



Spotlight on the Israel-Palestinian Conflict

April 2-9, 2024

Overview¹

- ▶ **The southern arena:** This past week there was a noticeable decrease in the fighting in the Gaza Strip, which focused mainly on airstrikes and ground activity in the al-Amal neighborhood in Khan Yunis and its eastern villages. On April 7, 2024, IDF forces left the combat zone in Khan Yunis. Several rockets were launched at the cities, towns and villages surrounding the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) claimed responsibility for most of the attacks. The Palestinian media continued to follow and quote statements from the Israeli prime minister and government officials about a possible IDF activity in Rafah.
- ▶ **The issue of the hostages:** Another round of talks was held in Cairo. Despite optimistic forecasts, Hamas stated that they were examining the proposal formulated during the talks, which they claimed did not meet their demands.
- ▶ **Aid for the Gaza Strip:** The Palestinians continue to complain about the rate of humanitarian aid deliveries for the Gazans. On April 7, 2024, the president of Egypt met with the director of the CIA and a decision was made to increase the number of trucks bringing humanitarian aid to 300 a day. World Jerusalem Day was marked in the Gaza Strip. Isma'il Haniyeh, head of the Hamas political bureau, and Ziyad al-Nakhalah, PIJ secretary general, who were both in Tehran, gave speeches for the event.
- ▶ **Israel, Judea and Samaria:** This past week there were four terrorist attacks: a stabbing, two shootings and one combined attack. The Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria. According to reports, dozens of wanted Palestinians were detained and weapons were seized. Activities focused on Tulkarm, Nablus, Qalqilya, Jenin and Hebron. The security forces exposed a terrorist squad planning to kill the Israeli minister of national security and attack national institutions. The Palestinian Authority (PA) security forces exposed a squad of ISIS terrorists planning to carry out attacks.

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► **Ramadan:** The prayer held on the Temple Mount for the last Friday of Ramadan, attended by 120 thousand worshippers, passed with relative calm. Some incitement was recorded and the police detained a number of people who caused disturbances.

► **The Palestinian Authority (PA):** The PA continues to press its suit for full membership in the UN, and the Security Council passed the request to the relevant committee. Muhammad Mustafa, prime minister of the new Palestinian government, held his first government meeting, as well as a round of meetings with regional leaders. It is possible that Mustafa and Hussein al-Sheikh, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee, will pay a visit during the second half of April 2024.

The Southern Arena

IDF activity in the Gaza Strip

► Before dawn on April 7, 2024, the IDF completed the withdrawal of forces which had spent the past four and a half months fighting in Khan Yunis. The IDF currently has one brigade inside the Gaza Strip to secure the Netzarim region and control the passage of Gazans between the northern and southern Gaza Strip (Israeli media, April 7, 2024). After the forces withdrew, residents of Khan Yunis reportedly left Rafah and returned to their previous places of residence. (Wafa, April 7, 2024). **Ismail al-Thawabta, director of the Hamas government media office in the Gaza Strip**, warned the public to be wary of Israel's announcements, calling them a "media trick," claiming Israel was planning to continue its activities in Khan Yunis and Deir al-Balah (Isma'il al-Thawabta's X account, April 7, 2024). The Palestinian media continue reporting on IDF ground and air attacks in the Gaza Strip (Ma'an, April 8, 2024).



Gazans return to Khan Yunis after the withdrawal of IDF forces from the area (Wafa, April 7, 2024)

► After the IDF forces withdrew, the Israeli Air Force attacked terrorist facilities and other targets, including a rocket-launching position, facilities and tunnels in a region from which rockets were

launched at the Re'im area and a terrorist operative who participated in the Hamas terrorist attack and massacre in Israel on October 7, 2023 (IDF spokesperson, April 9, 2024).

► Before the forces withdrew, they continued activities of a limited scope in the Khan Yunis area and the region to its east (IDF spokesperson, April 6, 2024). Al-Jazeera TV reported a decrease in IDF activity throughout the Gaza Strip and an IDF focus on attacking from a distance (al-Jazeera TV YouTube channel, April 3, 2024):

- ◆ **The al-Amal neighborhood in west Khan Yunis:** IDF forces continued operations in the neighborhood. They searched more than 100 terrorist objectives, located large quantities of weapons, destroyed warehouses storing IEDs and clashed face-to-face with terrorist operatives (IDF spokesperson, April 3-7, 2024).
- ◆ **Abasan and al-Qarara:** The forces operating in the area (north east and east of Khan Yunis) located and destroyed weapons and terrorist facilities (IDF spokesperson, April 3, 2024).



An al-Jazeera presenter describes the IDF activities in western Khan Yunis (al-Jazeera YouTube channel, April 1, 2024)



Weapons found in east Khan Yunis (IDF spokesperson, April 3, 2024).

► **Destruction of three tunnels in Khan Yunis which crossed the border into Israeli territory:** IDF forces destroyed three Hamas tunnels which crossed into Israeli territory. They had

previously been exposed in the past, were not used by the terrorists during the October 7, 2023 attack and massacre, and in recent months had been fully monitored by IDF and intelligence forces (IDF spokesperson, April 6, 2024).



Destruction of the tunnels (IDF spokesperson, April 6, 2024)

►After half a year of war, the IDF published a series of data [approximate numbers]: during the six months of fighting 9,100 rockets were launched into Israeli territory, the Israeli Air Force attacked 32,000 terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip, IDF forces eliminated 12,000 terrorist operatives, about 125 of them high-ranking officers, 3,250 rocket launchers were seized or destroyed and 4,250 terrorist facilities were destroyed (IDF spokesperson, April 7, 2024).

Eliminating senior Hamas terrorists

►On April 3, 2024, the death of Akram Abd al-Rahman Hussein Salama was reported, who had been a senior terrorist in Hamas' internal security force. He held several key positions, including deputy head of the Khan Yunis District. He planned terrorist attacks and was responsible for orchestrating critical terrorist attacks inside Israel (IDF Telegram channel, April 6, 2024). Akram Salama, 51 years old, was a brother of Hassan Salama, a senior Hamas military-terrorist wing operative who is currently serving 48 consecutive life sentences in Israel.² Akram Salama served 22 years in prison and was released as part of the Gilad Shalit exchange deal. He was killed in an attack on a house in Rafah (QudsN X account, April 4, 2024; alarabiya.net, April 6, 2024).

²Hassan Salama planned two terrorist attacks on number 18 buses in Jerusalem in February and March 1996 in which 46 people were killed, and two suicide bombing attacks on February 25, 1996, at a bus stop used by soldiers near Ashqelon, which killed an IDF soldier and wounded 36 people.



Akram Salama (IDF Telegram channel, April 6, 2024)

► On April 8, 2024, **Hatem al-Ghamri, the chairman of the Hamas government emergency committee in the central Gaza Strip camps**, was killed in an airstrike. Al-Ghamri was also an operative in the al-Maghazi Battalion of the Hamas military-terrorist wing in the field of rocket launching (IDF spokesperson, April 9, 2024).



Hatem al-Ghamri (IDF spokesperson, April 9, 2024)

Rocket attacks

► During the week rockets were fired at cities, towns and villages surrounding the Gaza Strip.

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) claimed responsibility for most of the attacks:

- ◆ On April 8, 2024, a rocket was launched from Khan Yunis and fell in an open area near Kibbutz Re'im; there were no casualties (Israeli media, April 8, 2024). The PIJ's military-terrorist wing announced it had launched a barrage of rockets at the concentration of IDF forces in Re'im (Paltoday Telegram channel, April 8, 2024).
- ◆ On April 7, 2024, several hours after the withdrawal of IDF forces from the Khan Yunis area, four rockets were launched from the area at the cities, towns and villages surrounding Gaza Strip. Two rockets were intercepted, two more fell in open areas. In response, the Israeli Air Force attacked the launcher, which was situated near a

displaced persons' camp (IDF spokesperson, Israeli media, April 7, 2024). Shortly after the launch, the Mujahideen Brigades announced that their operatives had launched a barrage of rockets at the Gaza Division headquarters in Re'im (Mujahideen Brigades Telegram channel, April 7, 2024). The Jerusalem Brigades, the PIJ's military-terrorist wing, also announced it had launched a barrage of rockets at the western Negev and Israeli communities surrounding the Gaza Strip (Paltoday Telegram channel, April 7, 2024).



The location of the launcher near a camp for displaced residents in Khan Yunis (IDF spokesperson, April 8, 2024)

◆ Between April 3 and 4, 2024, several rockets were fired at cities, towns and villages surrounding the Gaza Strip. No casualties or damage were reported. In response, the Israeli Air Force attacked 30 terrorist targets in the northern Gaza Strip (IDF spokesperson, April 4, 2024). The Jerusalem Brigades claimed responsibility for most of the launches (Paltoday Telegram channel, April 4, 2024).

The Palestinian perspective of the IDF's activity

► The Palestinian and Arab media continued to report on the destruction caused by the IDF forces at Shifa Hospital in Gaza. Anas al-Sharif, a reporter who is also al-Jazeera's correspondent in Gaza City and the northern Gaza Strip, broadcast from an area near the hospital and interviewed a number of people who stated that the area looked as if there had been "an earthquake." Al-Sharif also published aerial before and after photographs of the hospital area showing the extent of the destruction (Anas al-Sharif's X account, April 2, 2024).



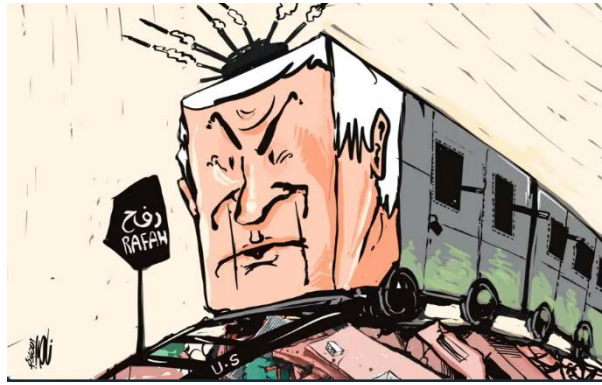
Right to left: Shifa Hospital and the area adjacent to it before and after the IDF activity (Anas al-Sharif's X account, April 2, 2024)

►The World Health Organization (WHO) condemned the extensive destruction at Shifa Hospital, claiming the hospital had become an "empty hall full of corpses [sic]." According to reports, a team from the agency was able to visit the hospital on April 5, 2024 and examined the destruction, reporting that of 36 hospitals in the Gaza Strip, only ten were currently operating, and only partially (Ma'an, April 7, 2024).

Possible IDF activity in Rafah

►The Palestinian media continued to regularly monitor and report on statements from Israeli officials regarding the possibility of IDF forces entering Rafah. They repeated the statement of THE Israeli prime minister's spokesman who said it was only a matter of time and that the prime minister had promised the United States to open a humanitarian corridor at the beginning of the activity to evacuate people from the area (Ma'an, April 1, 2024).

►In an online public opinion survey conducted by the Palestinian daily al-Quds among the surfers on its website regarding a possible IDF activity in Rafah, after the UN Security Council resolution (March 25, 2024), 71% of the participants answered there would be an activity, 25% answered there would not, and 4% replied that they did not know (al-Quds, April 8, 2024).



A Palestinian cartoon of Israel's preparations for an imminent military operation in Rafah with help from the United States (al-Quds, April 1, 2024)

The issue of the hostages and a ceasefire agreement

- ▶ On April 7, 2024, a delegation of the head of the CIA, senior Qatari officials and an Israeli delegation headed by the head of the Israeli Mossad arrived in Cairo for another round of talks regarding a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and a hostage deal. A Hamas delegation led by Khalil al-Haya also arrived in Cairo. Reportedly, there were intensive contacts between the mediators and the Hamas leadership to make the talks successful (al-Quds, April 7, 2024).
- ▶ Before and during the resumption of the negotiations, senior Hamas members reiterated yet again that the movement adhered to the demands conveyed to the mediators on March 14: a permanent ceasefire, the withdrawal of the IDF from the Gaza Strip, the unconditional return of the displaced Gazans to their former places of residence, the transfer of humanitarian aid and the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip as a condition for a hostage deal (Arab World Press news agency (AWP), April 5, 2024).
- ▶ The Egyptians were optimistic about the progress of the talks. "A high-level Egyptian official" reported progress in the discussions and agreement on the basic lines between all parties. He said the Qatari and Hamas delegations had left Cairo and would return in two days to agree on the terms of the final agreement. He said there had been significant progress in forging agreements on most of the points of contention (al-Qahera Network X account, April 8, 2024). Dhia Rashwan, chairman of the Egyptian Information Authority, stated that the ceasefire agreement was on the verge of being signed, positive signs of which were the meeting of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi with the head of the CIA and the increase in the number of trucks entering the Strip even before the end of the negotiations (RT in Arabic, April 7, 2024).
- ▶ After a series of discussions, the Hamas delegation left Cairo to consult with the movement's leadership. According to senior Hamas members, no progress was made in the negotiations

because Israel did not respond to any of their demands (al-Jazeera Telegram channel, April 8, 2024). Hamas said in a statement that Israel was still "stubborn" but nevertheless, the Hamas leadership was examining the proposal and would inform the mediators of its response (Hamas Telegram channel, April 9, 2024).

► **Senior Hamas member Sami Abu Zuhri** said that the media reports about the negotiations were "maneuvers that have nothing to do with what is really happening." He claimed Israel absolutely refused to respond to Hamas' demands. **Ali Barake, a senior Hamas member**, said that Hamas had rejected the latest proposal presented by Israel during the ceasefire talks in Cairo (Reuters, April 8, 2024).

The Gaza Strip

Palestinian casualties

► The Hamas-controlled ministry of health in the Gaza Strip reported that as of April 8 at 2:30 p.m., since the beginning of the war in the Gaza Strip 33,207 Palestinians had been killed and 75,933 injured (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, April 8 2024).

Aid for the Gaza Strip

► The Palestinian media continue to report a slow introduction of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip (al-Quds al-Arabi, April 1, 2024). According to a senior Egyptian official, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi met with the head of the CIA and they agreed to increase the number of trucks entering the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing to 300 daily (RT in Arabic, April 7, 2024).



Palestinian cartoon complaining about the slow pace of bringing aid to the Gaza Strip (al-Quds al-Arabi, April 1, 2024)

►According to reports, in the northern Gaza Strip a fuel truck and two trucks of medical equipment entered through the Rafah Crossing, which were transferred to al-Awda Hospitals in Jebalya and Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahia (al-Quds, April 7, 2024).



**Unloading medical aid at Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahia
(Wafa YouTube channel, April 7, 2024)**

►Apparently problems with the distribution of aid continue. A correspondent for Wafa TV in Gaza City documented local residents returning from al-Kuwait Square with sacks of flour received from aid trucks. Residents who were interviewed expressed their joy and noted that they managed to get the sacks of flour after spending the night waiting there (Wafa YouTube channel, April 2, 2024).



Gazans return with sacks of flour from al-Kuwait Square (Wafa YouTube channel, April 2, 2024)

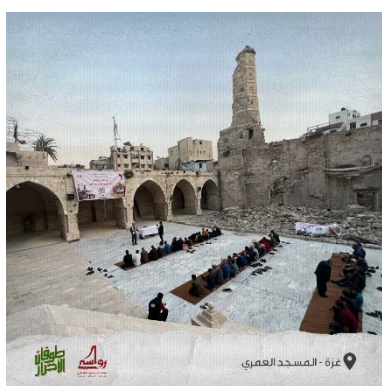
The situation in the Gaza Strip

►The World Bank issued a report prepared in cooperation with the UN and the EU providing an interim estimate of the damage caused to infrastructure in the Gaza Strip since the beginning of the war, which is about \$18.5 billion dollars. According to the report, only 5% of the water infrastructure is functional and 92% of the roads have been destroyed or damaged. (al-Quds, April 2, 2024). According to the data of the Hamas-controlled government information bureau

in the Gaza Strip, since the beginning of the war, 70,000 housing units were completely destroyed and 29,000 were partially destroyed (al-Quds, April 3, 2024).

World Jerusalem Day

►World Jerusalem Day³ was observed in the Gaza Strip with the name "The flood of free men." The day was marked by painting murals on the walls of destroyed buildings in the squares, hanging banners with the inscription "The flood of free men," and organizing a mass meal to break the Ramadan fast in the Great Omari Mosque in Gaza City (al-Mayadeen TV website, April 6 and 7, 2024).



Right: Placing posters in the Zeitoun neighborhood in Gaza City (Account X of the Rawasi Palestine Institute, April 7, 2024). Left: A fast-breaking meal at the Great Omari Mosque. On the walls are posters with the slogan "The flood of free men" (Account X of the Rawasi Palestine Institute, April 6, 2024)

►Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau, and Ziyad al-Nakhalah, PIJ secretary general, delivered speeches to commemorate World Jerusalem Day entitled "the Jerusalem pulpit," held simultaneously in Beirut, Sana'a, Tehran and Baghdad. Haniyeh claimed that Operation al-Aqsa Flood had united the ranks of the Muslim people, as was reflected above all by the unity of the arenas and fronts from "Palestine" to Lebanon, Yemen and Iraq, with the support and assistance of Iran. Al-Nakhalah said that the challenges facing them today were clear, that they were still in the middle of the campaign and everyone should do everything they could to support "Palestine" and the Palestinians in all areas. He praised Iran's historic role in supporting "Palestine" at all levels, as well as its role and influence in strengthening the unity of the "resistance forces" (Lebanese al-Watania News Agency, April 3, 2024). Al-Nakhalah

³ "World Jerusalem Day" has been observed since 1979 on the last Friday of Ramadan, according to the decision of Ruhollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. The event was intended to express Iran's and the Muslim world's support for the Palestinian issue and the "liberation of Jerusalem."

also participated in activities in Tehran to mark World Jerusalem Day (al-Mayadeen TV channel website, April 5, 2024).



Right: Al-Nakhalah marches in Tehran (al-Mayadeen TV website, April 5, 2024). Left: Al-Nakhalah speaks in Tehran before the Friday sermon (al-Alam TV website, April 5, 2024)

Israel, Judea and Samaria

Terrorist attacks

Stabbing in the Jordan Valley

► On the morning April 8, 2024, a Palestinian woman arrived at the Tayasir checkpoint, near Tubas in the Jordan Valley. She refused to identify herself to the IDF soldiers manning the position and tried to stab them. She was shot and killed (IDF spokesperson, April 8, 2024).

Shooting east of Qalqilya

► On the morning of April 7, 2024, a Palestinian drove the Nebi Elias intersection east of Qalqilya in an Israeli vehicle he had stolen the day before. He exited the vehicle and started shooting at a bus and an Israeli vehicle with an M-16 and fled the scene. Two bus passengers and the driver were injured. IDF forces were called to the scene, set up roadblocks and pursued the shooter. According to a security source, the terrorist planned to carry out a combined attack, since a large explosive device was discovered in his vehicle (Israeli media, April 7, 2024).



Right: The bus after the shooting (al-Aqsa Radio X account, April 7, 2024). Left: Detonating the terrorist's vehicle after an IED was discovered in it (Israel Police Force spokesperson's unit, April 7, 2024)

Shooting in the Jordan Valley

► On the night of April 4, 2024, shots were fired at an IDF vehicle near the Jordan River crossing. A preliminary investigation revealed that a suspicious person had crossed the Jordan River nearby and shot at the vehicle, which was conducting a routine patrol in the area. No casualties were reported, but the vehicle was damaged. It was suspected that the shooter was a Jordanian soldier who fled the scene (IDF spokesperson, Israeli media, April 5, 2024).

Combined attack near Kokhav Yair

► On the night of April 1, 2024, there was a drive-by attack near Kochav Yair. The terrorist arrived in a vehicle and rammed into four police officers who were standing at a police checkpoint at the al-Tira Junction, which had been erected to catch vehicle thieves. From there he continued to the Eliyahu Crossing near Qalqilya, where he tried to stab Israeli security guards. He was shot and killed. He was Wahhab Shbita, an Israeli Arab, 26 years old, a resident of al-Tira. His family claimed he was mentally ill and that they had informed the police before the attack. According to the police, the family informed them of his intention to carry out an attack only ex post facto (Israeli media, April 2, 2024).

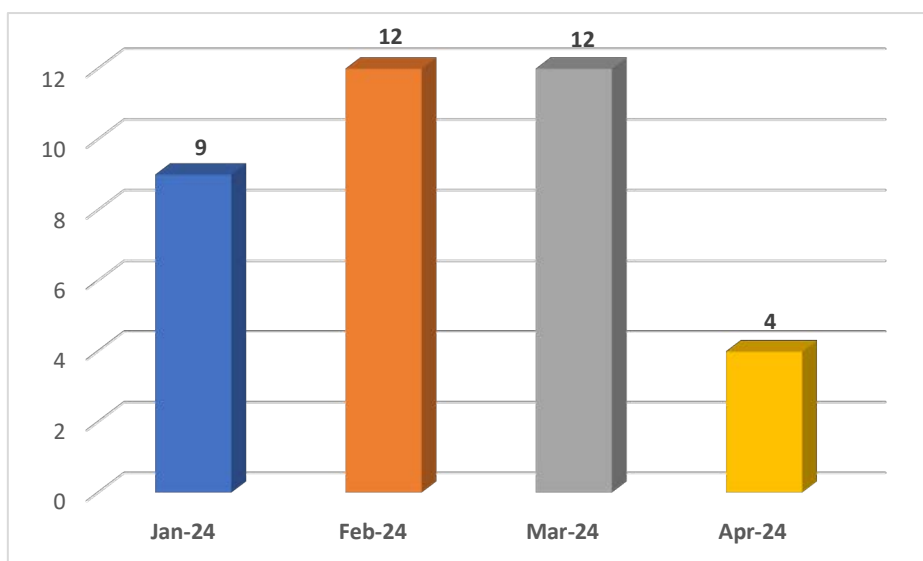


Right: Wahhab Shbita (al-Quds, April 2, 2024). Left: The assailant tries to stab the security guards at the Eliyahu Crossing (Israel Police, April 2, 2024)

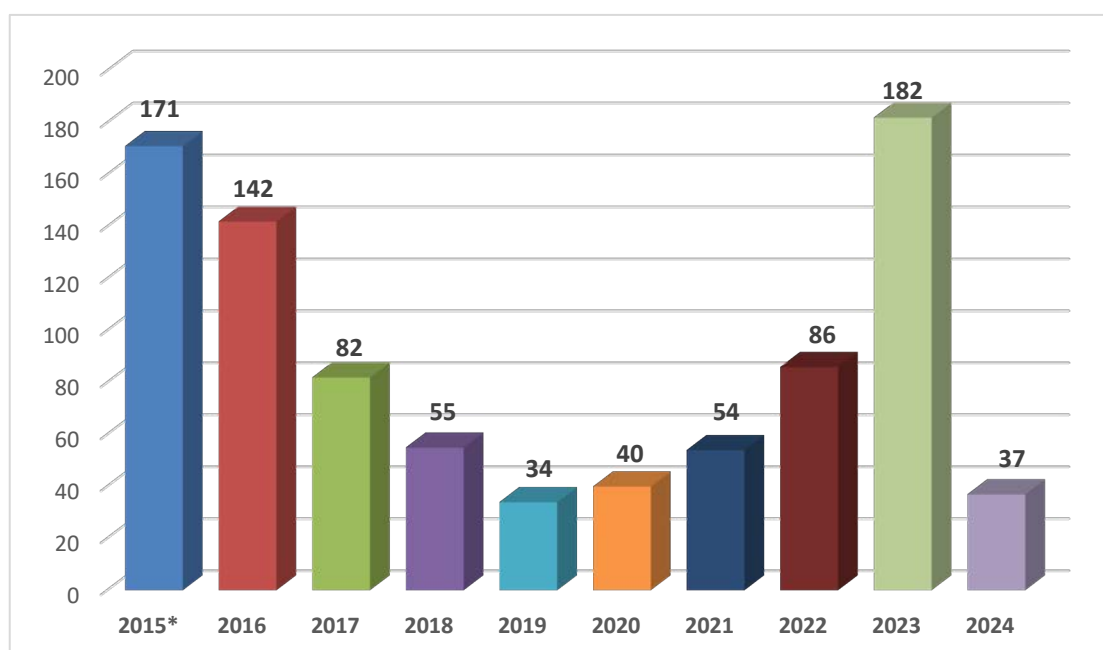
Stabbing prevented in Jerusalem

► A 17-year-old Palestinian, who was in Israel illegally, was detained by Border Police outside the Old City of Jerusalem. During the inspection carried out by the soldiers, a large knife was seized, which had been taped to his body. A preliminary investigation raised the suspicion that he intended to carry out a stabbing attack. Investigation also revealed that prior to his detention he posted on a social network, "The important thing is that I end my life with satisfaction, because there is no satisfaction except paradise" (Israel Police Force spokesperson's unit, April 7, 2024).

Critical terrorist attacks, 2024⁴



Annual distribution of critical terrorist attacks



⁴ 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. Rocks and Molotov cocktails thrown by Palestinians are not included. Shots fired at IDF forces during counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria are included.

Counterterrorism activities

- ▶The Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria, detaining dozens of wanted persons and seizing weapons. Activity focused Tulkarm, Qalqilya, Jenin and Hebron (IDF spokesperson X account, April 3-7, 2024). Since the beginning of the war, approximately 3,700 wanted persons have been detained, more than 1,600 of them Hamas operatives.
- ▶During the night of April 6, 2024, Israeli security forces operated in Deir Samet (west of Hebron). They located and seized weapons, including two M-16 rifles, a pistol, an improvised Carlo submachine gun and ammunition (IDF spokesperson, April 6, 2024).



The weapons found in Deir Samet (IDF website, April 6, 2024)

- ▶On the morning of April 5, 2024, IDF forces in Dura (near Hebron) mapped the house of the terrorist who carried out the stabbing attack in Gan Yavneh (March 31, 2024), murdering an Israeli civilian and injuring two others (IDF website, April 5, 2024).
- ▶Before dawn on April 3, 2024, the Israeli security forces operated in Ya'bed (southwest of Jenin) to detain a wanted Palestinian. He was shot and killed while trying to escape. Two pistols and another weapon were seized at the scene (IDF spokesperson, April 3, 2024). Palestinian media reported that he was Assad Assam al-Qaniri, 28 years old from Ya'bad. The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) issued a mourning notice for him, claiming he died in an exchange of fire with IDF forces. At his funeral, which was held in Ya'bad, a red headband of the National Resistance Brigades, DFLP military-terrorist wing, was placed on his head (Ma'an, the DFLP X account, April 3, 2024).



Assad al-Qaniri (Ma'an, April 3, 2024)

Terrorist network exposed in Israel

►The Israeli security forces recently detained 11 operatives who belonged to a terrorist network, seven Israeli Arabs and four Palestinians. The operatives planned to assassinate Itamar Ben Gvir, the minister of national security, and attack secure facilities, government offices and Ben Gurion Airport, and kidnap IDF soldiers. They planned to rent land in the Rahat area or in Judea and Samaria and construct a factory for the manufacture of concrete and blocks to serve as a cover for their underground training activities and for the manufacture of weapons. One of them contacted a Hamas terrorist operative in the Gaza Strip, who offered to finance their activities. Indictments were filed against them in court after they all confessed to the offenses attributed to them (Israeli media, April 4, 2024).



The members of the network (Israeli Security Agency spokesperson, April 4, 2024)



Right: A drone which was seized. Left: Two members of the network pose with a flag of Hamas' military-terrorist wing (Israel Police Force spokesperson's unit, April 4, 2024)

Palestinian security forces' counterterrorism activities

- ▶ A Palestinian security source reported that a joint force of the Palestinian security forces captured a squad in the village of Siris (south of Jenin) which had sworn allegiance to ISIS. According to the source, the security forces found mortar shells and a car bomb prepared for detonation. A tunnel dug under the house of one of the squad members was also found. The security forces stated that the equipment was apparently intended to attack the headquarters of the security forces in Judea and Samaria. According to the source, during the execution of the mission, the security forces encountered an IED which that exploded and caused property damage (AWP, April 6, 2024).
- ▶ Palestinian sources said that Muhammad Fathi Rashid, the commander of the organization, aka Jund Allah, had been detained earlier and admitted the entire squad existed. He also admitted that it had a large amount of explosives in its possession, and two days later he confessed about one of the members of the organization from Siris in the Jenin district (al-Bawaba website, April 6, 2024). The operatives of the squad reportedly planned to blow up the Great Mosque of Jenin during the Eid al-Fitr prayer in order to engage the Palestinian security forces, ambulances and civil defense teams, and then attack the Muqata'a. The operatives admitted that they provided "some armed men" with explosives to detonate in the markets during the days before Eid al-Fitr in order to empty them of civilians. Furthermore, the squad planned to blow up a number of women's beauty salons and a number of cafés (al-Bawaba website, April 6, 2024).
- ▶ The operation was supposed to be carried out with three car bombs: the first, which would carry 200 kgs, was supposed to explode in the Great Mosque; the second, with 50 kgs of

explosives, in a café; and the third, with 250 kgs of explosives, was supposed to blow up the Muqata'a, in addition to several shoulder-fired missiles that would be launched at shops, especially beauty salons and cafés. The zero hour would be determined with the group's leadership abroad by using the social networks (Yafa News Network website, April 6, 2024).



Right: Apparently a handwritten diagram of a street in Jenin, and landmarks, with the Great Mosque highlighted in yellow. Center: The car bomb (Right: Yafa News Network Telegram channel, April 6, 2024. Left: Yafa News Network X account, April 6, 2024 and Anwar Malek's X account, April 7, 2024)



Also from the raid

(Yafa News Network X account, April 6, 2024; Anwar Malek's X account, April 7, 2024)

- ◆ Meanwhile, a video was published on social media claiming to document operatives of the PA's security mechanisms deactivating a bomb planted on Al-Anbar Street in Jenin (QudsN, April 4, 2024; al-Shahed website, April 5, 2024).



The Palestinian security forces in action in Jenin (al-Shahed website, April 5, 2024)

Ramadan

The Friday prayer on the Temple Mount

►The Islamic waqf reported that despite the restrictions and Israeli security measures, on April 5, 2024, about 120,000 worshipers held the prayer of the last Friday of Ramadan at al-Aqsa Mosque (Wafa, April 5, 2024). The Israel Police stated that several attempts to incite riots by a number of worshipers had been dealt with, and one troublemaker had been detained after attacking the police. Two others were detained for violating a restraining order (Israel Police in Arabic X account, April 5, 2024).

►In his sermon, **Sheikh Muhammad Hussein, the mufti of Jerusalem and the PA**, blessed the worshipers eager to come to pray at al-Aqsa Mosque and the firm stance of Gazans, and called on them to persevere. He said that al-Aqsa Mosque was for Muslims only, and no one would share it with them (al-Jazeera TV website, April 5, 2024).



The Friday prayer at the Temple Mount (Account X of the al-Qastel website, April 5, 2024)

►On the night of April 5, 2024, Muslims celebrated the "al-Qader night"⁵ and crowds of worshipers stayed in the al-Aqsa compound throughout the night, with about 200,000 people participating in the prayers the previous evening. In the morning, worshipers began to gather near the Dome of the Rock and slogans and calls of support for the "resistance" [terrorist organizations] in the Gaza Strip (Huriya News, April 6, 2024).



**The demonstration after the prayer and its dispersal with tear gas
(Tufan_Alaqsa X account, April 6, 2024)**

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

The Palestinian effort to gain full membership in the UN

►**Riyad Mansour, the Palestinian delegate to the UN**, said that the PA intended to apply to the Security Council to change its status from observer to full member, in representative for the vote which will be held at the next Security Council session, which will be held on April 18, 2024 to deliberate the issue. Mansour noted that the Palestinian request for full UN membership, which was submitted in 2011, was still pending because the 15 members of the Security Council have not yet made an official decision on the matter (Ma'an, April 2, 2024).

⁵ Literally, "the night of destiny." It is the name of one of the last nights of Ramadan, falling on the 27th day of the month. According to Muslim tradition, it is the night when the initial version of the Qur'an was given to the Prophet Muhammad by the angel Gabriel. According to the belief, on this night Allah showers the believers with an abundance of blessings, the gates of heaven open for their prayers and they hope their requests will be granted. That is why Muslims usually stay awake all night.



**A letter sent by Riyad Mansour to the UN secretary general
(Account X of the PA legation to the UN, April 2, 2024)**

► **Fatah spokesman Munir al-Jaghoub said** that they received hints that the United States administration was willing to listen to the deliberations on granting the PA full UN membership and that there were encouraging statements from the EU. However, he said they were concerned the United States would use its veto, and claimed it was a "real test," especially for the United States, because the Palestinians did not think any country in the Security Council would oppose it. He also noted that there was Arab pressure, especially from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (al-Araby al-Jadeed, April 4, 2024).

► After a closed-door Security Council deliberation of the Palestinian request, the representative of Malta, who serves as the acting Security Council president, forwarded the request to the committee responsible for admitting new members to the UN. The representative proposed that the committee meet on April 15, 2024, so that the discussion on the Palestinian request would be held during the month (Ma'an, April 9, 2024).

The new Palestinian government

► On April 1, 2024 in Ramallah, Muhammad Mustafa, the PA's prime minister, held the first cabinet meeting under his leadership. He said the new government had three priorities (Wafa, April 1, 2024):

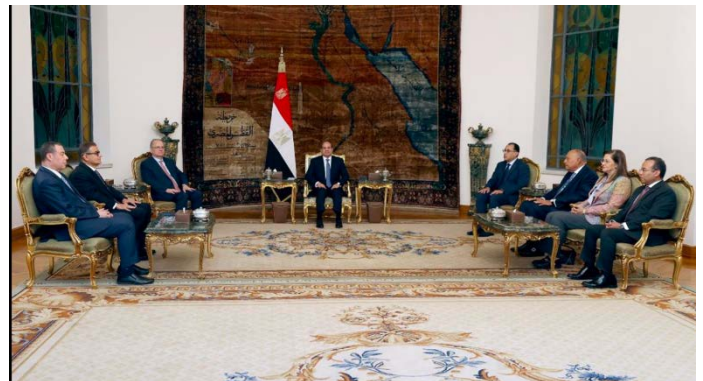
- ◆ Relief for the residents of the Gaza Strip: International negotiations are being held to introduce humanitarian aid and to reconstruct the Gaza Strip.
- ◆ Financial stability: The government will address the issue because the PA institutions will not develop without financial stability, which also provides economic stability. An appeal was made to international parties to exert pressure on Israel for it to transfer the tax revenues it collects for the PA.

- ◆ Development of the PA's institutions: The improvement and development of the PA institutions while working to eradicate corruption and provide the Palestinians with transparency.



The first meeting of the Palestinian government in Ramallah chaired by Muhammad Mustafa (Wafa, April 1, 2024)

- Muhammad Mustafa began a series of visits to Arab countries starting with Jordan, where he met with the prime minister on April 7, 2024. From there he went to Egypt, where on April 8 he met with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi to discuss efforts for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. On April 9 he arrived in Saudi Arabia, where he was received by the Saudi deputy foreign minister. No further details were given about the visit to Saudi Arabia (al-Quds, April 9, 2024).



Right: Mustafa meets with Egyptian President al-Sisi (Wafa, April 8, 2024). Left: Muhammad Mustafa lands in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (al-Quds, April 9, 2024)

- A source told the London daily Rai al-Youm that Anthony Blinken, the American Secretary of State, had invited Mohammad Mustafa, the PA prime minister and Hussein al-Sheikh, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee, to visit Washington in the second half of April 2024. A source close to Mohamad Mustafa said that during the visit he would present Blinken with a detailed plan to stop the transfer of salaries to the families of martyrs, the wounded and the prisoners. It was reported that as part of the plan, a new institution would be established to distribute the

financial aid to those populations on the basis of a welfare allowance, and in exchange, Israel would transfer the tax revenues and to the PA (Rai al-Youm, April 6, 2024).

The death of prisoner Walid Daqqa⁶

►On the evening of April 7, 2024, Walid Daqqa, a security prisoner who had been fighting cancer for about two years, died at Assaf Harofeh Hospital. In the morning, he was rushed from the prison in Ramla to the hospital after his condition deteriorated (Israeli media, April 7, 2024). Following his death, Palestinian condemnations and accusations against Israel for medical negligence and direct responsibility for his death were published. Hamas claimed Israel's refusal to release him was intended to thwart the deal to release prisoners. The PIJ announced that it would continue to work for the release of Palestinian prisoners from prisons in Israel (al-Araby TV, April 7, 2024). His family in Baqa al-Gharbia erected a mourning tent and is demanding that Israel release his body for burial (Arabi48, April 7, 2024).



Walid Daqqa (al-Quds, April 8, 2024)

⁶ One of the veteran Palestinian security prisoners in Israeli prisons. A resident of Baqa al-Gharbia. He was a PFLP terrorist operative who was involved in the kidnapping and murder of IDF soldier Moshe Tamam in 1984. He was sentenced to life imprisonment. In 2012, when the president at the time, Shimon Peres commuted his sentence to 37 years, but two more years were added after he was caught in prison with a phone smuggled into his cell.