



Spotlight on the Israel-Palestinian Conflict

May 7-15, 2024

Overview¹

► **The southern arena:** This past week the IDF expanded its activities in the Gaza Strip and is currently focusing on eastern Rafah and the Jebalya refugee camp. The activity in the al-Zeitoun neighborhood in Gaza City ended on the morning of May 15, 2024. Meanwhile, the Palestinian terrorist organizations continue firing rockets at the cities, towns and villages surrounding the Gaza Strip and the cities in Israel's south. For the first time in five months Beersheba was attacked by rocket fire. Five IDF soldiers were killed and several others injured in the fighting in the Gaza Strip.

► **The issue of the hostages:** The negotiations in Cairo stalled even after Egyptian efforts for a breakthrough. The Hamas delegation left Cairo and returned to Qatar. Hamas accused Israel of not taking the negotiations seriously and claimed the Israeli delegation's participation was meant as a cover for its action in Rafah.

► **Aid for the Gaza Strip:** With the closure of the Rafah Crossing following the IDF takeover, international and Palestinian figures warned that the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip would deteriorate. Meanwhile, UNRWA distributes aid in its centers throughout the Gaza Strip.

► **Israel, Judea and Samaria:** This past week no terrorist attacks were carried out and the intensity of IDF activities declined. A number of detentions and counterterrorism activities were carried out in the Hebron and Nablus areas. A Lion's Den terrorist operative was killed in the Balata refugee camp.

► **The Palestinian Authority (PA):** After a majority vote in the General Assembly, the PA's status was upgraded and its request to be accepted as a full member will be reexamined. Muhammad Mustafa, PA prime minister, continued his political activities to recruit support and financial aid for the PA and humanitarian aid for the Gazans. He emphasized the PA's difficult financial situation because of Israel's deduction of the tax revenue it collects for the

¹ Click <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en> to subscribe and receive the ITIC's daily updates as well as its other publications.

Palestinians. Senior Fatah member Jibril al-Rajoub, who denied the October 7th, 2023 attack and massacre, continued to promote Israel's delegitimization in FIFA, the international soccer association.

The Southern Arena

IDF activities in the Gaza Strip

- ▶ This past week the IDF expanded its activities in the Gaza Strip, focusing on east Rafah after on May 10, 2024, the Israeli cabinet unanimously approved an increase in the IDF's activities in the city. The forces also focused on the Jebalya refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip. The IDF operation in the al-Zeitoun neighborhood in Gaza, which began on May 9, 2024, ended on the morning of May 15 with the withdrawal of the forces.
- ▶ Five IDF soldiers were killed and several others were injured in the fighting during the past week (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, May 15, 2024). Four IDF soldiers were killed when a wreath of IEDs exploded, one soldier was killed in a clash with terrorist operatives (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, May 10-14, 2024).
- ▶ **Rafah:**² The IDF forces carried out a targeted operation in the east of the city of artillery fire and air force attacks on Hamas terrorist facilities, including the areas from which rockets were launched at Israel. Meanwhile, the IDF increased evacuating the population and called on residents of east Rafah to leave. According to reports, the forces located a model of a Merkava tank at a Hamas military-terrorist wing post (IDF spokesperson, May 11, 15, 2024).
- ▶ Al-Jazeera TV reported the IDF continued to attack the neighborhoods of al-Janina and Khirbet al-Adas, adding that there had been a high number of Gazans casualties (al-Jazeera



Right: Ongoing IDF attacks in east Rafah (Wafa YouTube channel, May 9, 2024). Left: A model of an Israeli tank model found in a Hamas post (IDF spokesperson, May 15, 2024)

² For more information, see the May 9, 2024 report, "The Palestinian Perspective on the IDF Operation in Rafah."

►The Palestinian media reported the continued flight of residents from east Rafah and other areas of the city, most of them going to the Khan Yunis area and the central Gaza Strip. According to UNRWA, so far about 450,000 people have left Rafah (al-Quds, May 15, 2024). It was also stated that Palestinian correspondents who reported from the area of the Kuwaiti Hospital in the center of the city began to leave and took their families with them after receiving notice from Israel to evacuate (Wafa YouTube channel, May 11, 2024).



Right: Palestinian media teams leave the area of the Kuwaiti Hospital (Wafa YouTube channel, May 11, 2024). Left: Residents of Rafah evacuate (Wafa YouTube channel, May 10, 2024)

►**The Jebalya refugee camp:** On the night of May 11, 2024, IDF forces began an operation following intelligence information of the presence of terrorist operatives and the restoration of Hamas' military infrastructure. Before the operation, the IDF called on residents to evacuate and go to central and west Gaza City (IDF spokesperson, May 12, 2024). Before the forces entered, Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked about 30 targets and killed a number of Hamas terrorist operatives. The forces advanced to the center of Jebalya and clashed with armed terrorist squads (IDF spokesperson, May 15, 2024). There was a report of IDF activity in the east of the refugee camp and heavy exchanges of fire between IDF forces and Palestinian terrorist operatives. It was also reported that many residents had fled the area because of the IDF activity (al-Jazeera YouTube channel, May 12, 2024).



Right: Residents of Jabaliya evacuate to the center of Gaza City (Wafa, May 12, 2024). Left: Smoke rises in the Jebalya refugee camp following the IDF attacks (al-Jazeera YouTube channel, May 12, 2024)

► **The al-Zeitoun neighborhood in Gaza City:** The intelligence-guided operation that began on May 9, 2024, was intended to dismantle remaining terrorist facilities. Buildings used for military-terrorist purposes, terrorist tunnels, observation and sniping positions and other terrorist facilities were attacked from the air. During the operation, the forces located large quantities of weapons in a neighborhood clinic and school, and clashed face-to-face with terrorist operatives (IDF spokesperson, May 9 and 11, 2024). On the morning of May 15, 2024, the operation ended and the forces left the area. The Palestinian media reported aerial attacks on buildings near the Hassan al-Bana and Ali Ibn Abu Taleb Mosques (Wafa, May 9, 2024).



Right: Residents flee the al-Zeitoun neighborhood at the beginning of the IDF operation (al-Araby YouTube channel, May 9, 2024). Left: Weapons found in a clinic in the al-Zeitoun neighborhood in Gaza (IDF spokesperson, May 11, 2024)

Rocket fire from the Gaza Strip

► The Palestinian terrorist organizations continue firing rockets and mortar shells at the cities, towns and villages surrounding the Gaza Strip and southern Israel, almost daily. Most of the rockets were fired at Sderot and nearby communities. For the first time in five months, rockets were fired at Beersheba. The barrage was fired immediately after the cabinet's decision to ramp up the IDF's operation in Rafah:

- ◆ **May 15:** In the morning, two rockets were fired at Sderot. One was intercepted and the other hit an empty building. No casualties were reported (Israeli media, May 15, 2024).
- ◆ **May 14 (Independence Day):** Three rockets were fired at Sderot and intercepted by the Iron Dome aerial defense system (Israeli media, May 14, 2024).
- ◆ **May 12 (Memorial Day eve):** Rockets were fired several times towards Sderot, including at 8:06 p.m., just a few minutes after the start of the Memorial Day ceremonies. Shrapnel from the interception of the rockets caused property damage. A

three-year-old boy who was on his way to a protected area was injured. During the day, rockets were fired at Kerem Shalom and on two occasions at Ashqelon. One of the rockets hit an apartment in the south of the city, superficially injuring three people (Israeli media, May 12, 2024). The Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military-terrorist wing, claimed responsibility for the rocket fire, and stated that the rockets had been fired at Ashqelon from the area in east Jebalya where the IDF was operating (Hamas Telegram channel in Judea and Samaria, May 12, 2024).

◆ **May 11:** In the evening, a rocket was fired at the Dudaim waste site near Beersheba. The rocket fell in an open area. Earlier, four rockets were fired from the Rafah area at Kerem Shalom. One was intercepted and three fell in an open area (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, May 11, 2024).

◆ **May 10:** In the morning, two rockets were launched at the communities of Sufa, Holit and Kerem Shalom; they were intercepted (IDF spokesperson, May 10, 2024). In two incidents in the afternoon and evening, rockets were fired from the Rafah area at Beersheba for the first time in five months. One of the rockets hit a playground and a nearby house. A woman was injured by shrapnel (Israeli media, May 10, 2024). In response, the IDF and the Israeli Air Force attacked the launch sites in the Rafah area (IDF spokesperson, May 10, 2024). Hamas' military-terrorist wing claimed responsibility for the first rocket barrage launched at Beersheba (Hamas Telegram channel in Judea and Samaria, May 10, 2024), and in all probability Hamas was also responsible for the second one. The Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades issued a video of the rocket launch and claimed it had been fired from ruins where IDF forces had already operated (Hamas Telegram channel in Judea and Samaria, May 11, 2024).



Right: The rocket hit in the playground in Be'er Sheva (Beersheba municipality Facebook page, May 10, 2024). Left: A picture from the Hamas video of the rocket attack on Beersheba (Hamas Telegram channel in Judea and Samaria, May 11, 2024)

The Control of the Rafah Crossing

- ▶ It is still uncertain who will direct the Palestinian side of the Rafah Crossing, which is currently closed and under IDF control. According to a "senior source in Ramallah," the Palestinian Authority (PA) decided to reject the offer extended by Israel and the United States to take control of the crossing. According to the source, the offer was forwarded to Mahmoud Abbas by both the United States and Israel, but he said he was not prepared to send his people to the Rafah Crossing as long as the fighting in the Gaza Strip continued and there was no chance of a ceasefire. The source also reported that Mahmoud Abbas' people had made it clear to the Americans that they would not be able to undertake management of the crossing as long as there were no "local understandings" with the Hamas leadership, because that would only lead to clashes and bloodshed (MAKO website, May 13, 2024).
- ▶ The National and Islamic Forces Oversight Committee opposed the idea of an American security company's managing and operating the crossing. The committee stated there would be no agreement to anyone's taking any kind of supervision over the Rafah Crossing or any other crossing, which they would consider a form of "occupation." The announcement called on the Arab League and all Arab and Islamic countries, especially Egypt, to reject all attempts to attack Palestinian-Egyptian sovereignty over the Rafah crossing, and called on all parties to oppose any form of cooperation with such "conspiracies," since the management of the internal situation was a Palestinian matter (Hamas website, May 8, 2024).
- ▶ **Hussein al-Sheikh, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee**, said that they rejected any form of oversight of the Rafah Crossing and attempts to harm its Palestinian sovereignty (Hussein al-Sheikh's X account, May 8, 2024).
- ▶ The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) warned against the presence of non-Palestinian elements in the management of the Rafah Crossing, and emphasized that they would treat them as a foreign body, an occupying force and a legitimate target for "resistance" [terrorist attacks] (PFLP website, May 7, 2024).

The hostages and a ceasefire agreement

- ▶ The negotiations in Cairo have stalled and according to the prime minister of Qatar, they returned to square one after Egyptian efforts last week failed to achieve a breakthrough in the prisoner exchange deal between Hamas and Israel. On May 9, 2024, the Hamas delegation left Cairo and returned to Qatar. Hamas accused Israel of not being serious about

negotiations, adding that its participation in the talks was meant to cover up the IDF action in Rafah (al-Jazeera YouTube channel, May 8, 2024).

► **Khalil al-Haya, a member of the Hamas political bureau and the movement's deputy chairman in the Gaza Strip**, said that the real reason the negotiations stalled was the "invasion" of Rafah, Israel's takeover of the Rafah Crossing and Netanyahu and Israeli officials' explicit rejection of the mediation proposal. He added that Hamas had not stopped the negotiations or withdrawn from them, but wondered what the good of negotiating was while Israel was fighting in Rafah. He claimed Israel did not want an agreement, but rather wanted negotiations to gain time. He repeated the Hamas mantra of a total cessation of the war in the Gaza Strip, a total withdrawal of the IDF forces, the return of the displaced Gazans to their previous places of residence, the provision of aid to the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, and after that, a real exchange deal with Israel (al-Araby TV website, May 10, 2024).

► "A source in Hamas" stated that Hamas would formulate its position after this round and that things would not be as they were before entering Rafah (al-Araby TV, May 9, 2024).

► **Zaher Jabarin, who is in charge of Judea and Samaria in Hamas and holds the prisoners' portfolio**, said Hamas had cards it had not yet played and could set more conditions for Israel in the negotiations. He claimed significant pressure had been exerted on Hamas but had not succeeded in changing its position. Regarding Judea and Samaria, Jabarin claimed "the West Bank will soon surprise the enemy" (Arab 21, May 8, 2024).

The Gaza Strip

Palestinian casualties

► **The Hamas-controlled ministry of health in the Gaza Strip** reported at 3:30 p.m., May 15, 2024, that since the beginning of the war 35,223 Palestinians had been killed and 79,141 wounded (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, May 15, 2024).

► On May 13, 2024, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) announced the death of Talal Abu Zarifa, a member of its political bureau, in the al-Sabra neighborhood in eastern Gaza City. According to the announcement, he joined the DFLP while a student in Algeria, and then returned to the Gaza Strip and advanced in the organization's ranks. He was also elected to the political bureau at the DFLP's 8th national general conference, whose deliberations ended in April 2024. Mahmoud Hamami, also a DFLP member, was killed along with him (DFLP media information bureau Telegram channel, May 13, 2024). According to

reports, Abu Zarifa was killed in an Israeli attack on the al-Sabra neighborhood in Gaza City on the evening of May 12, 2024 (Palinfo, May 13, 2024).



Talal Abu Aarifah (DFLP media information bureau Telegram channel, May 13, 2024)

► On May 10, 2024, Na'im al-Ghoull, a Hamas military-terrorist operative in the al-Shati Battalion in Gaza, was killed in a targeted airstrike. Al-Ghoull was involved in firing rockets at Israel and had held Noa Marciano captive, a female IDF soldier who was kidnapped on October 7 and murdered in Shifa Hospital (IDF Telegram channel, May 12, 2024). The Palestinian social networks reported the death of Naim Salama al-Ghoull (Abu Ghanem), who held the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in Palestinian Civil Defense, who was killed in an aerial strike near the "Palestine" Stadium in the al-Rimal neighborhood of Gaza City (Facebook page of his cousin, the journalist Ismail al-Ghoull, May 9, 2024; the Palestinian Civil Defense Facebook page, May 9, 2024).



Naim al-Ghoull (Facebook page of Ahmed Saleh, May 10, 2024)

► The military-terrorist wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades, announced the death of Alaa Kamal Abu Gharqoud, born in 1992 in the al-Bureij refugee camp. He was an operative in the artillery unit and was killed in an Israeli Air Force aircraft attack in the al-Bureij refugee camp on May 9, 2024 (Alburaj Telegram channel, May 9, 2024; PFLP Telegram channel, May 10, 2024).



Alaa Abu Gharqoud (Telegram channel of the Popular Front, May 10, 2024)

► On May 9, 2024, the Mujahideen Brigades network announced the death of several family members of Assad Atiya Abu Sharia, the movement's secretary general, in an Israeli attack on the family home. According to the announcement, Hatem Suleiman Abu Sharia, a released prisoner, was also killed. He had been the commander of the Mujahideen Brigades' al-Sabra and Tel al-Hawa Battalions. He was killed together with 12 members of his family, as well as the family of Abu Khaled Abu Sharia, the commander of the northern region of the Mujahideen Brigades (Mujahideen Brigades Telegram channel, May 9, 2024) Hatem Suleiman Abu Sharia was detained in May 2018 while participating in the return marches, sentenced to five years in prison in Israel, and released in May 2023 (Facebook page of the Abu Sharia and al-Hussainiya clan, May 26, 2019; al-Najah news site, May 25, 2023).



Hatem Suleiman Abu Sharia (al-Najah news site, May 25, 2023)

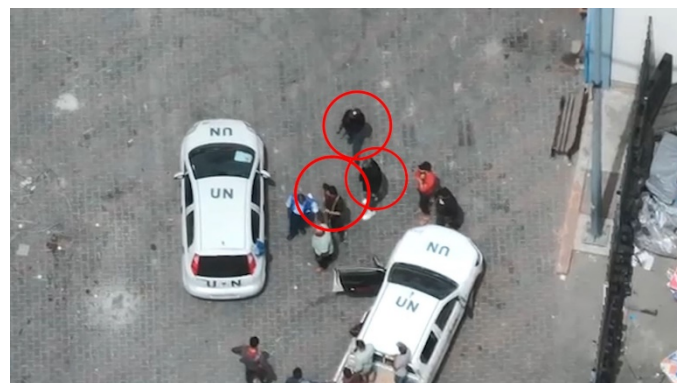
► Ahmed Ali, the commander of Hamas' naval force in Gaza City, was killed in a targeted aerial attack carried out under intelligence guidance. In recent years he had been involved in managing Hamas' naval projects in the Gaza Strip, and during the war he planned and carried out attacks on Israeli territory and on IDF forces operating in the Gaza Strip (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, May 8, 2024).

Aid for the Gaza Strip

►According to reports, UNRWA distributed sacks of flour from Turkey to residents in Jebalya (Wafa YouTube channel, May 9, 2024). An investigation by UN Watch reported many statements from Gazans regarding corruption among UNRWA employees including during the war, suspicion of theft and selling of humanitarian aid (UN Watch, May 8, 2024). The IDF published unusual documentation of Palestinians operating near UN vehicles and shooting from the UNRWA compound in east Rafah (IDF spokesperson, May 14, 2024).



UNRWA distributes sacks of flour in Jebalya (Wafa YouTube channel, May 9, 2024)



Palestinians at the UNRWA compound in east Rafah (IDF spokesperson, May 14, 2024)

►The Cypriote foreign minister announced that a shipment of humanitarian aid had left the port of Cyprus and was sailing to the floating pier built by the United States Army near the shore of the Gaza Strip. It is the first aid shipment to the Strip that will be unloaded at the new pier (AP, May 9, 2024) .

►**Salama Maarouf, the chairman of the Hamas' government's information bureau**, called for an end to airlifting humanitarian aid because it constituted a genuine threat to Gazan lives and so far had caused 21 deaths. He said airlifted humanitarian aid did not reduce shortages in the northern Gaza Strip because some of it fell into the sea, some landed outside the Gaza

Strip and some hit local residents and endangered their lives. Instead he demanded the full activation of the land crossings (al-Aqsa TV Telegram, May 9, 2024).

The situation in the Gaza Strip

- ▶The director of Kamal Adwan hospital in northern Gaza reported the collapse of the health system in the northern Gaza Strip and called on international organizations to immediately transfer medical equipment to the region. Medical officials in Rafah warned the public health system in Rafah would be damaged if the number of casualties increased in the city because of the expansion of IDF activities (Shehab, May 14, 2024).
- ▶At the same time, medical deployment in the south of the Gaza Strip was increased because of the IDF's activity in Rafah:
 - ◆The International Red Cross announced the opening of a 60-bed field hospital in Rafah, with the support of Red Cross societies in 11 countries. The International Red Cross will be responsible for medical supplies, and the various societies will be responsible for staffing and equipment. The hospital will soon be able to treat 200 people a day and will provide emergency surgical services, midwife services, maternal and newborn care, pediatric services and an outpatient clinic. It will also be able to manage mass-casualty events (International Red Cross website, May 14, 2024).



Red Cross field hospital in Rafah (International Red Cross website, May 14, 2024)

- ◆The administration of al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir al-Balah, the main hospital in the central Gaza Strip, added a tent and a hut to accommodate the wounded from the war, since the hospital is overcrowded, with many wounded sleeping in the corridors. The hospital currently has 600 beds compared to 265 beds before the war (Arab World Press, May 7, 2024).



The inside of the structure (Shuhadaa al-Aqsa Hospital Facebook page, May 7, 2024)

Hamas delegation meets with Hassan Nasrallah

► On May 15, 2024, **Hassan Nasrallah**, Hezbollah secretary general, met in Beirut with a delegation of senior Hamas officials which included **Khalil al-Haya**, **Muhammad Nasr** (members of the political bureau) and **Usama Hamdan** (senior Hamas member in Lebanon). They discussed the latest events and developments in the Gaza Strip and in Israel, the latest proposal presented in the negotiations with Israel and the international support they receive. The discussions emphasized the unity and cooperation between the various arenas (pal news, 15 May 2024).



Nasrallah meets with the Hamas delegation (pal news, 15 May 2024)

Hamas delegation visits South Africa

► A delegation from the Hamas movement participated in the Global Anti-Apartheid Conference for Palestine held in Johannesburg, South Africa, between May 10 and 12, 2024. The conference's objective was to lay the groundwork for mobilizing a global movement against apartheid, to demand accountability from Israel for its [alleged] "crimes" against the Palestinian people and to work towards its dismantling the [so-called "Israeli apartheid regime." The delegation included **Dr. Bassem Na'im**, a member of the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip, and **Imad Saber**, a member of Hamas' office of international

relations (Hamas website, May 10, 2024). The conference was also attended by **Dr. Mustafa al-Barghouthi**,³ Palestinian National Initiative secretary general, **Saleh Hejazi**,⁴ the BDS representative (aljazeera.net, May 10, 2024).



Bassem Na'im talks with Naledi Pandor, South African minister of international relations and cooperation (Hamas website, May 10, 2024)

³ Dr. Mustafa al-Barghouthi is a Palestinian physician and politician, secretary general of the left-wing Palestinian National Initiative Movement. Since 2006 he has served as a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council. He calls for "popular resistance" [popular terrorism] against Israel, was a co-founder of the BDS movement and participates in its activities.

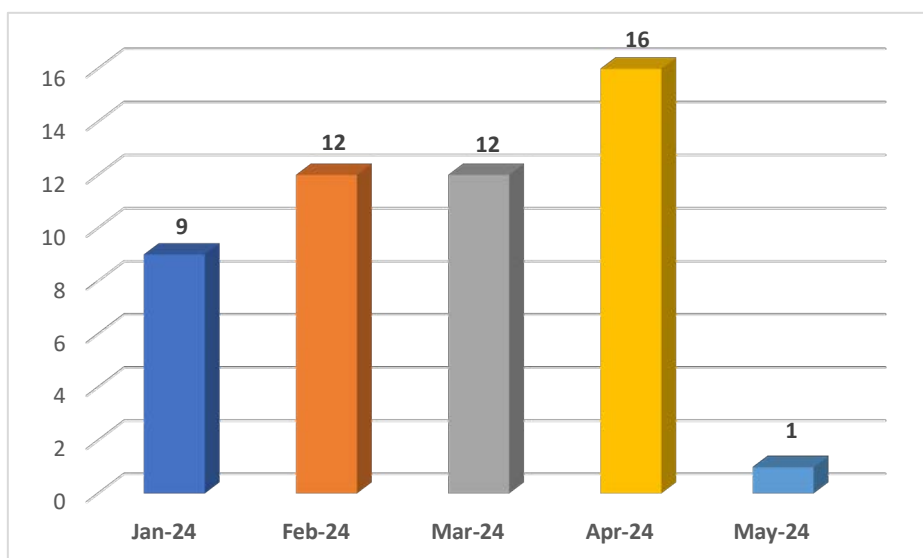
⁴ Saleh Hejazi was previously represented as the campaign coordinator of the National Committee to Boycott Israel (BDS) in Africa (Wafa, December 11, 2022).

Israel, Judea and Samaria

Terrorist attacks

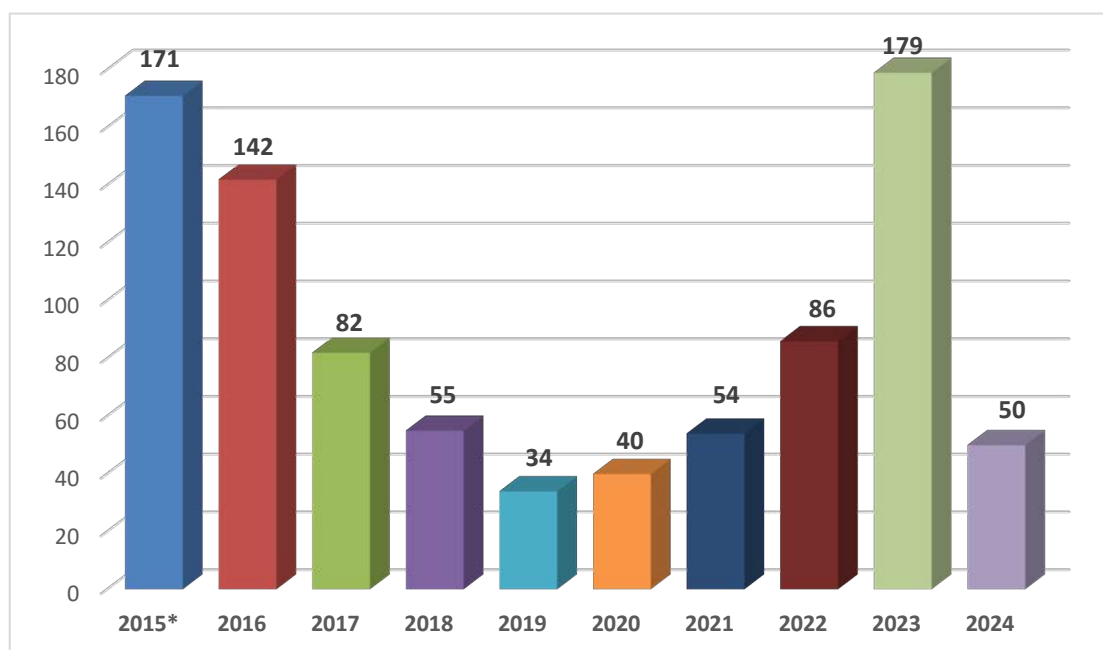
► This past week there were no terrorist attacks.

Critical terrorist attacks, 2024⁵



⁵ 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.

Annual distribution of critical terrorist attacks



Counterterrorism activities

►The Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria. This past week there was a decrease in their activities compared to the last few weeks. Since the beginning of the war, approximately 4,000 wanted persons have been arrested, including over 1,700 Hamas terrorist operatives (IDF spokesperson's X account, May 9, 2024). Activities this past week focused on Hebron and Nablus.

►On the night of May 11, 2024, Israeli security forces operated in the Balata refugee camp in Nablus. Shots were fired at the forces and they were attacked with IEDs. They forces responded by shooting, killing an armed Palestinian terrorist operative from the camp who in the past belonged to Lion's Den network (Israeli media, May 12, 2024). The ministry of health in Ramallah announced the death of **Samer Nasser Rumana, 27 years old**. The Palestinian Red Crescent stated that its teams evacuated a 16-year-old Palestinian to the hospital, who had been wounded by IDF fire (Wafa, May 12, 2024). The Lions' Den network stated that Samer Rumana was one of its operatives (Quds Press, May 12, 2024). Hamas also announced that Rumana was an operative in its ranks (Hamas Telegram channel in Judea and Samaria, May 12, 2024). Rumana was from the Old City of Nablus and his brother is detained in Israel (Ultra Palestine website, May 12, 2024), and his father is an officer in the Palestinian police (Feisal Abu Harb's Facebook page, May 12, 2024). Meanwhile, there were reports of clashes between armed Palestinians and PA security forces in the Old City of Nablus, after the

security forces attacked funeral participants (al-Araby al-Jadeed X account, May 12, 2024; al-Shahed website X account, May 12, 2024).



Right: Samer Rumana (Palestine Online X Account, May 12, 2024). Left: His father, Nasser Rumana (Nasser Rumana's Facebook page, July 18, 2021)

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

Upgrade of PA status in the UN6

► On May 10, 2024, the UN General Assembly passed by majority vote a proposed resolution to the PA grant full membership and recommended that the Security Council reconsider the request affirmatively. The vote was 143 in favor, nine opposed and 25 abstentions. The Gaza Strip also granted the PA rights like those of UN member states, upgrading its status from observer. The Palestinians will receive a seat in the General Assembly and in the committees, as opposed to a seat on the sidelines of the hall where countries with observer status sit. The Palestinians will be present at the General Assembly along with the other countries and will be able to participate in UN forums and conventions, but without the right to vote until the Security Council's final approval of its full membership.



United Nations General Assembly voting results (UN X Account, May 10, 2024)

⁶ For further information see the May 12, 2024 report, "The UN General Assembly Votes to Give the Palestinian Authority Additional Rights."

PA prime minister's political activity

► **Muhammad Mustafa, PA prime minister**, continues his political activity to enlist support and financial aid for the PA, as well as humanitarian aid for the Gazans. Over the weekend he spoke separately with the French prime minister and the Austrian foreign minister. In his conversation with the French Prime Minister, he demanded, in Brussels towards the end of May 2024, that a gathering be held of the countries donating to the PA in view of its difficult financial situation because of Israel's continued deduction of the tax revenues it collects for the PA. He claimed the deduction threatened the ability of the PA to continue functioning (Wafa, May 11, 2024).

► Meeting with Faisal bin Farhan, the Saudi Arabian foreign minister, during a short visit to Riyadh, Muhammad Mustafa informed him about the worsening of the PA's financial situation and the reform measures being taken in the PA institutions. They also discussed the possibility of increasing the amount of Saudi Arabian humanitarian aid to the residents of the Gaza Strip (Wafa, May 9, 2024).



Muhammad Mustafa (left) with the Saudi Arabian foreign minister (Wafa, May 9, 2024)

FIFA's delegitimization of Israel

► **Jibril al-Rajoub,⁷ chairman of the Palestinian Football Association and secretary of Fatah's central committee**, told a meeting of journalists in Ramallah that on May 17, 2024, the International Football Federation (FIFA) would discuss resolution proposed by the Palestinians to oblige Israel to stop its [alleged] "violations" against Palestinian sports, to

⁷ Al-Rajoub is also the chairman of the Palestinian Olympic Committee and the chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, which is subordinate to the PLO. In the past, he compared the current Israeli government to the fascist regimes in Europe in the 1940s, saying that its policies copied the Nazis' Nuremberg Laws, and were an exact copy of ISIS ideology (Jibril al-Rajoub's Facebook page, January 22, 2023). He also justified the Hamas October 7 attack and massacre by claiming it was part of a 75-year Palestinian "defensive war" (Jibril al-Rajoub's Facebook page, , November 26, 2023).

comply with FIFA laws and to be prosecuted for its actions. He said the proposed resolution includes two parts: to provide all the appropriate capabilities and conditions for the Palestinian Association to promote the development and spread of sports in all the territories of the PA, east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, in accordance with the laws, rules and regulations of FIFA; and to demand accountability from the Israel Football Association for the [alleged] explicit violations of FIFA rules. Among the violations claimed were the organization of a league in the Palestinian territories, and the inclusion in the Israeli league of clubs from settlements established on lands under the jurisdiction and sovereignty of the Palestinian Association. Another violation he claimed was measures taken by the IDF which forced the suspension of all sports activities in all Palestinian territories. The proposed resolution also includes a demand that Israel "stop harming Palestinian athletes," the destruction of sports facilities, and turning stadiums and facilities into interrogation centers (Wafa, May 9, 2024).

Nakba Day events⁸

► Every year the Palestinians mark Nakba Day on May 15, holding conferences and rallies in the city centers and the friction points. This year a siren was sounded for 76 seconds throughout the Palestinian territories. In the afternoon, a rally was held in the center of Nablus, attended by Ghassan Daghlis, the Nablus district governor, who said that they would not forget their lands and villages "taken" by Israel (Wafa, May 15, 2024).

► **Faisal Aranki, a member of the PLO Executive Committee**, called on the Palestinian communities in countries around the world to escalate their activities in the various arenas and at all levels for Nakba Day, and noted the importance of increasing coordination and contact with friendly movements and parties, and of sending messages and appeals to parliaments and international unions, demanding that the governments exert genuine pressure on the Israeli government to end the war in the Gaza Strip (Wafa, May 14, 2024).

⁸ In Arabic *nakba* means "catastrophe." It is Arab-Palestinian term for the departure, escape or deportation of approximately 750 thousand Palestinian Arabs during Israel's War of Independence in 1948.