cultural commission's Awda TV Telegram channel, June 21, 2023).



Omar Jabara (Wafa, June 21, 2023).

►**Lafi Adiv, head of the Turmus Aya local council**, claimed that during the attack carried out by about 400 settlers,⁷ 13 Palestinians were wounded and dozens choked on teargas. He added that they had set 30 buildings and 30 vehicles on fire, as well as dozens of acres crops. **Mahmoud Abbas, during a phone conversation with Lafi Adiv, called on Turmus Aya residents who had American citizenship to appeal to courts in the United States.** He also

⁶ Also known as Omar Qutin.

⁷ According to Palinfo, he said they came from the settlement of Shiloh.

instructed PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh and the government ministers to go to Turmus Aya and bring the local residents all the aid they needed (Wafa, June 21, 2023).

►On June 21, 2023, Muhammad Shtayyeh visited the town and met with the mayor and residents who had been harmed (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, June 21, 2023). On June 23, 2023, a delegation of more than 20 foreign diplomats from EU and other countries visited the town, led by Sven Kühn von Burgsdorff, the EU representative in the PA. They offered condolences to the Omar Jabara's family, saying a thorough investigation had to be carried out to prosecute the perpetrators (EU legation in the PA Twitter account, June 23, 2023).



Right: Muhammad Shtayyeh visits Turmus Aya (PA prime minister's office Facebook page, June 21, 2023). Left: Sven Kühn von Burgsdorff with Omar Jabara's wife (EU legation in the PA Twitter account, June 23, 2023).

In Urif (southwest of Nablus)

►**Ghassan Daghlas** reported that on the evening of June 21, 2023, 200 settlers from Yitzhar attacked the eastern part of the town. They threw an accelerant at the school and burned one of its classrooms. Clashes broke out with IDF forces, and a 60 year-old women and two youths were injured. He claimed the settlers also attacked the village mosque, broke its windows and tried to set it on fire, but local residents arrived and clashed with them (Wafa, June 21, 2023). According to Mazen Shehadeh, the former hear of the Urif village council, the attackers tore pages out of copies of the Qur'an and broke the mosque's windows (al-Araby al-Jadeed, June 21, 2023). Both terrorist operatives who carried out the shooting at the restaurant and gas station near Eli were from Urif.

►Pictures of burned copies of the Qur'an caused a wave of harsh reactions, including from international sources. Various organizations viewed the events as an escalation of a perceived religious war and called on the Palestinians to combat it. Hatem al-Bakri, PA minister of Muslim endowments, warned of increasing violations against mosques and their desecration.

He called on the Palestinians to defend their mosques and on international institutions to fulfill their duties towards the Palestinians (Dunia al-Watan, June 22, 2023).

►The **Egyptian waqf** reported that "damaging the holy Qur'an is the essence of terrorism, extremism and racism." The **Turkish foreign ministry** reported it "expected the criminals who carried out the hate crime will shortly be prosecuted" (Turkish foreign ministry Twitter account, June 23, 2023). **Hezbollah** noted that the desecration of mosques, burning the Qur'an, invading houses and destroying crops, as carried out by the settler gangs, were crimes of the worst sort and attacks on all religious, human and moral values, showed contempt for all the Semitic religions and insulted the Arab-Muslim nations (Radio al-Nur, June 23, 2023).

In Jalud (southeast of Nablus)

►On June 22, 2023, Wafa reported that according to eyewitnesses, dozens of settlers, protected by the IDF, attacked the houses of local residents on the outskirts of the village, and that one Palestinian had been shot in the stomach and evacuated to a hospital. Reportedly, dozens of residents suffered from teargas inhalation (Wafa, June 22, 2023).

In Umm Safa (northwest of Ramallah)

►On June 24, 2023, reports were received that Israeli civilians had set fire to Palestinian property during a violent clash between the Israelis and Palestinians, which included the throwing of rocks in the village of Umm Safa. IDF spokesman were deployed to the site and employed riot control measures. An Israeli civilian was detained by the forces and transferred to the Israel Police Force. An IDF fighter was wounded by a rock thrown by a Palestinian and taken for medical treatment (IDF spokesman, June 24, 2023).

►The Palestinians reported two attacks on June 22, 2023, in which two houses at the entrance to the village were attacked. Marwan Sabah, head of the village council, reported that settlers set dozens of houses on fire and burned seven vehicles (Palestine Online, June 26, 2023). On June 24, 2023, when settlers attacked the village, Muhammad Radhi, a photographer with the local Palestinian TV, reported that about 70 settlers entered the village, set fire to a number of buildings and attacked an ambulance transporting a patient. The ambulance driver was injured and the ambulance was damaged (Wafa, June 24, 2023). **Hussein al-Sheikh** reported he had contacted the head of the Umm Safa council to tell him the unwavering position of the Palestinian leadership was to call on the Palestinians to stand firm and fight back against "terrorist attacks" (Hussein al-Sheikh's Twitter account, June 26, 2023).



Damages in Umm Safa (Jmedia Twitter account, June 25, 2023).

Smuggling weapons from Jordan to Judea and Samaria

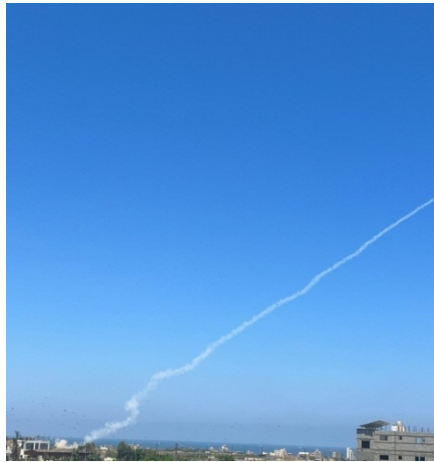
►An "exclusive source" told al-Akhbar that the Jordanian authorities had detained four citizens of Palestinian extraction, accusing them of smuggling weapons to Judea and Samaria, apparently for Hamas terrorists. Reportedly, the detention led to tension in Jordan's relations with Hamas (al-Akhbar, Lebanon, June 24, 2023). Neither Jordan nor Hamas has officially referred to the matter (Ra'i al-Yawm, June 25, 2023). **Fayiz Abu Shamala, a Hamas-affiliated political commentator from Khan Yunis**, wrote that the smuggling had been carried out on instructions from **Saleh al-'Arouri, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau** (Fayiz Abu Shamala's Twitter account, June 25, 2023).

Israel's South

Rocket and mortar shell fire into Israel

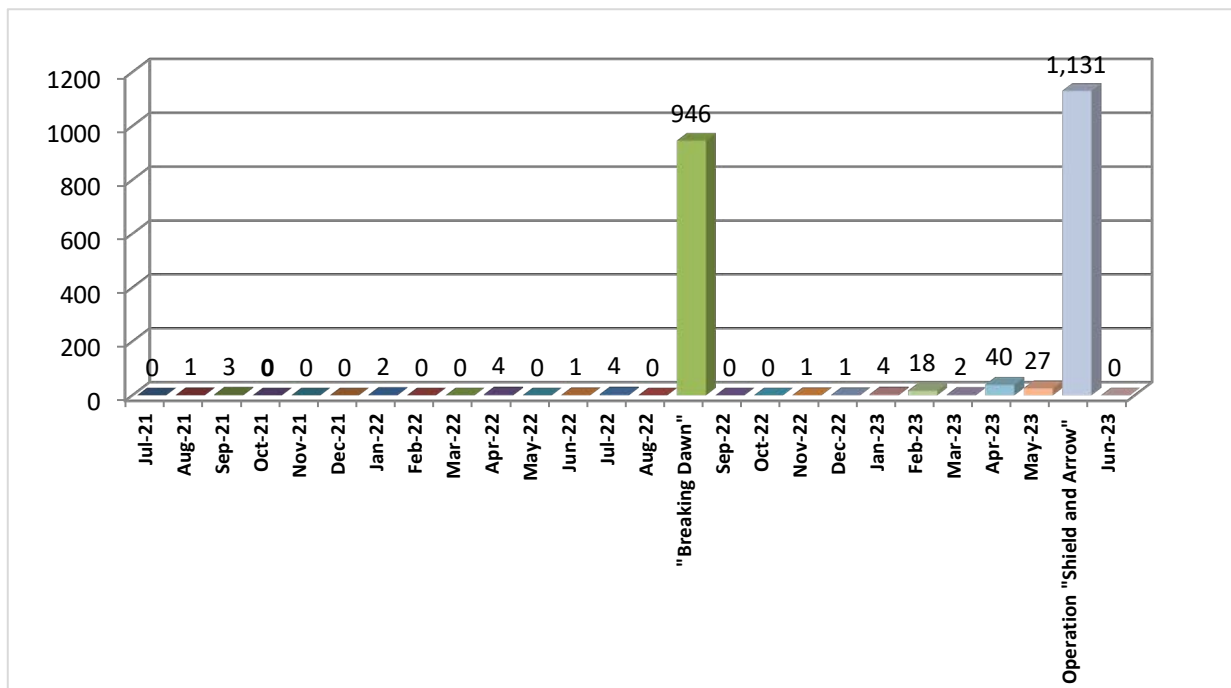
►This past week no rocket or mortar shell hits were identified in Israeli territory.

►According to reports, on June 26, 2023, the "Palestinian resistance" [terrorist organizations] fired a rocket toward the sea as part of "improving its military capabilities and increasing rocket accuracy" (Shehab, June 26, 2023).

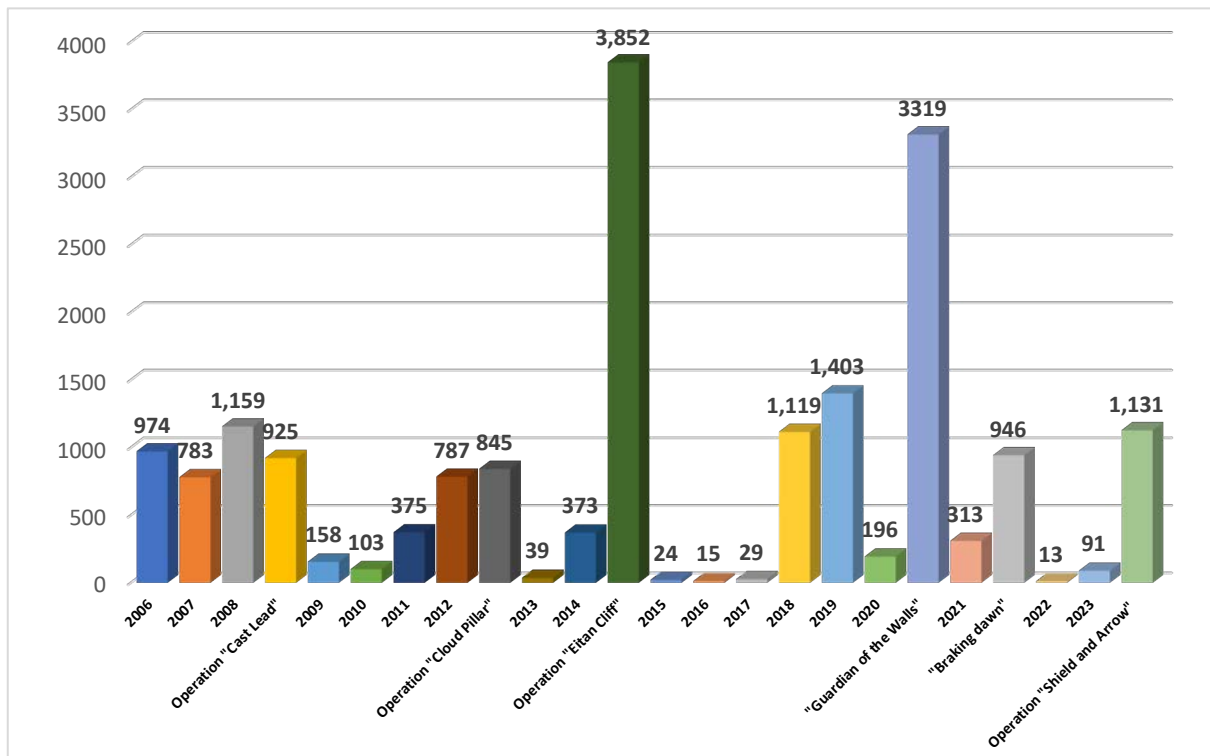


Firing the rocket towards the sea (Shehab Twitter account, June 26, 2023).

Monthly Distribution of Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire since July 2021



Annual Distribution of Rocket Hits since 2006



Hamas and PIJ delegations visit Iran

►The Hamas and PIJ delegations ended their visit to Iran.

◆The PIJ said in an announcement that the delegation and Iranians had discussed the Palestinian issue, Zionist aggression against the Palestinian people in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip, and ways to confront it. It was also reported that **Ziyad al-Nakhalah, PIJ secretary general**, related to the "Palestinian resistance's achievements" in "Operation Free Men's Revenge" [Operation Shield and Arrow], stressing adherence to the Palestinian "resistance." The announcement also noted that the senior Iranian officials who met with the members of the delegation confirmed Iran's position on the side of the Palestinian people and its support for the "resistance" [terrorist organizations] (PIJ political bureau Telegram channel, June 23, 2023).

◆While in Iran, the Hamas delegation, led by **Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau**, met with several senior Iranian officials, including **Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, President Ebrahim Raisi, Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Akbar Ahmadian, and IRGC Commander Hossein Salami**. At every meeting, mention was made of Iran's unwavering support for the Palestinian issue and both sides

stressed they would continue cooperating in a way that would serve every aspect of the "resistance" (Hamas website, June 19 to 21, 2023).

► Interviewed by Iranian media outlets, Isma'il Haniyeh said that during the most recent round of fighting in May [Operation Shield and Arrow], the Hamas put all its capabilities at the PIJ's disposal. He said the "resistance" had defeated Israel, stressing that the blood of the commanders had not been shed in vain. He thanked Iran for its "unconditional" support of the Palestinians, and said Iran was the greatest power standing behind the "Palestinian resistance." He also claimed that recent regional developments, such as the Iran-Saudi Arabia reconciliation, and the change in the regional trend towards Syria, served their interests and harmed those of Israel (al-Alam, June 22, 2023).

Two Hamas military-terrorist wing operatives die

► Iyad al-Buzum, spokesman for the ministry of the interior in Gaza, reported the deaths of **Ayman Atiya Mansour, an Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades commander**, and his son Atiya, who were shot to death in Jabalia. He added that the shooter had committed suicide (ministry of the interior in Gaza website, June 22, 2023). According to reports, the shooter was **Eid Muhammad Khadr Muhammad Mansour**, 40 years old, an arms dealer accused several years ago of collaborating with Israel (al-Khamsa li'al-Anbaa' website, June 23, 2023). Hamas' military-terrorist wing announced the deaths of Ayman Atiya Dayab Mansour, 52 years old, a wing commander and one of its first operatives, and of his son, Atiya Ayman Mansour, 31 years old, an Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades operative. Ayman Mansour had several command positions, most importantly that of deputy commander of the northern Gaza Strip Brigade. He reportedly survived a number of Israeli attempts to kill him, and his house was attacked (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website, June 22, 2023). The memorial service held for him was attended by Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades commanders from the northern Gaza Strip and members of the Hamas leadership. **Zakariya Abu Muamar, a member of the Hamas political bureau**, said Mansour had participated in founding the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades and their first fighting squads (Hamas website, June 24, 2023; Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website, June 25, 2023).



Right: Ayman Mansour. Left: Atiya Mansour (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website, June 22, 2023).

►The Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military-terrorist wing, announced the death of **Muhii al-Din Muhammad Muhammad Sadudi**, 24 years old, from the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip, who was killed during a training exercise (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website, June 25, 2023). According to reports, he died in the hospital after being wounded when a jeep overturned in the al-Tel military post (@abwdy124938 Twitter account, June 25, 2023).



Muhii al-Din Muhammad Muhammad Sadudi (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website, June 25, 2023).

Hamas operatives go on a pilgrimage to Mecca

►Heading a Hamas delegation, **Isma'il Haniyeh** arrived in Saudi Arabia for the Eid al-Adha pilgrimage (Hajj) to Mecca. Among the members of the delegation were **Khaled Mashaal, Khalil al-Haya and Saleh al-'Arouri** (palsawa, June 25, 2023). It was the second time members of the Hamas leadership had visited Saudi Arabia in recent months. A Hamas delegation also led by Haniyeh arrived in Saudi Arabia on April 17, 2023, after a years-long break in relations, when Saudi Arabia authorized the delegation to come to Mecca as pilgrims for the Umrah (a pilgrimage made at any time of the year and not during the time of the Hajj).



The Hamas leadership in Mecca. Right: Isma'il Haniyeh is second from the left (palsawa, June 25, 2023).

The PIJ leadership holds meetings

►The PIJ leadership's new political bureau finished a round of meetings and deliberations. The organization issued an announcement noting participants, from the Gaza Strip and abroad, including **Ziyad al-Nakhalah, PIJ secretary general; Muhammad al-Hindi, from the "external" leadership; Nafez Azzam, Khaled al-Batash** and others. According to the announcement, the organization's top priority is standing up to Israel's ongoing aggression with all the means at its disposal, especially the armed "struggle." At the meetings they also praised the military wing's great achievement of Operation Free Men's Revenge [Operation Shield and Arrow] in May, and its continuation in Judea and Samaria, especially in Jenin, where "seven enemy vehicles were blown up" (PIJ website, June 25, 2023).

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

Palestinian activity with foreign diplomats

►Following orders from PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas, Riyad Mansour, the Palestinian delegate to the UN, sent an "urgent" letter to the president of the Security Council demanding the Council members and the UN secretary general take "immediate steps" to make Israel and its "terrorist militias of settlers" accountable for their "crimes." He added that Israel, its military forces and settlers burn villages, threaten communities and attack Palestinian civilians, killing and wounding. Mansour said the Palestinian leadership strongly condemned all the crimes and

called on the international community to take responsibility and work to stop the escalation (Wafa, June 21, 2023).

►Mahmoud Abbas held a reception for an Arab League delegation headed by **Hifaa' Abu Ghazala, aide to the secretary general and head of the social affairs sector**. Mahmoud Abbas stressed the importance of the Arab League's efforts, and praised the work of the social development ministry for combatting poverty in the PA (Wafa, June 24, 2023).

Muhammad Shtayyeh visits Saudi Arabia

►**Muhammad Shtayyeh** arrived in Jeddah to perform the Hajj. The governor of the Jeddah district held a reception for him upon his arrival (Jeddah district Twitter account, June 26, 2023).



Muhammad Shtayyeh arrives in Jeddah (Jeddah district Twitter account, June 26, 2023).

Aid from Qatar for Jenin

►**Hussein al-Sheikh, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee**, on behalf of Mahmoud Abbas, transferred to **Akram al-Rajoub, government of the Jenin district**, a grant of \$1 million, aid from Qatar, for the institutions and associations of Jenin and its refugee camp. The money was given as part of the effort to strengthen the firm stance of the residents of Jenin in the face of "Israel's crimes." Al-Sheikh and al-Rajoub thanked Sheikh Tamim bin Hamed Thani, the emir of Qatar, as well as Qatar's prime minister and foreign minister (Hussein al-Sheikh's Twitter account and Akram al-Rajoub's Facebook page, June 24, 2023). According to reports, a large amount will be allotted to the Jenin refugee camp in light of its exceptional circumstances (Sada News, June 24, 2023).



Hussein al-Sheikh gives the governor of the Jenin district the grant from Qatar (Hussein al-Sheikh's Twitter account, June 24, 2023).