



Spotlight on Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (September 6-12, 2023)

Overview

► This past week Palestinians carried out four terrorist attacks. Three were shooting attacks: shots were fired at the Argaman Junction (in the Jordan Valley) and at IDF positions in Tulkarm and Jalameh (northern Samaria). One was a stabbing attack in the Old City of Jerusalem in which two people were injured. Israeli security forces continued counterterrorism activities, focusing on Jenin and near Jericho. Palestinians suspected of terrorist activities were detained and weapons were confiscated. A rocket was unsuccessfully launched from west of Jenin at the Gilboa settlements in Israel. The rocket fell in Palestinian territory. The Hamas-affiliated Ayash Battalion again claimed responsibility for the attack. Saleh al-'Arouri, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau, said the "resistance" [anti-Israel terrorism] in Judea and Samaria would continue to develop and claimed there was high-level coordination between Hamas and the military-terrorist wings of the other organizations.

► On the eve of the Jewish High Holidays, the Israeli media reported that senior IDF officers warned Hamas through intermediaries not to engage in escalation. Hamas denied the reports and emphasized it would continue to fight Israel in every arena.

► On September 12, 2023, the joint operations room of the military-terrorist wings of the Palestinian organizations held its fourth "military" maneuver, which included live fire, rocket launches towards the sea and a simulated attack on an Israeli position. Hamas banned protest demonstrations near the security fence after that became a condition for the resumption of activity at the Kerem Shalom Crossing, which was suspended after an attempt to smuggle weapons. The chairman of Qatar's National Committee for the Reconstruction of Gaza participated in the negotiations for reopening the crossing.

► Harsh international condemnations were leveled at Mahmoud Abbas' anti-Semitic, Holocaust-denying remarks in a speech at a meeting of Fatah's Revolutionary Council. Palestinian Authority (PA) figures rushed to issue clarifications, claiming he had been quoting "history books and academic [sic] studies." In the meantime, preparations continue for Mahmoud Abbas' September 21, 2023, speech at the United Nations General Assembly and for

the meeting of the PA's donors countries, which will also be held in New York City. Palestinians condemned the decision of the Israeli minister of finance to deduct the debts of the East Jerusalem Electric Company from the tax revenues Israel collects for the PA.

Terrorist Attacks

Shots fired at an IDF position near Tulkarm

►On the evening of September 8, 2023, shots were fired at an IDF position near Tulkarm. No casualties were reported; the position was damaged. According to reports, the shots were fired from Tulkarm. Empty shell casings were found nearby. IDF forces launched a search for the shooters (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, September 8, 2023).

Shots fired at an IDF position in Jalameh

►On the morning of September 8, 2023, shots were fired at an IDF position in Jalameh (north of Jenin). Searches revealed dozens of empty shell casings. There were no casualties (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, September 8, 2023).

Stabbing attack in Jerusalem

►On the afternoon of September 6, 2023, a young Palestinian from east Jerusalem went to the Jaffa Gate promenade in Jerusalem and attacked an Israeli civilian and an American tourist with a meat cleaver. A security guard from a nearby shopping mall and police chased and caught the attacker. The cleaver, which he threw on the ground, was found near the scene of the attack (Israel Police, September 6, 2023).

►The Palestinian media reported the attacker **was Bassel Iyad Lafi, 17 years old, from Jabel Mukaber in east Jerusalem** (al-Qastel website Twitter account, September 6, 2023; QudsN Facebook page, September 6, 2023). The Palestinian social networks refer to him as Bassel Iyad Lafi Abu Sarhan (Fahed Abu Sarhan's Facebook page, September 6, 2023), and Bassel Iyad Lafi Abu Sarhan al-Ubeidi (Facebook page of al-Sherari Atta, September 6, 2023).



Right: Bassel Iyad Lafi (al-Qastel website Twitter account, September 6, 2023). Left: The meat cleaver used to carry out the attack (Israel Police, September 6, 2023)

► **Muhammad Hamada, Hamas spokesman for Jerusalem affairs**, claimed attack was a "natural response to the crimes of the Israeli occupation" against Jerusalem and its residents, the invasions of al-Aqsa Mosque, the destruction of houses, the displacement of residents and acts of aggression against women, etc. He claimed the attack "proved" that despite everything Israel did, it could not break the will of the growing "resistance." He also added that the path of "resistance" [terrorist attacks] was the only response (Hamas website, September 6, 2023).

► **Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) spokesman Tareq Salami** praised the escalation of "resistance" activities and welcomed the attack, which he said was carried out as a natural response to "Zionist terrorism." He added that Israel's threats to intensify its activity in Jenin or elsewhere would not stop the "resistance" but would only increase the Palestinians' determination to continue fighting (Telegram channel of the PIJ in Judea and Samaria's media information office, September 6, 2023).

► After the attack, **Mustafa al-Sawaf, a Hamas-affiliated political commentator from Gaza**, wrote an article calling on all Palestinians who were capable of carrying out attacks and to act, since "resistance" was the duty of every Palestinian and did not require approval or permission, neither from father nor husband nor leader (Shehab, September 7, 2023).



A notice captioned, "The response in the appropriate place as revenge and rage for the women [sic]." Right: The attack at the Jaffa Gate. Left: A policeman kicks a Palestinian woman who tried to carry out an attack on September 5, 2023, near the Temple Mount (Telegram channel of the PIJ in Judea and Samaria's media information office, September 6, 2023)

Shots fired at the Argaman Junction

► On the afternoon of September 5, 2023, a Palestinian went to a restaurant at the Argaman Junction in the Jordan Valley, fired two shots into the air and one at a container, after which he fled. There were no casualties. The container was damaged. Border Police forces were dispatched to the scene. At first criminal intent was suspected, but later it became clear it was a terrorist attack. The forces pursued the shooter, who was located in an orchard nearby. He shot at the police, who returned fire, killing him. A Border Police fighter was wounded during the exchange of fire (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, September 5, 2023).



The gun used by the terrorist (Israel Police, September 5, 2023)

► The ministry of health in Ramallah reported the death of **Muhammad Yussuf Isma'il Zubidat, 17 years old**. Israel allegedly retains his body. He was a high school student (Wafa, September 5, 2023). The Dawn Battalion, affiliated with the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades (AAMB), claimed

responsibility for carrying out the attack, calling it the "first response to the crime in Hebron"¹ (Dawn Battalion Telegram channel, September 5, 2023).



Right: Muhammad Zubidat with a headband reading "Dawn Battalion" (Dawn Battalion Telegram channel, September 5, 2023). Left: The al-Fajr Battalion logo. To the right of the rifle the Arabic reads, al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades (Dawn Battalion Telegram channel, August 22, 2023)

► Hamas issued a mourning notice for him, stating that the "resistance" [terrorist attacks] continued, and that the "occupation" had to expect Palestinians in every city and street [would attack]. It also stated that the "resistance" would not rest until liberation from the "occupation," no matter how many victims there were (Hamas website, September 5, 2023).

Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem praised the attack, which he claimed had been carried out "in defense of the Palestinians" and in response to the crimes of the "occupation," especially "the crime against the women in Hebron." He boasted Israel had failed to stop the "tide of" resistance in Judea and Samaria, which he claimed had both means and goals (Hamas website, September 5, 2023).

► The **PIJ in Judea and Samaria** welcomed the attack, calling it the "natural and legitimate response" to Israel's escalating actions against the Palestinians, the latest of which were [allegedly] "violating the dignity of the women in Hebron" and "storming" Tulkarm. The PIJ's announcement also claimed the attack expressed the unity of the conflict arenas and "the expansion of the circle of fire" (PIJ website, September 5, 2023).

¹ Referring to an article in the Israeli daily Haaretz alleging that "masked female IDF soldiers" forced women from the Ajlouni family in Hebron to disrobe and face them, naked.

Rocket fire from western Jenin targeting the Gilboa

►On the morning of September 10, 2023, an improvised rocket was unsuccessfully launched at Ram-On, a moshav in the Gilboa area to the north of Jenin. The rocket fell in Palestinian territory and no casualties or damage were reported. IDF forces located the launcher near the village of Silat al-Harithiya (Israeli media, IDF spokesman's Twitter account , September 10, 2023). It was the seventh rocket launch in the past two months.²

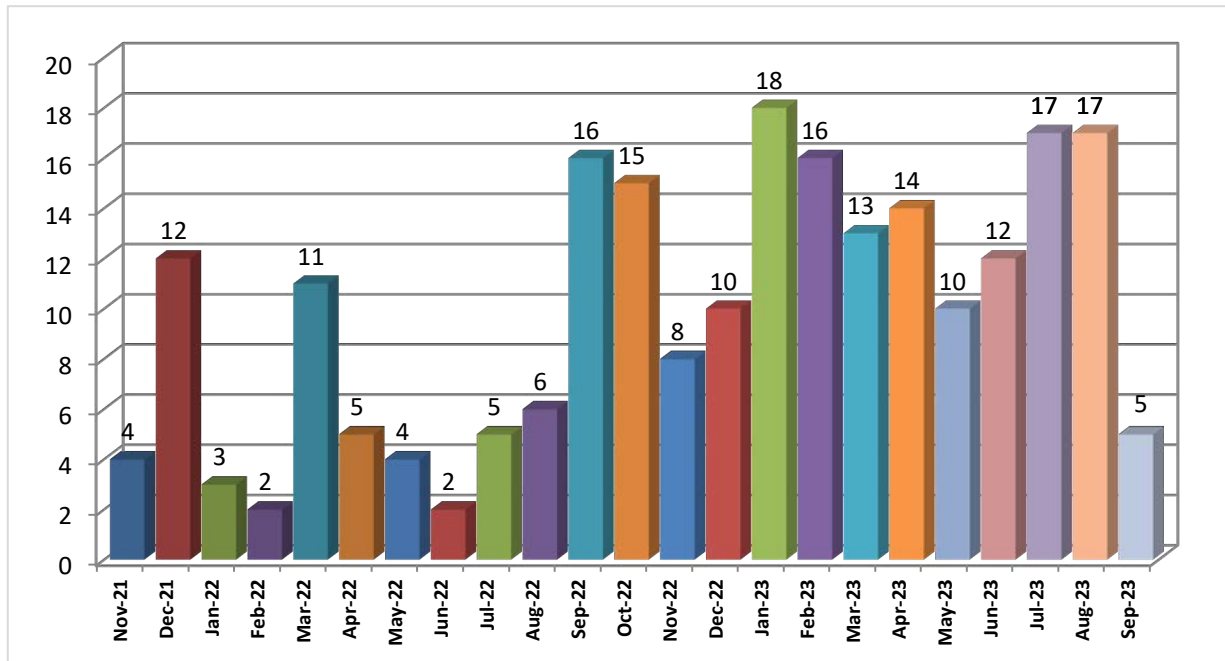
►The Hamas-affiliated al-Ayash Battalion in western Jenin stated that as part of its ongoing preparations and development, in response to "Israel's crimes" against the Palestinians and to avenge the "freedom fighters," al-Ayash Battalion operatives had successfully launched a Qassam 1 rocket at "the settlement of Ram-On" in "Jenin territory." The announcement claimed that the prisoners and Jerusalem were a red line Israel could not cross without a response (al-Ayash Battalion in western Jenin Telegram channel, September 10, 2023). A video of the launch was later issued.



Right: A note next to the rocket launcher reading, "Al-Ayash Battalion; shelling the settlements in the Jenin territory in Marj Bin Amer [the Jezreel Valley] with a Qassam 1 rocket; Sunday, September 10, 2023; and the next one [will be] bigger; #West Bank, shield of Jerusalem." Left: The rocket launch (al-Ayash Battalion in western Jenin Telegram channel, September 10, 2023)

² For further information see the July 31, 2023 ITIC report, "Israel attacked by rockets fired from Judea and Samaria: analysis and significance."

Critical Terrorist Attacks in Judea and Samaria since November 2020³



Judea and Samaria

Counterterrorism Activities

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

The Aqabat Jabr refugee camp

► Before dawn on September 11, 2023, Israeli security forces operated in the Aqabat Jaber refugee camp (southwest of Jericho), detained two wanted Palestinians suspected of terrorist activity and confiscated two weapons. During the activity armed Palestinian terrorists shot at them and threw IEDs. The forces returned fire (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, September 11, 2023).

The Jenin refugee camp

► On the morning of September 6, 2023, Israeli security forces in the Jenin refugee camp detained Muhammad Naghnighia, an AAMB terrorist operative who recently aided carrying out

³ 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 attacks in Judea and Samaria and was involved in arms dealing. During the activity armed terrorists shot at the forces, who returned fire (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, September 6, 2023).



Right: IDF forces enter the Jenin refugee camp (Twitter account of photojournalist Hassan Aslih, September 6, 2023). Left: Muhammad Nagnighia, detained AAMB terrorist operative (Shehab website and Twitter account, September 6, 2023)



An old photo of Nagnighia and Zakaria Zubeidi, a senior AAMB operative in Jenin, currently imprisoned in Israel (Shehab website, September 6, 2023)

Palestinian killed in the al-Aroub refugee camp

►According to reports, on the evening of September 9, 2023, a number of Palestinians approached the IDF position near the al-Aroub refugee camp (north of Hebron) and threw Molotov cocktails at soldiers. In response, IDF fighters shot at the Palestinians (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, September 9, 2023).

►The ministry of health in Ramallah reported the death of **Milad Munzer al-Ra'i, 16 years old, from the al-Aroub refugee camp** (Wafa, September 9, 2023). **The PIJ in Judea and Samaria**

issued a mourning notice for him, claiming him as one of its operatives (Telegram channel of the PIJ in Judea and Samaria's media information office, September 10, 2023). Milad al-Ra'i had posted support for the PIJ's military-terrorist wing on his Facebook, along with pictures of himself visiting the graves in Jenin of PIJ operatives (Milad al-Ra'i's Facebook page, July 31, 2022). A funeral was held for him in the al-Aroub refugee camp; his body was wrapped for burial in a PIJ flag (Wafa, September 10, 2023). After his funeral, Palestinians rioted against IDF forces (Ma'an, September 10, 2023).



The mourning notice issued by the PIJ for al-Ra'i (Telegram channel of the PIJ in Judea and Samaria's media information office, September 10, 2023)



Photos Milad al-Ra'i posted to his Facebook page. Right: Jerusalem Brigades terrorist operatives in the al-Aroub refugee camp (Milad al-Ra'i's Facebook page, December 6, 2022). Left: Al-Ra'i visits the graves of PIJ terrorist operatives in Jenin (Milad al-Ra'i's Facebook page, July 31, 2022)



Palestinians throw Molotov cocktails and rocks at IDF forces in the al-Aroub refugee camp (Ma'an, September 10, 2023)

► **PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh** called on international human rights organizations, especially UNICEF, to intervene to stop Israel's "daily crimes of killing Palestinians," the most recent of which was the "execution" of the child Milad al-Ra'i (Wafa, September 10, 2023).

► **Rawhi Fatouh, chairman of the Palestinian National Council**, condemned the "execution" of Milad al-Ra'i. He claimed the soldiers of "the Israeli occupation" had unambiguous orders from their commanders and ministers in the Israeli government to kill Palestinian civilians, especially children. Fatouh claimed Israel's violations against children, the killing, deliberately injuring and causing disability were war crimes requiring the Israeli government be held accountable and international intervention to provide protection for Palestinian children and civilians (Wafa, September 9, 2023).

► The **PIJ** issued a mourning notice claiming the "heinous crime" reflected the desire of "the enemy and its criminal government" to continue its aggression against the Palestinians, adding that such events "united the arenas of conflict and ignited the flame of intifada" [uprising] (Telegram channel of the PIJ in Judea and Samaria's media information office, September 10, 2023).

Prevention of arms smuggling from Jordan

► On September 5, 2023, the Northern District Prosecutor's Office filed an indictment against one Palestinian from Qalansuwa and another from the village of Akhtaba (northeast of Tulkarm) for involvement in smuggling arms from Jordan at the beginning of August 2023. According to the indictment, they smuggled four FN pistols and four Claymore mines (a fragmentation device used by Hezbollah) through the security fence from Jordan to Israel, projectiles for breaching bunkers and an anti-tank mine. The deal was made for an operative

of the PIJ's military-terrorist wing who was detained in Israel in 2006. The two smugglers intended to go to the Nur al-Shams refugee camp in Tulkarm, but were stopped by police forces at the entrance to Qalansuwa (Israeli media, September 5, 2023). The border between Jordan and Israel has recently been used to smuggle large quantities of weapons.

A new Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades network in the village of Bani Na'im

►On September 5, 2023, the new Telegram channel was launched, represented as the official and only channel of the Bani Na'im Battalion in Hebron, subordinate to the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military-terrorist wing. Its first posting announced the beginning of jihad activity (Bani Na'im Battalion Telegram channel, September 5, 2023), and later announced that it would produce a device called "al-Arouri 1" (Bani Na'im Battalion Telegram channel , September 5, 2023).



The IED shown in a video (Bani Na'im Battalion Telegram channel, September 5, 2023)

The PA security force activity

►On September 8, 2023, it was reported that armed, masked operatives of the PA security forces had erected several checkpoints in the city of Tulkarm and stopped vehicles for inspection. The Tulkarm Battalion of the PIJ's military-terrorist wing said in response that the deployment of the checkpoints was directed against its operatives, adding that they operated only against Israel (Shehab, September 8, 2023).



PA security force checkpoints in Tulkarm (Shehab, September 8, 2023)

Saleh al-'Arouri interviewed by al-Jazeera TV

► **Saleh al-'Arouri, deputy chairman of Hamas' political bureau and coordinator of its activities in Judea and Samaria**, was interviewed at length by al-Jazeera TV. He related to the following topics (aljazeera.net, September 6, 2023):

- ◆ **Formal Hamas claim of responsibility for attacks:** According to al-'Arouri, formally claiming responsibility for attacks in Judea and Samaria is subject to the discretion of the military wing and considerations of the "resistance's" interests. Hamas is "the backbone" of the "resistance," its public involvement affects the "resistance" environment and conveys the message that political leadership exists. Claiming responsibility for terrorist attacks only expresses anger at Israel's actions, but has a political purpose. The "resistance" attacks for which Hamas accepted responsibility were those carried out by movement members, several of whom left evidence in the form of wills and photos testifying to their membership in Hamas' military wing.
- ◆ **The "resistance" in northern Judea and Samaria:** According to al-'Arouri, all areas of Judea and Samaria, north to south, are a hothouse for "resistance activity," but for objective reasons, the "resistance" in the north expanded rapidly and significantly mainly following Israel's withdrawal.
- ◆ **Rockets launched by the al-Ayash Battalion:** Developing "resistance" activity is a priority for Hamas and the other organizations, whose objective is to attack and exhaust Israel. Therefore, the mission of developing "resistance" measures has to be effective and have influence, be considered a central goal, and all capabilities and energy must be devoted to it, including rockets which are efficient and effective. The "resistance" in the Gaza Strip inspired the "resistance" in Judea and Samaria, which will continue to develop.

◆ **Coordination between Hamas and the military wings in Judea and Samaria:**

Coordination takes place at a high level. There is no doubt that friction on the ground creates an atmosphere of positive interaction between the operatives of the various military wings, which aspire to create common ground for developing military cooperation to stand together against Israel.

◆ **Hamas-Syria relations:** Syria is an important country for "Palestine," and one of the countries that has had influence in all aspects of the conflict with "the Zionist enemy." Restoring relations with key strategic regional countries which have influence in the conflict will serve Hamas' goals.

The Israeli Security-Political Cabinet's postpones deliberating the conditions of the security prisoners

► On September 12, 2023, the Security-Political Cabinet met to discuss security assessments for the High Holidays. On recommendations from the IDF, the prime minister decided to postpone deliberating the conditions of the security prisoners until October 2023 (after the holidays) (Israeli media, September 2, 2023).

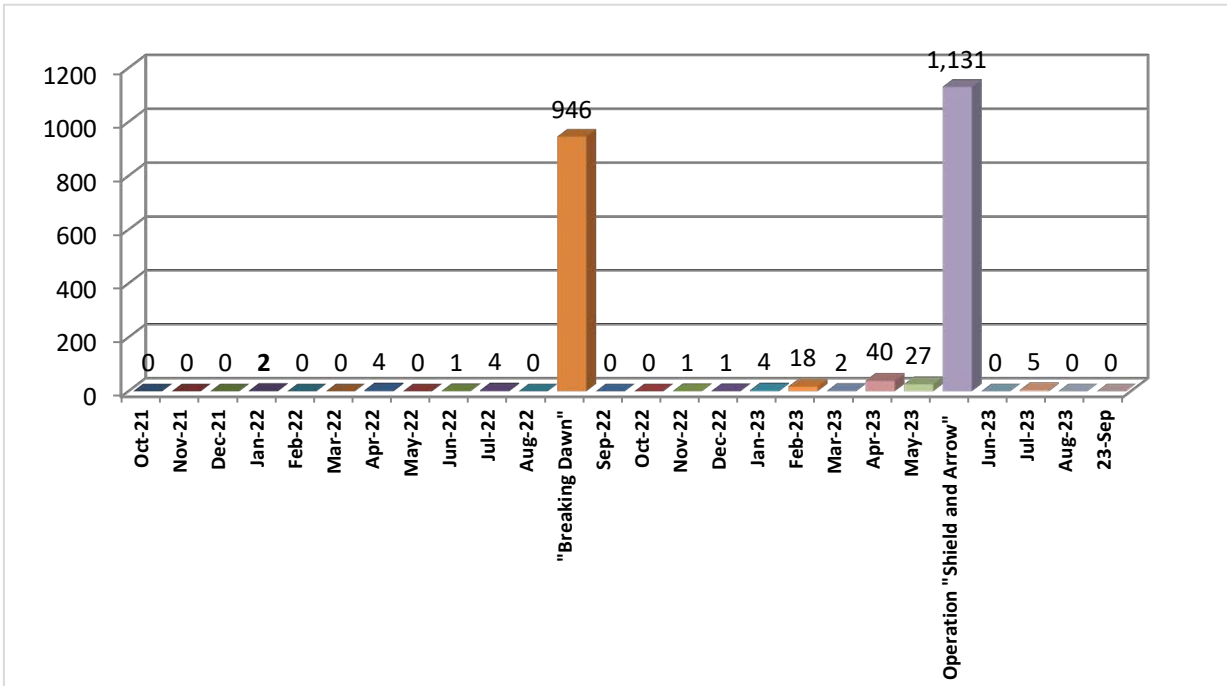
► The Palestinian prisoners' movement called on the public to demonstrate in Palestinian city centers on the evening of September 12, 2023 in support of the prisoners' struggle and to protest against Israel's intention to worsen prison conditions (Shehab, September 11, 2023).

Israel's South

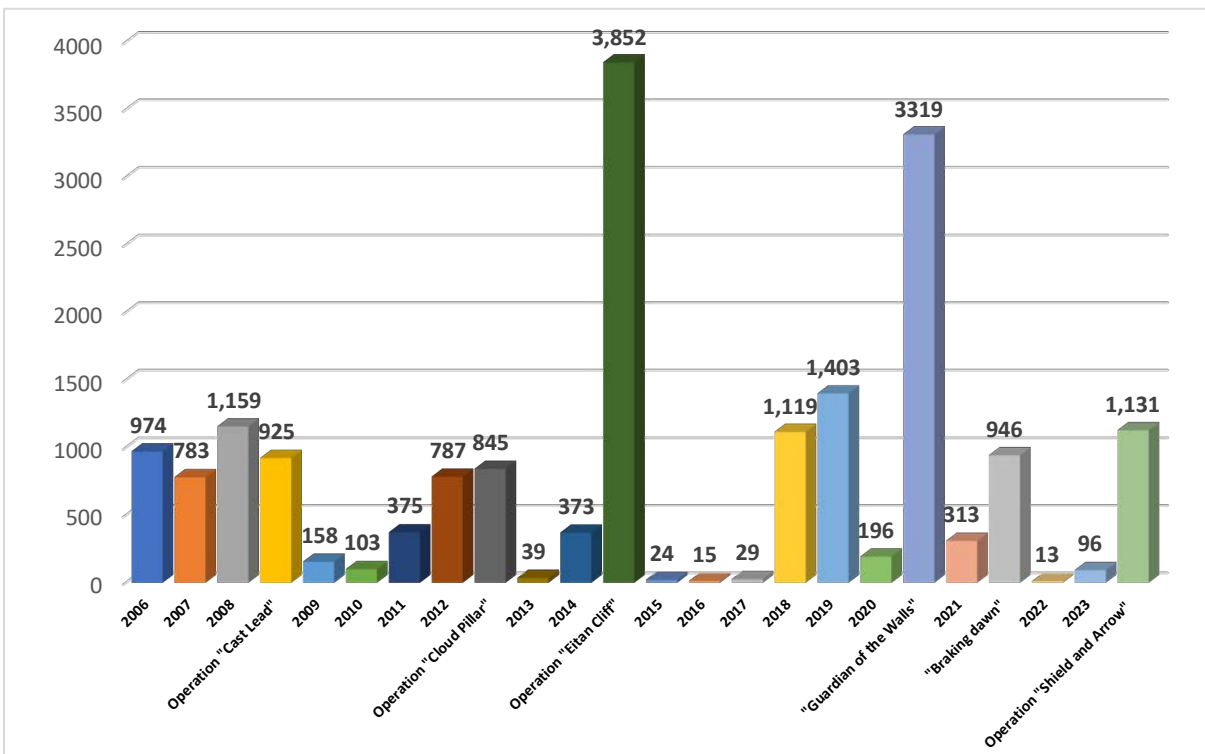
Rocket and mortar shell fire into Israel

► 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

Clashes in Gaza City

► On the evening of September 5, 2023, dozens of Palestinians rioted in the eastern part of Gaza City, throwing IEDs and hand grenades. In response, IDF forces fired at the rioters (IDF spokesman's Twitter account , September 5, 2023).

► The Palestinian media reported that dozens of Palestinians had "demonstrated" at the Malka return camp in the east of Gaza City to protest "harassment of five women in Hebron by IDF soldiers." The "demonstrators" burned tires, shouted "Allahu akbar," and waved Palestinian flags. They also detonated IEDs near the security fence (Shehab, September 5, 2023; Safa, September 5, 2023).



IED explosion (Right: Shehab Telegram channel, September 5, 2023. Left: Paldf Twitter account, September 6, 2023)

Prevention of demonstrations along the Israel-Gaza Strip border

► After four consecutive weeks of demonstrations and riots near the border security fence in eastern Gaza City, the Amad website reported that as of September 8, 2023, Hamas would prevent protesters from reaching the areas close to the security fence. The following decisions were also announced: police patrols would be deployed along the border areas, especially in the Malka camp; plainclothes operatives of the general investigations department would be deployed to deal with civilians who approached the border; there would be increased and early security activity against key instigators; security and intelligence activity would be increased regarding any intention to act contrary to procedure, and information about the issue would be transmitted to the central operations administration. The decisions were circulated to the

military-terrorist wing commanders, the restraint force and Hamas security forces (Amad, September 8, 2023).⁴



Restraint force operatives forcefully remove protesters from the Malka camp (Telegram channel of Hamza al-Masri [a Gazan who opposes Hamas], September 9, 2023)

Reopening the Kerem Shalom crossing

► Stopping demonstrations near the fence was apparently an Israeli condition for the reopening of the Kerem Shalom Crossing, which was closed on September 4, 2023 following the discovery of an attempt use it to smuggle weapons. On September 8, 2023, the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) announced the reopening of the crossing. He emphasized Israel would not allow civilians or humanitarian activity in the Gaza Strip to be exploited for terrorist acts (COGAT Facebook page in Arabic, September 8, 2023). The PA "presidential" committee for coordinating merchandise, which is subordinate to the Palestinian Crossings Authority, confirmed Israel had briefed it about reopening the crossing and in the meantime the "revolutionary youth" announced the cancellation of their activity at the Malka camp (al-Quds, September 8, 2023). The media reported that Mohammed al-Emadi, chairman of Qatar's National Committee for the Reconstruction of Gaza, had been involved in the negotiations for reopening the Kerem Shalom Crossing.

⁴ For further information see the September 10, 2023 ITIC report, "Possible Renewal of the Return Marches."

►Gazan economic commentator, Muhammad Abu Jayab, said Israel's had closed the crossing for a few days to exert economic pressure on the Gaza Strip in order to achieve political and security goals. He claimed reopening the crossing was part of the Israeli game of opening, closing, then reopening and reclosing it, again and again. He also claimed the closure caused economic losses in several sectors. He emphasized the importance of opening the crossing to revitalize industry, agriculture and production in Gaza, and provide workers with job security (al-Ghad TV, September 7, 2023).



Activity resumes at the Kerem Shalom Crossing (Shehab Twitter account, September 10, 2023)

Muhammad El-Amadi visits the Gaza Strip

►**Mohammed al-Emadi, chairman of Qatar's National Committee for the Reconstruction of Gaza**, visited the Gaza Strip this week. He met with the Hamas leadership to discuss a series of urgent issues, especially calming the security situation (al-Ayam, September 9, 2023). He also promised to act to restore Qatar's grant of \$10 million to the Gaza Strip after it had been reduced to \$3 million two years ago (al-Ayam, September 9, 2023).

Hamas' response to Israel's warnings on the eve of the Jewish High Holidays

►The Israeli media reported that senior IDF officers contacted Hamas through intermediaries and warned against firing from the Gaza Strip during the Jewish High Holidays, stating that Israel would respond severely to any attack as it had in the past, including by launching a military operation (Kan website, September 8 2023). In response, **Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem** claimed the report was fake news because mediators do not convey threats from Israel, so it was impossible for Hamas to receive them. He claimed it was a "broken record" played by Israel every time it found itself pressured by the "resistance" or fear of a new wave of escalation (Dunia al-Watan, September 9, 2023).

► Hamas claimed Israel would be responsible for everything that happened during the High Holidays, called on Palestinians to stay in al-Aqsa Mosque and claimed it would continue its actions in response to measures taken by Israel (Hamas website, September 11, 2023).

Military-terrorist wings hold maneuvers in the Gaza Strip

► On September 10, 2023, the military wings of the terrorist organizations in Gaza announced their annual exercise held by the joint operations room of the terrorist organizations would be called "Firm Pillar 4." During the exercise there was an increase in alertness. Senior military joint operations room operatives held a preliminary tour of the planned maneuver area (QudsN Twitter account, September 10, 2023). It was the fourth maneuver held by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip in the last three years.⁵



A preliminary visit by the joint operations room leadership to the area of the planned maneuver (Filastin al-A'an, September 10, 2023)

► The exercise took place on September 12, 2023, between 7:00 and 11:00 a.m. Before it began, **Iyad al-Buzum, spokesman for the ministry of the interior in Gaza**, announced roads near the seashore would be closed. As part of the exercise, rockets were launched from the Khan Yunis area towards the sea, commando squads held an exercise against naval targets and a beach landing was practiced under the cover of rocket barrages and anti-tank missiles. An assault on "an IDF post" was simulated (Shehab, Ma'an, September 12, 2023).

⁵ For further information see the January 5, 2023 ITIC report, "The military exercise held by the joint operations room of the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip: messages and threats for Israel."



Rocket launches from Khan Yunis towards the sea (QudsN Twitter account, September 12, 2023)



Storming "an IDF post" from the sea (QudsN Twitter account, September 12, 2023)

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

Responses to Mahmoud Abbas' anti-Semitic, Holocaust-denying speech

► During the August 24-25, 2023, meeting of Fatah's Revolutionary Council in Ramallah, Mahmoud Abbas gave a speech rife with anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial. He claimed Hitler had "fought" the Jews of Europe not for anti-Semitic reasons but because of interest on loans made by the Jews. He also claimed the origin of Ashkenazi Jews was not the ancient Israelites but from an ancient Turkish people known as the "Khazars" who converted to Judaism (Palestinian TV, August 24, 2023). The arguments had been used by Mahmoud Abbas in the past to discredit the Jews' attachment to the Land of Israel and to strengthen the Palestinian narrative.⁶

► In response, there were harsh international condemnations. **Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the American ambassador to the United Nations**, said his speech had not added to promoting

⁶ For further information see the May 3, 2018 ITIC report, " 'History lecture' by Mahmoud Abbas: At the opening of the PNC session, Mahmoud Abbas delivered a speech of fake history and anti-Semitism."

regional peace (Linda Thomas-Greenfield's Twitter account, September 7, 2023). The Paris municipality announced it was revoking the award given to Mahmoud Abbas in 2015 (France 24, September 8, 2023).

►In light of the condemnations, **Nabil Abu Rudeineh, spokesman for Mahmoud Abbas**, issued a "clarification," claiming Mahmoud Abbas condemned the Holocaust and he had merely been quoting books by Jewish and American historians which were not considered as Holocaust denial (Wafa, September 10, 2023). **PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh** condemned the "unjustified attack" on Mahmoud Abbas, noting he had been quoting "academic" and "historical" studies. He also claimed that instead of Mahmoud Abbas, the attack should be focused on Israel's actions towards the Palestinians (Wafa, September 8, 2023). The PA foreign ministry demanded an apology, claiming the distortion of Mahmoud Abbas' words undermined the Palestinians' "rights" (Wafa, September 8, 2023).

The meeting of the UN General Assembly and the meeting of the donor countries

►**Riyad Mansour, the Palestinian delegate to the UN**, gave an updated report about the preparations being made for the UN General Assembly where, as every year, Mahmoud Abbas would deliver a speech.⁷ Mansour claimed this year's General Assembly session would be particularly important and Mahmoud Abbas would refer to the Palestinian state in his speech (Sawa, September 6, 2023).

►During an interview, **Palestinian foreign minister Riyad al-Maliki** elaborated on the diplomatic move they have been conducting for several months with international and Arab parties to obtain full support for the Palestinian issue. He claimed it was an ongoing process whose objective was to end the "Israeli occupation." He attacked the United States for its full support of Israel, particularly evident in the veto it exercised in UN Security Council deliberations. He claimed **they were currently drafting the speech Mahmoud Abbas' was supposed to give, which will include several important topics, among them a proposal to convene an international peace conference**. He also said Mahmoud Abbas would take advantage of the gathering to hold meetings with global leaders (AlQahera News channel, September 10, 2023).

⁷ The UN General Assembly session begins on September 19, 2023, and Mahmoud Abbas is expected to speak on September 21, 2023.



Riyad al-Maliki during the interview (AlQahera News channel, September 10, 2023)

► **Muhammad Shtayyeh** met with **Hilde Haralstad**, the Norwegian envoy to the peace process in the Middle East. They discussed the agenda of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) conference of the countries donating to the PA, which is planned for the same day as the General Assembly session. According to Muhammad Shtayyeh, the conference will be held 30 years after the Oslo Accords and under the shadow of the "extremist Israeli government." He demanded Israel be condemned at the conference for its measures against the Palestinians and the idea of a two-state solution be discussed. He also demanded a discussion about Israel's continued [allegedly] "illegal" deduction of the tax funds it collects for the Palestinians, and an increase in international aid granted to the PA, which he claimed had decreased in the last decade from 30% of the total Palestinian GNP to only 1% (Wafa, September 5, 2023).



Shtayyeh meets in his office in Ramallah with Hilde Haralstad (Wafa, September 5, 2023)

Mahmoud Abbas receives the Palestinian Monetary Authority's report for 2022

► Mahmoud Abbas met with **Feras Milhem**, chairman of the Palestinian Monetary Authority, who gave him the Monetary Authority's annual report for 2022. Milhem briefed Mahmoud Abbas on the report's more important findings, the Monetary Authority's efforts and plans to strengthen the banking sector, since the Palestinian economy is dependent on its banks. Mahmoud Abbas praised the results of the Monetary Authority, emphasizing his support for its

work and efforts to develop the Palestinian banking system and improve its performance (Mahmoud Abbas' Facebook page, September 6, 2023).



Mahmoud Abbas meets with Feras Milhem (Mahmoud Abbas' Facebook page, September 6, 2023)

Israel's decision to deduct the PA's electricity bill from the tax revenues it collects

►Israeli Minister of Finance Bezalel Smotrich instructed his office to deduct between \$5.25 and \$7.88 million every month from the tax revenues it collects for the PA to pay the debt the East Jerusalem Electric Company owes the Israeli Electric Company. The Palestinian company's debt currently stands at \$525 million, despite a debt-settlement arrangement reached with the company in 2016. In the outline drawn up by the Israeli ministry of finance and approved by Israeli security, the debt will be deducted every month from the tax revenues. The ministry of finance also discovered the company had ties to the PA, in that 19% of the stockholders in the East Jerusalem Electric Company and seven of its 18 board of directors were members of Palestinian local authorities. The East Jerusalem Electric Company buys electricity from Israel and transfers it to the PA territories (Israeli media, September 5, 2023).

►**Muhammad Shtayyeh** called the measure "systematic robbery and the looting of Palestinian money" because the East Jerusalem Electric Company is a private company and does not belong to the Palestinian Authority. He claimed the deductions, along with the crimes of the State of Israel, the [alleged] violation of the dignity of women and the desecration of holy places of Islam and Christianity were the recipe for an explosion and the declaration of a financial war combined with the ongoing political war that Israel waged against the Palestinians. He claimed that despite the measures against the Palestinians, they would not waive their rights and would continue to "defend" themselves and their holy sites. He called on the United States and EU countries to intervene (Wafa, September 5, 2023).

►On September 6, 2023, Muhammad Shtayyeh held a meeting attended by Khaled al-Asili, the PA minister of economy and representatives of the electric company to examine ways to fight Israel's decision. Shtayyeh condemned Israel's actions and claimed they would fight the decision in every way possible. He also claimed no legal relationship existed between the East Jerusalem Electric Company and the PA which could justify deducting its debts from the PA's funds. He also said the East Jerusalem Electric Company was a working national institution and their goal was to strengthen and protect it, and ensure its continued activity (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, September 6, 2023).



Muhammad Shtayyeh holds a conference to discuss Israel's decision (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, September 6, 2023)

Reconstructing of Jenin refugee camp

►On September 7, 2023, a press conference was held in the Jenin refugee camp by Majdi al-Salah, the minister of local government, Kamal Abu al-Rab, the acting governor of Jenin, representatives of the People's Committee for the Reconstruction of the Refugee Camp and other civilian and official institutions. Al-Salah reviewed the status of reconstructing the refugee camp after the Israeli activity in early July 2023. He said works were being carried out for the first phase of repairing the camp roads at a cost of approximately \$2.4 million, and the cost of the second phase was estimated at a little over \$2 million. Furthermore, he noted the Palestinian Water Authority had restored water to the refugee camp with the help of \$920,000 in donations, and that approximately 70% of the water network and 95% of the sewage system had been restored. The authority also rented houses for families who lost their homes at a cost of \$236,000. He said so far Mahmoud Abbas' office had transferred \$130,000 and that they were currently waiting \$30 million from Algeria (Wafa, September 7, 2023).



Press conference in the refugee camp in Jenin (Wafa, September 7, 2023)

The PA receives armored vehicles from the USA

►"Palestinian sources" said that by means of Jordanian mediation and with the approval of the Israeli government, the PA had received a number of armored vehicles and weapons from the United States, equipment made in America. The armored vehicles will support the activities of the PA security forces and police. According to the "sources" they will be used to enforce law and order in the areas under Palestinian security control and will help the security forces deal with Palestinian "militants" [terrorist operatives] in Jenin, Tulkarm and Nablus (al-Quds, September 11, 2023).

►The "sources" stated that through Hussein al-Sheikh, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee, the PA had made it clear to various parties more than once, including during meetings he held with the Americans, that it did not have the capabilities to confront the terrorist cells densely deployed in Jenin, Nablus, and Tulkarm, and that IDF forces were also having difficulty dealing with them without aerial assistance and armored forces on the ground. The "sources" stated that the Americans understood the PA's requirements and had worked to provide it with the necessary equipment (al-Quds, September 11, 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.** This week as well buses were often targeted. The more prominent events were the following:⁸

⁸ Information and pictures from Rescue Without Borders in Judea and Samaria unless otherwise noted.

- ◆ **September 11, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near the Yakir Junction (northwest of Salfit). Two Israelis were wounded; the vehicle was damaged.



The vehicle damaged by rocks near the Salfit Junction.

- ◆ **September 10, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Luban al-Sharqia (northeast of Ramallah). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **September 10, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus near Karnei Shomron (east of Qalqilya). No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **September 10, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus at the T-crossing (southeast of Bethlehem). No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **September 10, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus near Havat Gilad (east of Qalqilya). No casualties were reported; the bus was damaged.
- ◆ **September 10, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus near Kafr Shuqba (northwest of Ramallah). No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **September 10, 2023:** A Molotov cocktail was thrown at an Israeli vehicle near the Husan bypass road (west of Bethlehem). No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **September 10, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle in Hawwara (south of Nablus). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **September 10, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus near Nebi Elias (east of Qalqilya). No casualties were reported; the bus was damaged.



The shattered front windshield of the bus attacked with rocks near Nebi Elias.

- ◆ **September 10, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Azoun (east of Qalqilya). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **September 10, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus near al-Aroub (north of Hebron). No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **September 10, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Migdalim (southeast of Nablus). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **September 10, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus and other vehicles near Luban al-Sharqia (northeast of Ramallah). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **September 10, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle at the Doar Junction (west of Ramallah). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **September 10, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Qadumim (east of Qalqilya). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **September 8, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus near Nebi Elias (east of Qalqilya). No casualties were reported; the bus was damaged.
- ◆ **September 7, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus near Uja (north of Jericho). No casualties were reported; the bus was damaged.
- ◆ **September 5, 2023:** Molotov cocktails were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near the Bayt Kahil bridge (northwest of Hebron). No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **September 5, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus near Uja (north of Jericho). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **September 5, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus near Tekoa (south of Bethlehem). No casualties were reported; the bus was damaged.