



Spotlight on Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(August 2-8, 2023)

Overview

- ▶ This past week Palestinians carried out four terrorist attacks: three shootings (in Tel Aviv, at the Hamra Junction in the Jordan Valley and in Ma'ale Adumim) and a stabbing south of Hebron. A municipal security patrol officer was killed in the shooting in Tel Aviv. Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities, focusing on the Nur al-Shams refugee camp in Tulkarm and the Jenin area, where three Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) operatives en route to carry out an attack were killed. In the Askar refugee camp in Nablus, Israeli security forces demolished the house of a Hamas terrorist operative who shot and killed two Israeli brothers in Hawwara on February 26, 2023.
- ▶ The Gaza Strip remains relatively quiet. Thanks to funding from Qatar, this past week the fourth turbine was activated at the power plant that supplies electricity, increasing the hours of electricity in several areas. The London-based daily newspaper al-Araby al-Jadeed reported that Hamas security forces prevented Gazans from holding further demonstrations to protest Gaza's economic hardships.
- ▶ Following the meeting of the Palestinian organizations' leadership in Egypt, reports were published about serious differences and therefore low expectations for a breakthrough in the internal Palestinian reconciliation. According to Khaled Mashal, a senior Hamas figure, the main cause of the internal Palestinian schism is competition for leadership between the Palestinians in the Arab world, not only in the Palestinian territories.
- ▶ Mahmoud Abbas arrived in Jordan at the head of a delegation of senior Palestinian Authority (PA) figures and met with King Abdallah of Jordan. Mahmoud Abbas met in Ramallah with the chairman of the commission opposing the fence and settlements called for the escalation of the "popular resistance" [popular terrorism]. Israel's political-security cabinet voted for a series of relief measures for the PA, whose senior figures continue efforts to stop Israel from deducting funds from the tax revenues collected for the PA.

Judea and Samaria

Terrorist Attacks

Shooting attack in Tel Aviv

► On the evening of August 5, 2023, two municipal security patrol officers on Nahalat Binyamin Street (in central Tel Aviv) identified a Palestinian who aroused their suspicion. When one of the officers approached him he pulled out a gun and shot the officer, mortally wounding him; he later died in the hospital. The other officer shot and killed the Palestinian (Israeli media, August 5, 2023).



The scene of the shooting in Tel Aviv (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit and Magen David Adom, August 5, 2023).

► The terrorist was **Kamal Abu Bakr**, 22 years old, originally from the village of Rumana (north-west of Jenin) who had lived in the Jenin refugee camp for the past two years. He was an operative in the Jenin Battalion, affiliated with the Jerusalem Brigades, the PIJ's military-terrorist wing. A letter was found in his possession stating he intended to die as a shaheed. According to his family, he had been wanted by Israel for the past six months and had evaded capture by not using a smart phone or social networks (Israeli media, August 5 and 6, 2023). It is still unclear how he managed to enter Israel.



Abu Bakr in one of the situation rooms in the Jenin refugee camp. Pictures of shaheeds are pinned on the wall (Ultra Palestine website, August 5, 2023).

- ▶ Acquaintances in the Jenin refugee camp said the terrorist's nickname was "Abu Dejana" and he always joined the Palestinians who shot at Israeli security forces when they entered the camp. He was always extremely careful because he was wanted [by the Israeli security forces], and refused to expose his face, be photographed or interviewed by the media. He attended funerals unarmed and dressed as a "civilian" to blend in with the other mourners and make it difficult to identifying him. He was considered religious, always said his prayers and rarely spoke. He was in his last year of law school at the American University in Jenin. Being wanted ended his dream of becoming a lawyer. He hand-wrote his will in February 2023, claiming he did not belong to a party or organization, but only to Islam. He asked not to be eulogized or prayed for or to have a [marked] grave (al-Araby al-Jadeed, August 7, 2023). According to his father he had almost no friends. He was a devout Muslim, going only between the mosque and his home (Qudsfeed YouTube channel, August 7, 2023).
- ▶ In response to the attack, IDF forces entered the village of Rumana to map his house before demolishing it. Palestinians threw an explosive device at the forces, who responded by firing shots shooting (IDF spokesman Twitter account, August 5, 2023).
- ▶ The Jenin refugee camp celebrated when reports of the attack in Tel Aviv were published. Pastries were distributed to passersby in the streets and the loudspeakers on the minarets of the mosques were to broadcast calls of joy. According to reports, the Palestinian security forces operated in Jenin to disperse one of the celebration marches and detained two demonstrators (Shehab Twitter account, August 5, 2023).



Right: Mapping the terrorist's house in Rumana (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, August 5, 2023). Left: PA security forces disperse a celebration march in the Jenin refugee camp (Shehab Twitter account, August 5, 2023).

► The **PIJ** published a statement praising the "heroic attack" carried out by Kamal Abu Bakr, a senior "resistance fighter" [terrorist operative] in Jenin. The announcement claimed the attack was a "natural response" to Israel's actions against the Palestinians, the latest of which was the killing two Palestinians, one in Tulkarm and one near Ramallah (see below) (Filastin al-Yawm, August 5, 2023). **PIJ spokesman Tareq Salami** called the attack a "quality commando operation," claiming it showed the "resistance" continued (PIJ Telegram channel, August 5, 2023). **Hamas spokesman Abd al-Latif al-Qanua** praised the attack, claiming it was "a response to the aggression of the 'occupation' and its settlers." He claimed it showed the Palestinians' willingness to defend al-Aqsa mosque (al-Aqsa, August 5, 2023). **Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem** claimed it was a "natural response to the crimes of the occupation," which had "recently escalated" (Hazem Qassem's Telegram channel, August 5, 2023).

Shooting attack in the Jordan Valley

► On the afternoon of August 2, 2023, an Israeli family was attacked as they drove in the Jordan Valley near the Hamra Junction. The vehicle was hit by six bullets. The mother was injured by flying glass. The Palestinians fled towards Nablus; IDF forces initiated pursuit (Twitter account of the IDF spokesperson, Israeli media, August 2, 2023).



The Israeli vehicle attacked in the Jordan Valley (Magen David Adom, August 2, 2023).

► **Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem** praised the shooting attack in the Jordan Valley, claiming it was a response to "Israel's crimes" against the Palestinian people, and especially against Al-Aqsa Mosque (Hazem Qassem's Telegram channel, August 2, 2023).

Stabbing attack at the Eshtamoa Junction

► On the evening of August 1, 2023, at the Eshtamoa Junction, south of Hebron, a Palestinian aroused the suspicions of an IDF force. When the soldiers tried to question him he pulled out a knife and tried to stab them; he was shot and killed (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, August 1, 2023).

► The ministry of health in Ramallah reported the death of **Muhammad Farid Shuqi al-Zaarir, 15 years old, from the village of al-Samoa**. According to reports he was in the ninth grade at the al-Bahkari Boys School in al-Samoa and was an excellent student (Wafa, August 1, 2023). On his Facebook page he wrote that being a shaheed was the proper [ending to the] life of a jihadist (Muhammad al-Zaarir's Facebook page, August 1, 2023).



Right: Muhammad Farid Shuqi al-Zaarir (Wafa, August 1, 2023). Left: The knife found in the terrorist's possession (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, August 1, 2023).

► **Hamas** issued a mourning notice for him according to which "the blood of the Palestinian children will be a curse on the occupation and its settlers, and the response of the Palestinian revolutionaries will not be long in coming" (Hamas website, August 1, 2023).

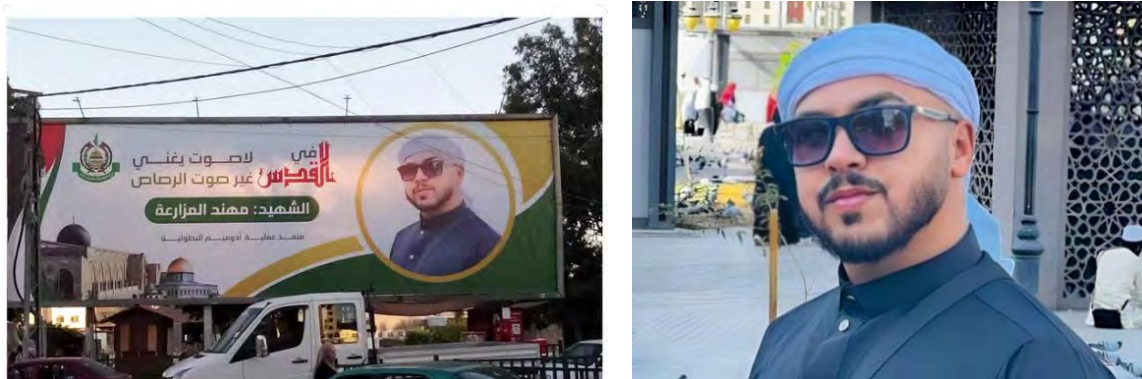
Shooting attack in Ma'ale Adumim

► At noon on August 1, 2023, a Palestinian armed with a gun and wearing a yellow "security guard" vest went to the Ma'ale Adumim shopping center. He entered the restaurant and shot at people who were sitting there. He then went out into the street shooting at businesses and passers-by, and finally hid in nearby bushes. A Border Police officer on vacation shot and killed him. Six people were wounded in the attack, two of them critically (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit and the Israeli media, August 1, 2023).



Right: Restaurant CCTV documents the attack, showing the terrorist entering and shooting (Shehab Twitter account, August 2, 2023). Left: The gun used in the attack (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, August 1, 2023)

► The ministry of health in Ramallah reported the death of **Muhannad Muhammad Suleiman al-Mazar'a, 20 years old, from al-Eizariya** (east of Jerusalem) (ministry of health in Ramallah Telegram channel, August 1, 2023; Wafa, August 1, 2023). He was a Bedouin who lived in Jebel al-Baba near al-Eizariya (al-Araby al-Jadeed, August 1, 2023; @alqudsalbawsala Twitter account, August 1, 2023). About an hour before the attack he uploaded a recording of his "will" to the social media. In it he called on Palestinians not to abandon prayer and jihad, and asked that his name not be written on his grave and his body not be wrapped in any organization flag, as it belonged only to Allah (Safa, August 1, 2023; Alaraby TV website, August 1, 2023). Officials in Israel stated that he held a work permit for Israel and worked at the municipal community center in Ma'ale Adumim. His father has been employed by the municipality of Ma'ale Adumim for about 25 years (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, Israeli media, August 1, 2023).



Right: Muhannad al-Mazar'a (Wafa, August 1, 2023). Left: A street sign with the Hamas logo and the picture of al-Mazar'a hung at al-Saraya Square in the center of Gaza City. The sign reads, "In Jerusalem no voice sings, only the sound of bullets" (ghdyr N Yasen's Twitter account, August 2, 2023)

► **Hamas** praised the "bold act of heroism," adding that the Palestinians were united in the conflict with "the occupier" and able to respond to its crimes, protect the holy places and avenge the blood of the martyrs (Hamas website, August 1, 2023). **The PIJ in Judea and Samaria** issued a mourning notice claiming that the continuation of the "occupation's crimes" against the Palestinians would return "like fire and hell" from an unexpected place, and that the "resistance" of "heroic martyr" Muhannad al-Mazar'a on August 1 was not the end (Daffa_media Telegram channel [the PIJ Telegram channel in Judea and Samaria], August 1, 2023).

Reactions to the attacks

► Palestinian media, mainly in the Gaza Strip, did not hide their satisfaction with the large number of attacks and published headlines such as, "Three Attacks in 24 hours." The PA related to the young age of terrorists who had been killed. For example, **Nabil Abu Rudeineh, spokesman for Mahmoud Abbas**, said the international silence and lack of demand for accountability encouraged Israel to continue committing "crimes" against the Palestinians, the latest of which was the "cold-blooded execution of the boy Muhammad Farid Shuqi al-Zaarir near the village of al-Samoa, and the young man Muhammad al-Mazar'a in East Jerusalem" (Wafa, August 1, 2023).

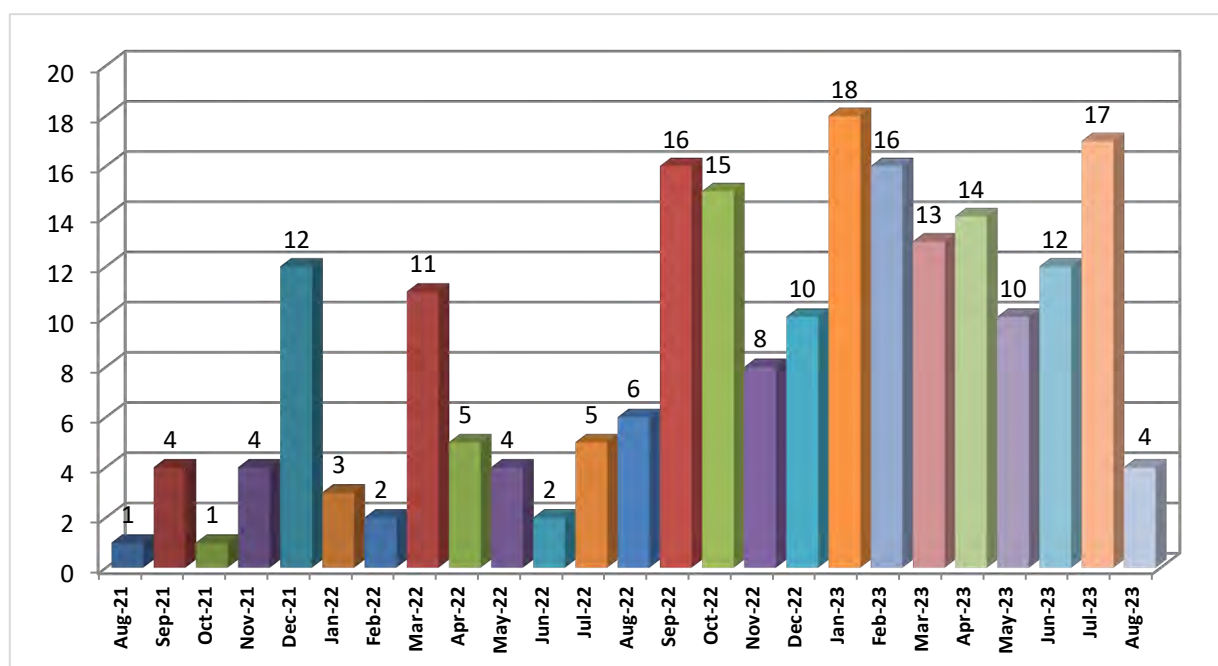
► **PA government spokesman Ibrahim Melhem** wrote that harming children by killing, imprisoning and frightening them and by using them as human shields did not stop, and was fueled by a racist ideology based on burning, killing and genocide. He noted that the latest victims were a 10th grade student [sic], the boy Muhammad al-Zaarir, who was shot to death by the village of al-Samoa, and Muhannad al-Mazar'a from the village of al-Eizariya, who was

executed. He added that PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh demanded UNICEF prosecute the criminals in an international court and not allow them to escape punishment (Ibrahim Melhem's Facebook page, August 1, 2023).

Shooting near Avnei Hefetz

► On the evening of August 5, 2023, a shooting was reported near the settlement of Avni Hefetz (southeast of Tulkarm). There were no casualties. During searches a bullet was found and IDF forces began pursuit of a suspected shooter (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, August 5, 2023).

Critical Terrorist Attacks in Judea and Samaria since November 2020¹



Counterterrorism Activities

► This past week the Israeli security forces continued intensive counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria, focusing in Jenin, Tulkarm and Nablus. They detained Palestinians suspected of involvement in terrorism and confiscated large quantities of weapons:

Preventing terrorists from Jenin from carrying out an attack

► On the afternoon of August 6, 2023, Israeli security forces killed three Palestinians riding in a vehicle near Arabeh (southwest of Jenin). The three armed terrorists had left the Jenin refugee camp and were going to the settlement of Mevo Dotan to carry out an attack, apparently a

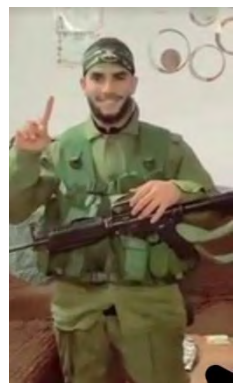
¹ A critical attack is defined by the ITIC as involving shooting, stabbing, a vehicular attack, the use of IEDs, or a combination of the above. Stones and Molotov cocktails thrown by Palestinians are not included.

shooting. The leader **was Naif Abu Sues, 26 years old**, from the Jenin refugee camp. He had been involved in terrorist activity against Israeli security forces, planning attacks and directing the actions of terrorists. Two other terrorists were killed with him. An M-16 assault rifle and several ammunition magazines were found in the vehicle (IDF spokesman's Twitter account and the Israeli media, August 6, 2023).



Right: The terrorists' vehicle (Shehab, August 6, 2023). Left: The rifle found in the vehicle (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, August 6, 2023)

- ▶ The ministry of health in Ramallah reported the death of three Palestinians near Arabeh during an Israeli security force activity (ministry of health in Ramallah Facebook page, August 6, 2023). According to reports, the car with the dead bodies inside was towed by the Israeli security forces (Palestine Online Telegram channel, August 6, 2023).
- ▶ The Jenin Battalion of the Jerusalem Brigades, the PIJ's military-terrorist wing, issued a mourning notice for the death of its three operatives, **Naif Jihad Naif Abu Sues, 27 years old [sic], from the Jenin refugee camp, Khalil Nazar Nimr Abu Na'asa, 21 years old, from the Jenin refugee camp and Baraa' Ahmed al-Qaram, 15 years old, from the village of Jalqamous**, southeast of Jenin (Dunia al-Watan, August 6, 2023).



The three terrorists killed by the Israeli security forces, from right to left: Naif Abu Sues, Khalil Abu Na'asa and Baraa' al-Qaram (QudsN Twitter account, August 6, 2023)

► Senior PIJ and Hamas figures condemned the killing. **PIJ spokesman Tareq Salami** claimed that the "crime" committed by Israel in Jenin was aggression against the entire Palestinian people. He claimed Israel's actions would have a harsh response from the "resistance" [terrorist organizations] (Jerusalem Brigades, August 6, 2023). **Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem** claimed Israel could not avoid paying for its "crimes" and assassination of the three [terrorists] was an "escalation of its aggression" (Shehab, August 6, 2023).

Nur al-Shams refugee camp in Tulkarm

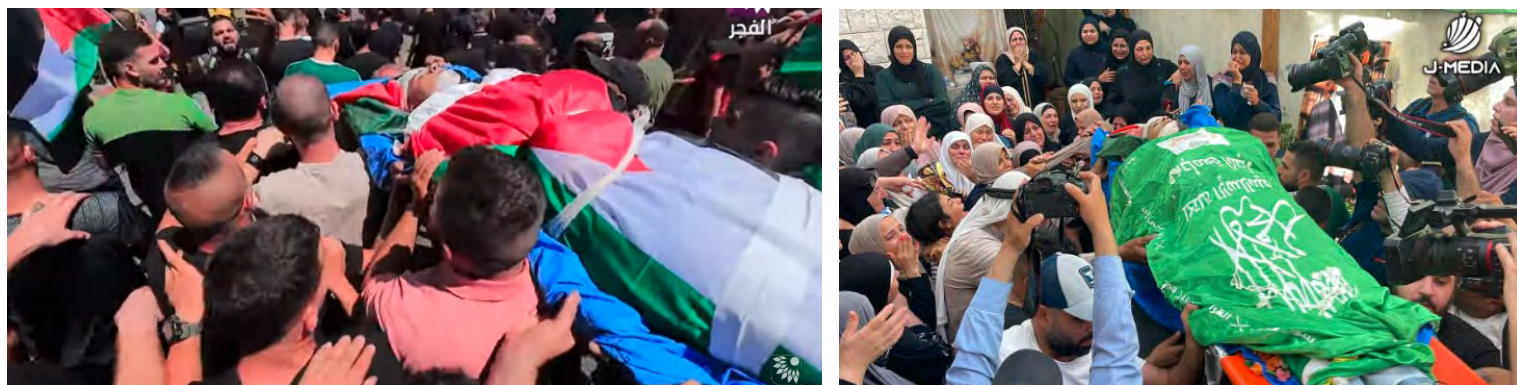
► Before dawn on August 4, 2023, Israeli security forces entered the Nur al-Shams refugee camp in Tulkarm to detain wanted Palestinians. During the activity armed Palestinians detonated IEDs and threw rocks and Molotov cocktails at the forces, who returned fire. According to IDF sources, a Palestinian was killed after being shot at the same time he was hit by shrapnel from an IED he tried to throw at the fighters (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, August 4, 2023).

► The ministry of health in Ramallah reported the death of **Mahmoud Hussam Abu San, 18 years old** (ministry of health in Ramallah Facebook page, August 4, 2023). According to reports, he was killed during an exchange of fire with Israeli security forces (Watan Net, August 4, 2023).

► Hamas issued a mourning notice for its shaheed, jihad fighter **Mahmoud Abu San** (Islamic Bloc website, August 5, 2023). A video was issued of his funeral showing his body wrapped in a Palestinian flag. However, on Palestinian websites the body was shown wrapped in a Hamas flag. His funeral was attended by dozens of armed, masked men who chanted slogans in support of Hamas' military-terrorist wing (al-Fajar channel in Tulkarm, August 4, 2023).



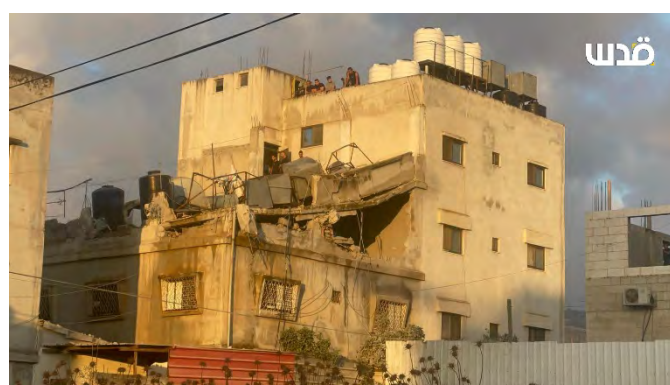
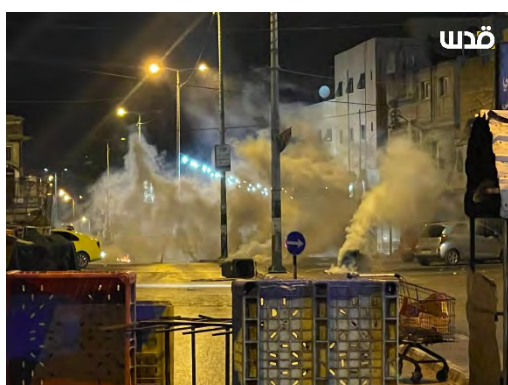
Mourning notice issued by Hamas (Islamic bloc website, August 5, 2023).



Right: His body wrapped in a Hamas flag (Palinfo website, August 4, 2023). On the left: His body wrapped in the Palestinian flag (al-Fajar channel in Tulkarm, August 4, 2023)

Askar refugee camp in Nablus

► On August 8, 2023, Israeli security forces operated in the Askar refugee camp in the eastern part of Nablus to demolish the home of Abd al-Fatah Kharousha, a Hamas terrorist operative who shot and killed two Israeli brothers near Hawara on February 26, 2023. During the IDF activity Palestinians rioted, shooting and throwing IEDs, rocks and Molotov cocktails at the forces, burning tires and blocking roads. The fighters responded with riot dispersal measures (IDF spokesperson's Twitter account, August 8, 2023). The Palestinian media reported that three Palestinians were wounded by IDF forces in the Askar refugee camp (al-Quds, August 8, 2023). The wife of terrorist Kharousha was interviewed near the ruins of her home and said that the demolition of the house would not break their determination, and she wanted to encourage her two children who were imprisoned in Israel (QudsN Twitter account, August 8, 2023).



Right: The terrorist's house after its demolition (IDF spokesperson's Twitter account, August 8, 2023). Left: Burning tires and blocking roads in the Askar refugee camp (QUDSN's Twitter account, August 8, 2023)

Palestinian killed in Silwad

► The **director of the Palestine Medical Center in Ramallah** reported that on August 7, 2023, **Ramzi Fathi Hamed, 17 years old from Silwad** (northeast of Ramallah) died of his wounds after having been shot several days earlier. According to the IDF, he was shot after throwing Molotov cocktails at the guard post at the entrance to the settlement of Ofra (Israeli media, August 7, 2023). The mayor of Silwad claimed he was sitting in his car near Ofra when a Jewish settler shot him (Wafa, August 7, 2023).

► A military funeral was held for Ramzi Fathi Hamed and his body was carried by operatives of the PA's national security forces. His body was wrapped in the Palestinian flag and a Fatah headband was on his forehead. His funeral was attended by Laila Ghannam the governor of the Ramallah district (Wafa, August 7, 2023). Hamas and the PIJ issued mourning notices. Hamas warned Israel that the Palestinians would stand with strength and courage to oppose "settler terrorism" and would respond strongly to "the killing of children" (Shehab, August 7, 2023).



Right: Ramzi Fathi Hamed (Facebook page Qalqilya al-Hadath, August 7, 2023). Left: Military funeral attended by the governor of the Ramallah district (Wafa, August 7, 2023)

Palestinian killed in a clash between Jewish settlers and Palestinians

► On the evening of August 4, 2023, a riot broke out between Jewish settlers from the outpost of Oz Zion (east of Ramallah) and Palestinians from the nearby village of Burqa. According to the settlers, the conflict began when a settler shepherd went to the area between the outpost and the Palestinian village. The shepherd felt threatened by Palestinians who arrived and he called for help. A riot broke out during which a settler shot and killed a Palestinian. One of the settlers was seriously injured by a thrown rock and was hospitalized. Following the incident, two Israeli settlers were detained. A few days later, five Palestinians from the village were also detained (Israeli media, August 4, 6, 2023).

► The ministry of health in Ramallah reported the death of **Qusay Jamal Matan, 19 years old, from Burqa** (ministry of health in Ramallah Facebook page, August 4, 2023). His body was wrapped for burial in a Palestinian flag, and Palestinian and Fatah flags were carried at his funeral (Wafa, August 5, 2023).



Qusay Matan's funeral procession in Burqa (Wafa, August 5, 2023)

► The PA foreign ministry strongly condemned the IDF and accused it of supporting and protecting the settlers (PA foreign ministry Facebook page, August 4, 2023). **Hussein al-Sheikh, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee**, called on the international community and UN agencies to include Itamar Ben-Gvir's political party in the lists of global terrorist organizations because of his call to kill Palestinians and his party's active involvement in killing Palestinians in Burqa (Hussein al-Sheikh's Twitter account, August 5, 2023). Hamas and the PIJ also condemned his death and claimed "the crimes of the enemy will only increase the resistance" [terrorist activity] (Hamas and PIJ Telegram channels, August 5, 2023).

► **Tor Wennesland, special UN envoy to the Middle East peace**, condemned the "acts of violence" against Palestinians in the village of Burqa, including the shooting of a 19 year-old Palestinian. He called for an investigation of the incident and for the perpetrators to be held accountable (Tor Wennesland's Twitter account, August 5, 2023).

The activity of the Palestinian security forces

► In Jenin tensions continued between residents and local armed operatives and the PA security forces because of the continuing detentions of activists, mainly from the PIJ, which are described as "political." On August 4, 2023, a Palestinian youth was killed in unclear circumstances when shots were fired at his vehicle. **Akram al-Rajoub, governor of Jenin district**, claimed the [PA] security forces had not been involved in the shooting and the incident was under investigation. Riots broke out during the funeral and the PA's security

forces fired teargas canisters, after which armed operatives shot at the Muqata'a building (government headquarters) (Shehab, August 2, 2023).



Shots fired at the Muqata'a in Jenin (Shehab Twitter account, August 2, 2023).

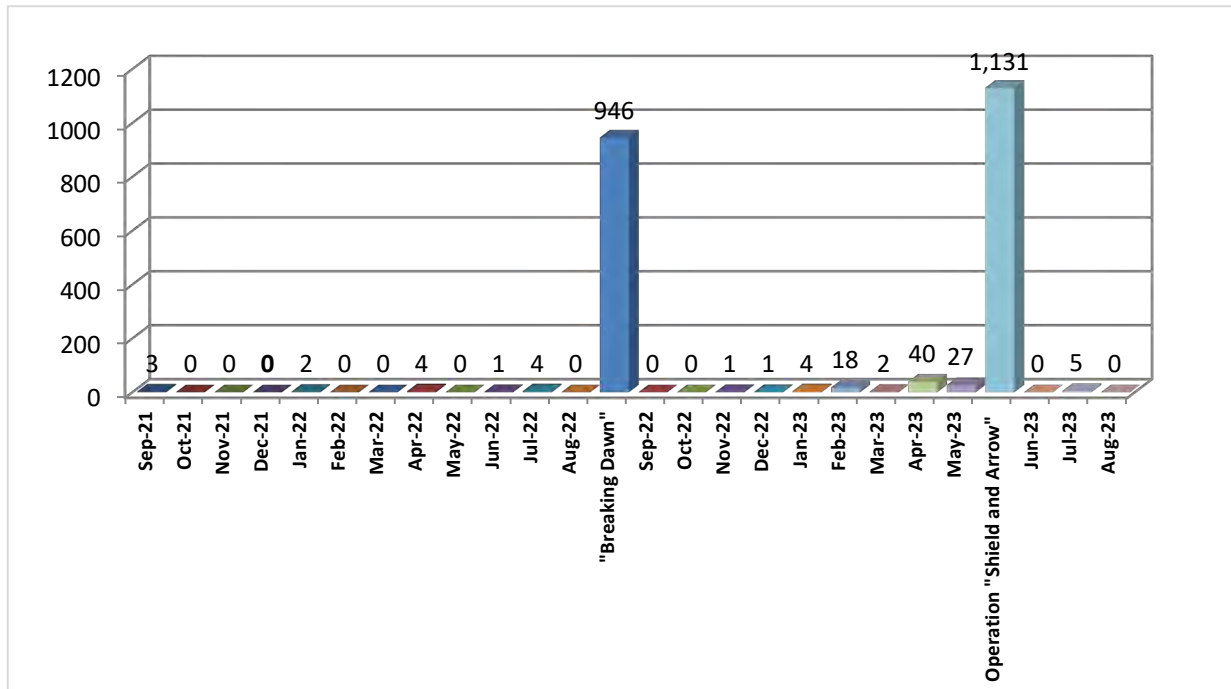
► The PIJ organized a march in Gaza to protest against the PA's detention policy (Shehab, August 4, 2023). During the march **Khaled al-Batash, a member of the PIJ's political bureau**, gave a speech. He condemned the detentions of the PIJ's "activists" in Judea and Samaria and the "closure" of the Gaza Strip. He also claimed that "instead of half a step forward, they took us a full step back under the heading of fear for legitimacy and sovereignty, and they continued detaining 'resistance fighters' and members of the opposition " (Safa, August 4, 2023). Interviewed by al-Aqsa TV, **Hamas spokesman Abd al-Latif al-Qanua** said the PA leadership had to stop all administrative detentions. He said "the land of the West Bank must be fertile for the resistance and the PA must lift its heavy hand from the resistance fighters" (al-Aqsa TV, August 4, 2023).

Israel's South

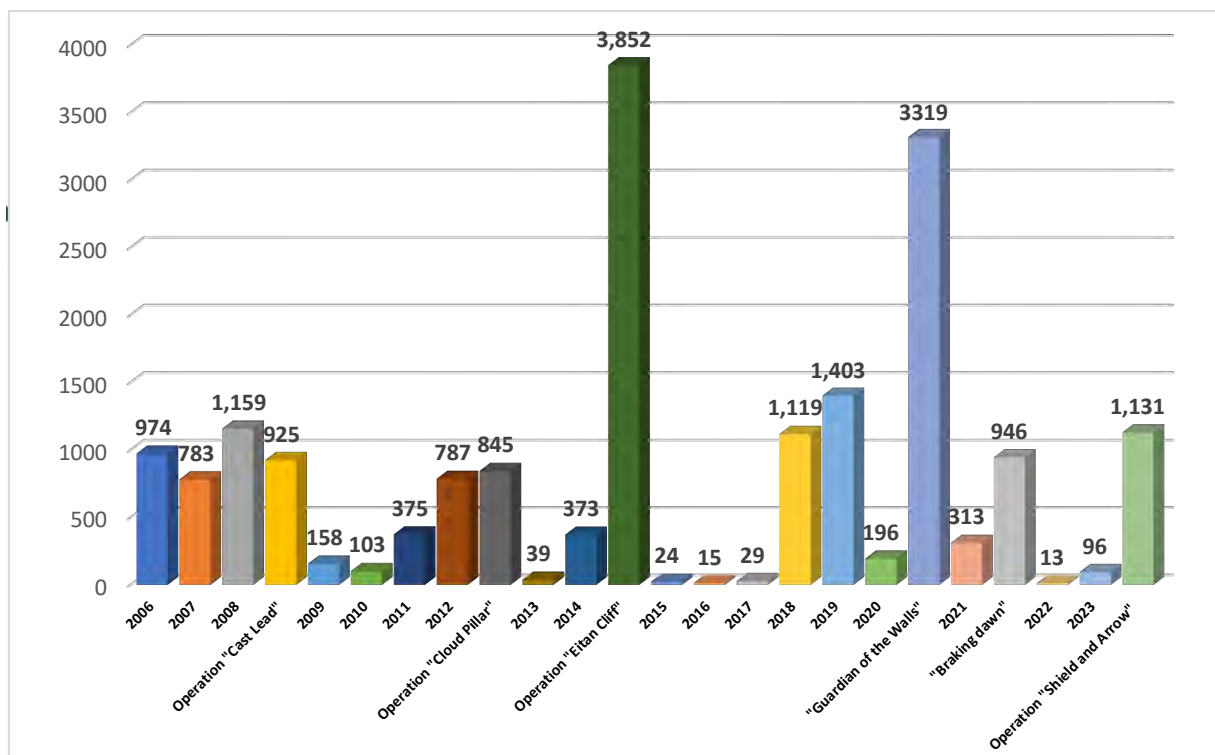
Rocket and mortar shell fire into Israel

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

Monthly Distribution of Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire since September 2021



Annual Distribution of Rocket Hits since 2006



Developments in the Gaza Strip

Fourth Gaza Strip power plant turbine begins operations

► On August 1, 2023, the fourth turbine at the power plant that provides electricity in the Gaza Strip began operations. **Jalal Isma'il, chairman of the Gaza Energy Commission**, said electricity production would now increase to 85-95 megawatts and local residents, especially in the Gaza city and northern Gaza districts, where the loads were heaviest, would benefit from an improvement in the supply of electricity and schedule once they were able to alternate eight hours with and eight hours without electricity, and there would also be a possibility of additional hours outside of peak hours. He also said the operation of the turbine had been made possible by Qatar, its monthly cost was \$4.8 and funding would be sufficient until September 5, 2023 (al-Ra'i news agency, July 31, 2023; Aljazeera.net, August 1, 2023).

► **Walid Sa'ad Sa'il, deputy chairman of the board of the Palestinian Electric Company and CEO of the Gaza power plant**, said the fourth turbine would operate permanently and not for a fixed period, and added there was authorization for funding the operation of all four turbines for an unlimited period (Dunia al-Watan, July 31, 2023).

Hamas security forces prevent protest demonstrations

► An editorial in the London daily newspaper al-Araby al-Jadeed related to the demonstrations organized on July 30, 2023 to protest the economic hardships in the Gaza Strip. According to the paper, Hamas security forces detained many of the demonstrators, adding that an attempt to organize demonstrations on August 4, 2023 had failed because of the extensive deployment of Hamas security forces.

► **Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem** claimed Gaza's difficult economic and humanitarian situation was caused by the Israeli "siege," which has lasted for more than 17 years. He claimed the PA also bore responsibility and that "non-violent protest is everyone's guaranteed right." **Fatah spokesman Munther al-Haik** said Gazans had the right to make their voices heard about the prevailing hardships, but Fatah emphasized the need to maintain peace and civil security and not to incite conflicts through the social networks (al-Araby al-Jadeed, August 7, 2023).

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

Mahmoud Abbas's activity

► On August 8, 2023, Mahmoud Abbas met with King Abdallah II of Jordan in Amman. They discussed bilateral relations, common issues and the latest political developments. The meeting was also attended by Hussein al-Sheikh, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee; Majed Faraj, chief of Palestinian General Intelligence; Bisher Khasawneh, Jordanian prime minister; and Ayman al-Safadi, Jordanian foreign minister (Wafa, August 8, 2023).



Mahmoud Abbas in a meeting with King Abdallah of Jordan (Mahmoud Abbas's Facebook page, August 8, 2023)

► On August 2, 2023 Mahmoud Abbas met with **Nikos Christodoulides, president of Cyprus**. Mahmoud Abbas said both sides hoped to expand cooperation in fields such as trade, tourism and the economy. He also thanked Cyprus for the scholarships it granted to Palestinian students and for its efforts with the EU to support peace in accordance with international decisions regarding legitimacy. Mahmoud Abbas claimed he expected to complete "Palestine's" joining the UN as a full member state and broad European recognition of the state of "Palestine" (Mahmoud Abbas's Facebook page, August 2, 2023). Christodoulides and Mahmoud Abbas were in attendance as their foreign ministers signed agreements for cooperation agreements (PA foreign ministry Twitter account, August 3, 2023).



Mahmoud Abbas meets with Nikos Christodoulides (Mahmoud Abbas' Facebook page, August 2, 2023).

► On August 6, 2023, Mahmoud Abbas met with **Mu'id Shaaban, the chairman of the commission opposing the fence and settlements**,² who gave him the commission's report for 2022. Mahmoud Abbas expressed his appreciation to the "heroes of the popular resistance" for their activities, achievements in dealing with "the Israeli occupation" and success in removing several settlements. He emphasized the importance of "escalating the peaceful popular resistance [popular terrorism]" to protect the Palestinians and their land (Wafa, August 6, 2023).



Mahmoud Abbas receives the annual report for 2022 from Mu'id Shaaban (Wafa, August 6, 2023)

American delegation visits Ramallah

► On August 2, 2023, **Hussein al-Sheikh** met with an American delegation led by **Andrew Miller, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State**. Al-Sheikh demanded the US pressure the Israeli government to stop all its unilateral measures and find a political horizon that would lead to the end of the "occupation." He claimed Israel did not fulfill the agreements of the Aqaba and Sharm el-Sheikh summit meetings and continued the policies of settlement and demolishing

² A PA commission which documents the Jewish settlement in Judea and Samaria and its takeover of land, and organizes protests in the friction areas.

houses, which undermined the two-state solution. They also discussed the PA's critical financial situation caused by the cessation of American support and Israel's continued deductions of the tax revenues it collects for the PA. Miller emphasized the need to renew the strategic dialogue with the US administration and work on resolving bilateral issues (Hussein al-Sheikh's Twitter account, August 6, 2023).



Hussein al-Sheikh meets with a delegation from the United States (Hussein al-Sheikh's Twitter account, August 6, 2023)

Relief for the Palestinians

► At a meeting of the political-security cabinet, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu presented a series of planned economic relief measures for the PA, three of which were recommended by the security establishment: easing tax collection, increasing operating hours and changing tax collection at the Allenby Crossing, and allocating land for an industrial zone in Tarqumiyah (northwest of Hebron).

► In response **Hussein al-Sheikh** called the Israeli government racist, trying to improve its image with frivolous measures and undermine the PA. He called on the US government to find a creative political initiative based on international decisions and signed agreements, and to create a political horizon that would lead to serious negotiations to end the Israeli "occupation" (Hussein al-Sheikh's Twitter account, August 6, 2023). **PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh** claimed the funds held by Israel were Palestinian, and Israel had to immediately stop its monthly deductions and return all the Palestinians' money (Wafa, August 6, 2023).

Increased PA cooperation with the World Bank

► On August 3, 2023, Muhammad Shtayyeh met with **Stefan Emblad, the representative of the World Bank in the PA and Gaza**. They discussed bilateral cooperation and were briefed

about the progress of the various projects financed by the World Bank and carried out by the PA (Wafa, August 3, 2023).



Muhammad Shtayyeh meets with Stefan Emblad (Wafa, August 3, 2023)

The internal Palestinian reconciliation

► The Palestinian and international media reported that expectations for ending the internal Palestinian schism were very low, despite the meeting of the organization's leadership in Egypt and Mahmoud Abbas' call to establish a monitoring committee to complete the reconciliation (aljazeera.net, August 7, 2023). According to London-based al-Hiwar TV, the meeting was held out of politeness and a sense of obligation, and no results had been expected (al-Hiwar TV, August 4, 2023). Al-Araby al-Jadeed published cartoons clearly reflecting the gaps between the Hamas and PA positions (al-Quds al-Arabi, 3, August 1, 2023).

► Interviewed by al-Jazeera TV, **Musa Abu Marzouq, a member of the Hamas political bureau**, said no preparations were currently being made regarding the monitoring committee called for by Mahmoud Abbas. He claimed the meeting had not born the necessary fruit, although Hamas was interested in results. He said Hamas would continue maintaining contacts with the "Palestinian organizations" to narrow the gaps and resolve internal disputes (aljazeera.net, August 7, 2023). **Khaled Mashal, a member of the Hamas political bureau and chairman of Hamas "abroad,"** claimed the real cause of the schism was not the competition for leadership in the Palestinian territories but in the Arab world (Sputnik website in Arabic, August 3, 2023).



Palestinian cartoons that reflect the gaps in the reconciliation process (al-Quds al-Arabi, August 1 and 3, 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:³

- ◆ **August 7, 2023:** A Molotov cocktail was thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Beit El (north of Ramallah). No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **August 7, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near the settlement of Ma'ayan Meir (northwest of Ramallah). No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **August 7, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Shiloh (northeast of Ramallah). One person was injured and evacuated to a hospital. The vehicle was damaged.



The Israeli vehicle attacked near Shiloh

³ Information and pictures from Rescue Without Borders in Judea and Samaria unless otherwise noted.

- ◆ **August 7, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at Israeli vehicles near Shuqba (northwest of Ramallah). No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **August 6, 2023:** Palestinians reported an Israel bus had been damaged by rocks thrown at it near the village of Burqa (northeast of Ramallah). No casualties were reported; the bus was damaged (QudsN Twitter account, August 7, 2023).



Bus damaged near Burqa (QudsN Twitter account, August 7, 2023).

- ◆ **August 6, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near the Hever Junction (southeast of Hebron). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **August 6, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus near the Greater Yitzhar Junction (south of Nablus). No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **August 6, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Azzun (east of Qalqilya). On August 2, Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus at the same location. No casualties were reported; vehicles were damaged.
- ◆ **August 2, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Sinjil (northeast of Ramallah). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **August 2, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Emanuel (north of Ariel). No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **August 2, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near the Maccabim Crossing (west of Ramallah). No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **August 2, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Bayt Ummar (north of Hebron). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **August 1, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus near Nebi Elias (east of Qalqilya). The bus driver was injured; the bus was damaged.