



Spotlight on the Israel-Palestinian Conflict

July 16 – 23 , 2024

Overview¹

- ▶ **The southern arena:** This past week IDF activity focused on the Rafah region in the southern Gaza Strip and in the east of Khan Yunis in the central Gaza Strip. IDF forces also attacked Hamas facilities in UNRWA compounds. The Palestinian organizations continue firing rockets at the cities, towns and villages surrounding Gaza.
- ▶ **The negotiations for a ceasefire and the release of the hostages:** Hamas accused Israel of raising obstacles in the negotiations. The American Secretary of State said progress had been made towards reaching an agreement but several disputed issues remained.
- ▶ **The situation in the Gaza Strip:** Hamas apologized to the Gazans for the suffering caused by the war. The American Army Central Command announced the final dismantling of the pier constructed off the Gaza Strip coast for the transfer of humanitarian aid.
- ▶ Human Rights Watch stated that on October 7, 2023, Hamas and other Palestinian organizations committed war crimes and crimes against humanity. Hamas condemned the report and claimed the organization had ignored Israel's actions since the beginning of the war.
- ▶ **The internal Palestinian reconciliation:** Fourteen Palestinian organizations led by Fatah and Hamas held a meeting in China and signed a declaration "to end the schism and strengthen national unity." They agreed to establish a temporary government for the Gaza Strip after the war.
- ▶ **Israel, Judea and Samaria:** This past week there were three terrorist attacks in which six Israelis were injured. In the north, an IED injured two civilians, and two soldiers and two civilians were injured when an IED exploded. A foreign citizen attempted a stabbing attack in the south. The Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria, eliminating three wanted Palestinian terrorists with an aerial attack in Tulkarm camp. They detained two suspects near Jericho who planned to abduct Israelis and shoot at IDF

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

forces and attack them with IEDs, and exposed a terrorist cell in Birzeit University which planned to carry out an attack, following instructions from Hamas headquarters in Turkey

► **The Palestinian Authority (PA):** The Palestinians welcomed the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice in The Hague which stated that Israel had to end the occupation of the Palestinian territories.

The Southern Arena

IDF operations in the Gaza Strip

► This past week IDF activity focused on the Rafah area in the southern Gaza Strip and Khan Yunis in the central Gaza Strip. Ground and aerial forces attacked terrorist operatives, destroyed terrorist facilities and rocket launchers and located tunnels and large quantities of weapons.

► **Rafah:** IDF forces killed dozens of armed terrorist operatives in clashes and with airstrikes, located rocket launchers, mortar shells and large quantities of weapons, and destroyed terrorist facilities. They also destroyed the tunnel through which an attempt was made in June 2024 to infiltrate into Israeli territory (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, July 16-23, 2024). According to the IDF, the forces killed more than 150 terrorist operatives during two months of activity in the Rafah area and located approximately 400 weapons of different types. They also destroyed a tunnel of hundreds of meters which had several floors and located lathes, rockets and shafts, and raided a school used by terrorist operatives who tried to take over a route used to deliver humanitarian aid (IDF spokesperson, July 22, 2024).

► **Khan Yunis:** On July 22, 2024, IDF forces began operations in eastern Khan Yunis. Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked more than fifty terrorist facilities, including munitions warehouses, observation posts, buildings used by Hamas and tunnel shafts. Dozens of terrorist operatives were killed in airstrikes and by tank fire (IDF spokesperson, July 22-23, 2024).

► Before the start of the operation, the IDF ordered the evacuation of the eastern neighborhoods of Khan Yunis and the eastern part of the humanitarian zone, and instructed the evacuees to move to the humanitarian zone established in al-Mawasi (X account of Avichay Adraee, the IDF spokesperson in Arabic, July 22, 2024). According to reports, at least 200,000 people were evacuated from several neighborhoods in the region (al-Mayadeen, July 22, 2024), and there were airstrikes and artillery fire in eastern and central Khan Yunis, which provided cover for an IDF ground force invasion of eastern Khan Yunis (Telegram channels of the Safa news agency and al-Aqsa TV, July 22, 2024). The ministry of health in Gaza reported that 73

people had been killed and more than 270 injured in the IDF attacks; Nasser Hospital called on Gazans to donate blood (ministry of health in Gaza Telegram channel, July 22-23, 2024).



Right: The map for the evacuation of Khan Yunis published by the IDF spokesperson (Avichay Adraee's X account, July 22, 2024). Left: Gazans leave Khan Yunis (Shehab Telegram channel, July 22, 2024)

Attacks on Hamas, including in UNRWA facilities

► On July 16, 2024, Israeli Air Force fighter jets attacked terrorists who were operating from an UNRWA school in al-Nuseirat, using the site as a facility from which to attack IDF forces. According to reports, measures were taken before the attack to reduce harm to civilians (IDF spokesperson, July 16, 2024). Twenty-three people were reportedly killed and dozens more injured in the attack on the UNRWA school in the al-Nuseirat refugee camp (al-Jazeera, July 16, 2024). Hamas claimed the attack on UNRWA's al-Ghazi school was "a continuation of the occupation army's genocide" and that the United States was responsible "for the crimes" (Hamas Telegram channel, July 16, 2024).

► On July 18, 2024, an Israeli Air Force fighter jet attacked terrorist operatives in the headquarters of Hamas' Gaza City Brigade in the UNRWA compound in the al-Zeitoun neighborhood; steps were taken to reduce harm to civilians. The attack killed Adel Hamadiyah, a military intelligence officer in the Gaza City Brigade and responsible for gathering intelligence, including in preparation for the terrorist attack and massacre of October 7, 2023, and responsible for attacks on IDF forces in the Gaza Strip (IDF spokesperson, July 18-19, 2024). The Palestinians reported that the attack hit the al-Falah school in the al-Zeitoun neighborhood, killing two and injuring eight (Quds Agency Telegram channel, July 18, 2024).



The school in al-Zeitoun after the attack (al-Bureij Tujmi'una Telegram channel, July 18, 2024)

►Philip Lazzarini, UNRWA commissioner general, accused Israel of attacking at least eight schools in the Gaza Strip within ten days, including six which belonged to UNRWA (Wafa, July 17, 2024).

The elimination of senior Hamas operatives

►On July 21, 2024, Avichay Adraee, the IDF spokesperson in Arabic, reported signs had increased indicating that Muhammed Deif, the commander of Hamas' military wing, was killed in the air force attack in Khan Yunis on July 13, 2024, but there was still no official confirmation. He said the attack was carried out after it had been confirmed that Deif was with the commander of the Khan Yunis Brigade, Rafe' Salamah whom Hamas did report as killed (Sky News in Arabic, July 16, 2024).

►On July 16, 2024, the IDF published data regarding damage to Hamas' capabilities since the beginning of the war. According to the data, about 14,000 terrorist operatives have been killed, including six with the rank of brigade commanders, more than 20 with the rank of battalion commander and 150 company commanders. In addition, 37,000 targets and more than 25,000 terrorist facilities and launch sites were attacked from the air (IDF spokesperson, July 16, 2024).



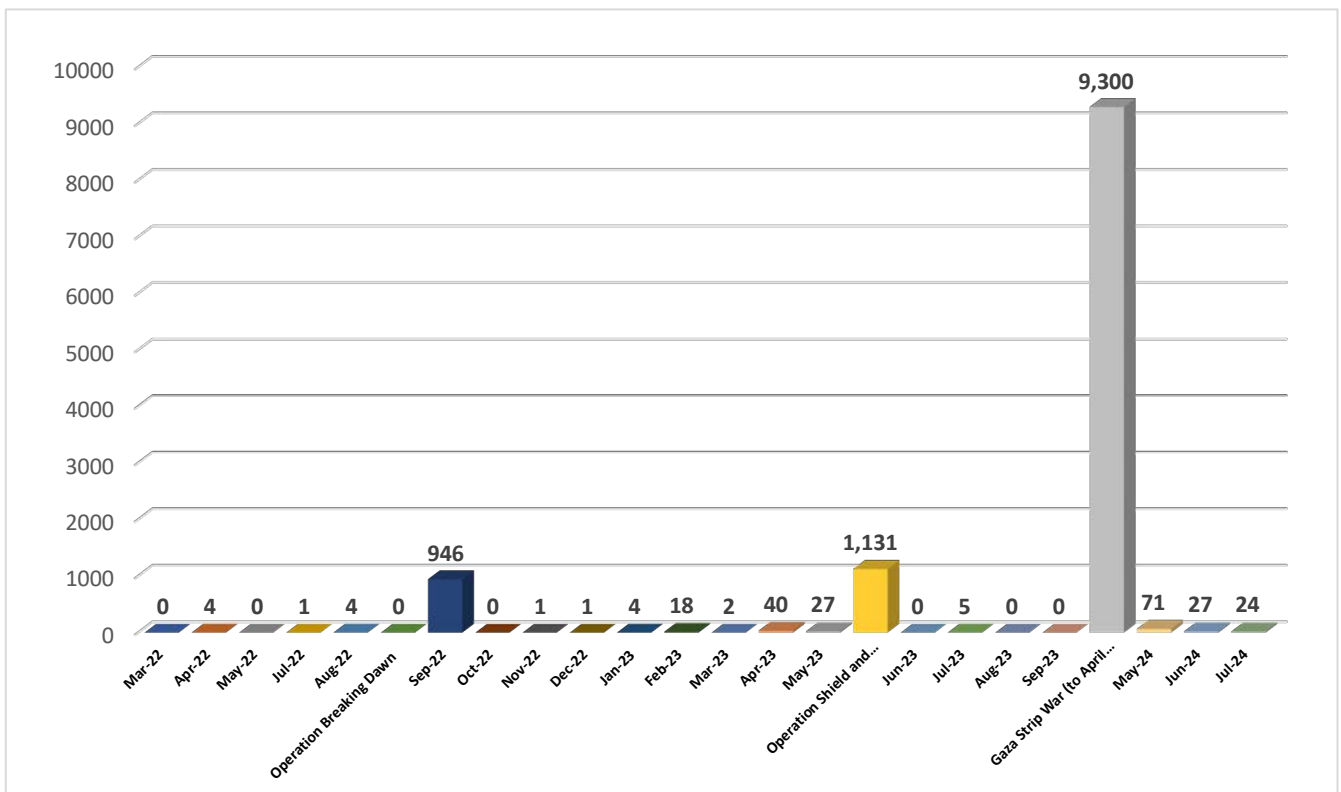
Senior Hamas terrorists who have been eliminated since the beginning of the war (IDF spokesperson, July 16, 2024)

Rocket fire from the Gaza Strip

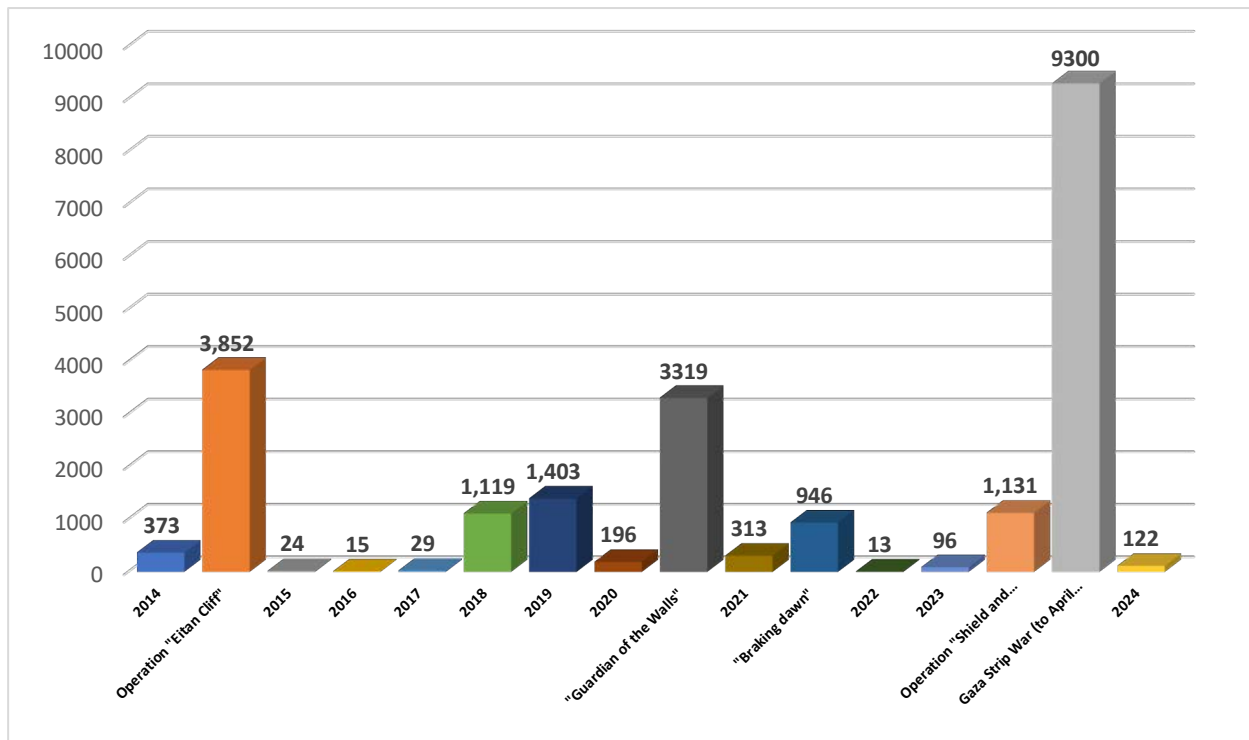
► This past week the Palestinian organizations continued firing rockets at the cities, towns and villages surrounding the Gaza Strip, but far fewer than in previous weeks:

- ◆ July 20, 2024: A rocket fell in an open area in the western Negev; no casualties or damage were reported (Israeli media, July 20, 2024)
- ◆ July 22, 2024: Three rockets were launched from the Khan Yunis area and fell in open areas in western Negev; no casualties or damage were reported (Israeli media, July 22, 2024).

Monthly Distribution of Rocket Fire



Annual Distribution of Rocket Hits



* Distribution for 2024 begins in May

The hostages and a ceasefire agreement

►Osama Hamdan, a senior Hamas figure, claimed that the biggest obstacle to a prisoner exchange deal was the "stubbornness" of the Israeli government. He claimed Hamas had shown "great flexibility" [studied intransigence] during the negotiations but continued to hold the position that the agreement had to end the suffering of the Palestinians (al-Jazeera, July 19, 2024).

►Abu Hamza, spokesman for the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) military wing, said the Palestinian prisoners were at the top of the "resistance's" agenda and that their release was "inevitable." He added that they were committed to "continue fighting, by all methods and means, until the defeat of the occupation" (al-Jazeera, July 16, 2024).

►American Secretary of State Anthony Blinken said progress had been made towards reaching an agreement which would lead to a ceasefire, the release of the hostages and a path that would make sustainable peace and stability possible. He added that some disputed issues were still being negotiated (State Department website, July 19, 2024).

►"Egyptian sources" said that the issues remaining in dispute were the withdrawal of IDF forces from the Philadelphia Axis and the Netzarim Corridor, the return of the displaced persons to the north of the Gaza Strip, and a gradual Israeli withdrawal from all areas of the Gaza Strip.

The "sources" added that without a "clear and decisive" Israeli response regarding the points, the negotiation meetings would be "futile" (al-Akhbar, July 23, 2024).

The Gaza Strip

Palestinian casualties

► **The Hamas-controlled ministry of health in the Gaza Strip** reported at 1:00 p.m., July 23, 2024, that since the beginning of the war, 39,090 Palestinians had been killed and 90,147 injured (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, July 23, 2024).

► Israeli Air Force aircraft carried out targeted killings of terrorist operatives:

- ◆ On July 18, 2024, about 20 Hamas operatives from the al-Shati Battalion were killed, including nukhba operatives, surveillance operatives and snipers. One of the casualties was Muhammad Abu Khattab, a platoon commander in the al-Shati Brigade, who was responsible for the attack in which an IDF soldier was killed on July 9, 2024. In addition, Ismail Shakashqah, a nukhba operative who participated in the attack and massacre on October 7, 2023, was killed, as was Nimr Hamida, who belonged to the Ramallah Committee of Hamas' West Bank headquarters and was involved in the shooting in Ain Yabroud in October 2003, in which three IDF soldiers were killed. Another casualty was Izz al-Din 'Akilah, from the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, who was responsible for orchestrating attacks on IDF forces during the fighting (IDF spokesperson, July 18 and 21, 2024).
- ◆ On July 18, 2024, Tahsin al-Nadim was killed. He worked for the al-Qahera company, which transferred funds to Hamas' military wing in the Gaza Strip for terrorist attacks. The following day, a building belonging to the company was attacked in the humanitarian area of Deir al-Balah after the evacuation of the population in the region and with the help of precision weaponry to reduce harm to non-combatants (IDF spokesperson, July 20, 2024).

The situation in the Gaza Strip

► On July 17, 2024, the American Army's Central Command (CENTCOM) announced that the temporary floating pier, designed to deliver humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip, would be dismantled for the last time. Rear Admiral Brad Cooper, CENTCOM deputy commander, said the pier had "achieved its intended effect" and aid would now be delivered to the Gaza Strip through the Port of Ashdod. The pier began operations on May 17, 2024, but suffered from safety issues and was untethered several times due to high waves. A total of more than 8,831

tons of humanitarian aid were delivered through the pier (American Defense Department website, July 17, 2024).

►John Kirby, spokesman for the National Security Council, said the United States wanted to open the Rafah Crossing for the delivery of humanitarian aid (Reuters, July 18, 2024).

►On July 21, 2024, Thafer Melhem, head of the Palestinian energy and natural resources authority, announced the water desalination facility in Deir al-Balah had been reconnected to the F11 power line (Wafa, July 21, 2024). Meanwhile, employees of the Gaza Strip electric company inspected the power lines and the electrical room in the water desalination facility, southwest of Deir al-Balah, in preparation for operating the facility through the power line connected to the Israeli electricity grid. The desalination plant is expected to produce 20,000 cubic meters of water per day and thus provide clean water for hundreds of thousands of Gazans (Gaza Strip electric company Facebook page, July 21, 2024).



Testing the desalination plant connection to Israel's electricity grid (Gaza Strip electric company Facebook page, July 21, 2024)

►The World Health Organization claimed that the conditions in the Gaza Strip created an ideal environment for the spread of disease. According to the organization, the destruction of the health system in the Gaza Strip, including continuous population movement, a lack of medical supplies and poor water quality and sanitation, led to low rates of vaccination and an increase in the risk of contracting preventable diseases, especially polio. However, the organization's spokesperson noted that the virus, which was found in the sewage systems, was still isolated from the environment and that no related cases of paralysis had been detected (Wafa, July 20, 2024). The Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) stated that 95% of the population of the Gaza Strip was vaccinated against the polio virus (COGAT X account, July 23, 2024).

Hamas appeals to the Gazans

► On July 20, 2024, Hamas issued a message addressed "to the Palestinian people in general, and to our wonderful people in the Gaza Strip in particular." Hamas justified the terrorist attack [and massacre] on October 7, 2023, claiming it had "strategic consequences" and "made it clear that the Zionist entity has no future on our land." Hamas stated they knew the Gazans were suffering "as a result of the systematic destruction and Zionist enemy's war of extermination." They asked for forgiveness for "our inability to fulfill our loyalty to you," but expressed confidence that "the enemy would be defeated and the aggression would end." Hamas claimed that the movement continued the negotiations to "end this crazy war and brutal aggression," and that together with all the Palestinian organizations they sought to reach an agreement "that will end the suffering," and therefore urged the residents to be patient. According to the message, "the resistance is still in good condition and is fighting the noblest campaign known in modern times," and "no one will decide for the Gaza Strip except the Gazans, and no one will determine the day after except the Gazans, and no one will control the Gaza Strip except the Gazans" (Shehab Telegram channel, July 20, 2024). It was Hamas's third appeal to Gazan public, after previous announcements on March 31, 2024 and May 24, 2024, in which it also confessed its inability to meet its obligations to civilians because of the war and its consequences.

Report on Hamas war crimes

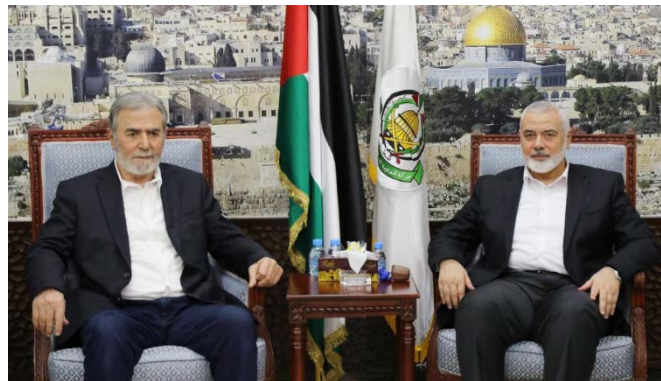
► On July 17, 2024, Human Rights Watch published a comprehensive report stating that Hamas' Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades and at least four other organizations led by the Hamas military wing had committed war crimes, crimes against civilians and crimes against humanity on October 7, 2023. According to the report, Palestinian terrorist operatives committed arbitrary murders and sexual crimes, abused bodies, took and imprisoned hostages, and used civilians as human shields (Human Rights Watch, July 17, 2024).

► Hamas condemned the report, alleging it was false and biased and was an "Israeli propaganda document," and demanded that Human Rights Watch retract it and apologize. According to Hamas, the report ignored "the crimes committed by the occupation" against the Palestinians and chose to present October 7 as the beginning of the war even though it had been preceded by "years of suffering, wars and 'murder.'" Hamas also claimed that the allegations of torture and sexual abuse were false and had no evidence or witnesses, while Palestinians imprisoned in Israeli prisons had [allegedly] been subjected to "abuse and

starvation" for years. In addition, Hamas claimed the report ignored the "crimes" committed by Israel since October 7, for example attacks on schools and hospitals, and claimed that the IDF itself attacked Israeli civilians on October 7 using weapons that the Palestinians did not possess (Hamas Telegram channel, July 17, 2024).

Hamas' Foreign Relations

►On July 18, 2024, Hamas delegation headed by Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau, met in Qatar with a PIJ delegation headed by Ziyad al-Nakhalah, PIJ secretary general, and Muhammad al-Hindi, deputy PIJ secretary general. They discussed the developments in the war in the Gaza Strip and the negotiations for a ceasefire, and praised the "firm stance of the Palestinian people." The delegations called on the PLO leadership to withdraw its recognition of the State of Israel after the Knesset's decision against the establishment of a Palestinian state and concluded that a unified position had to be taken to "confront the attempts to erase the Palestinian issue" (Hamas Telegram channel, July 18, 2024).



Haniyeh (right) and al-Nakhalah (Hamas Telegram channel, July 18, 2024)

►On July 16, 2024, Ismail Haniyeh spoke with Hakan Fidan, the Turkish foreign minister. Haniyeh said Hamas had responded positively to the mediators' proposals for a ceasefire and accused Israel of "evading the required commitments" and not wanting to end the war. Fidan said Turkey condemned the "massacres of the occupation" and praised Hamas' positions in the negotiations. He added that it was necessary "for the occupation government to respond positively to end the war" (Hamas Telegram channel, July 16, 2024).

►Haniyeh also met with Bassel al-Hassan, chairman of the Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee, appointed by Najib Mikati, prime minister of the Lebanese interim government, to discuss the issue of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and UNRWA's situation. Haniyeh claimed that all information regarding the cessation of negotiations by Hamas was untrue, and the movement continued its efforts to reach a ceasefire according to its terms. He noted Hamas' concern for Lebanon's stability and expressed his appreciation for the significant efforts made

by the Lebanese government regarding the UNRWA issue (Lebanese News Agency, July 17, 2024).

The internal Palestinian dialogue

► On July 21-23, 2024, the Chinese foreign ministry in Beijing hosted a meeting for the internal Palestinian dialogue, attended by representatives of 14 Palestinian movements and organizations, including Fatah, Hamas, the PA and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). On July 23, 2024, the Chinese foreign ministry announced that the participants had signed the "Beijing declaration to end the division and strengthen Palestinian national unity." Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said the parties had agreed on the establishment of a "temporary national reconciliation government" for the Gaza Strip after the end of the war, adding that the meeting had made it clear that the PLO was "the only legitimate representative" of all Palestinians. He added that all the organizations and movements expressed a willingness to promote reconciliation and demonstrated a commitment to promote "national justice and bring precious hope to the suffering Palestinian people" (Xinhua News Agency and Chinese Foreign Ministry website, July 23, 2024).



The representatives of the organizations with the Chinese foreign minister at the signing ceremony of the declaration (Filastin al-Yawm, July 23, 2024)

► Musa Abu Marzouq, a member of the Hamas political bureau, who headed the movement's delegation to the talks in China, confirmed that Hamas had signed a "national reconciliation" agreement with Fatah and the other organizations. He stated that "the way to complete this journey was national unity" and Hamas was committed to it (al-Quds al-Arabi, July 23, 2024).

► Fatah spokesman Osama al-Qawasmi confirmed that the organizations had agreed to form a government for Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip. He claimed there was "cautious optimism" after the signing, and that most of the efforts had been directed towards ending the war in the Gaza Strip. He added that the existing circumstances would lead to the establishment of a

reconciliation government and praised Hamas for "showing maturity in its thinking about Palestinian unity" (al-Arabiya, July 23, 2024).

►Abd al-Fatah Doula, a senior Fatah figure, said that Hamas and Fatah still differed on the wording of the international resolutions concerning the Palestinian issue, but there was agreement on the resolutions' framework. He said the internal Palestinian schism has not yet ended but the parties were taking serious steps, and the discussions on "the day after" would take place when the war ended (al-Arabiya, July 23, 2024).

►"One of the participants" called the meeting in China "tumultuous," adding that substantial differences had been exposed, but "it was inappropriate to return from such a distant country without a general statement which would satisfy China and not arouse the anger of the Palestinian street." According to "the participant," Fatah believed that the PA should be unified and all weapons should be in the hands of its security forces, while Hamas claimed the Palestinians were in a "national liberation phase" which required the organizations to possess weapons and "resist." He added that there were also fundamental differences of opinion regarding the agreements the PLO had signed with Israel, while Hamas wanted to jettison them (al-Sharq, July 23, 2023).

►Before the official announcement, reports were published about the content of the agreed-upon statement. According to reports, the parties agreed on the establishment of a government to be established on the basis of an internal Palestinian consensus which would have authority over all Palestinian territories, and would confirm the unity of Judea, Samaria, east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. They expressed a commitment to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with its capital in Jerusalem [sic] and guaranteeing the [so-called] "right of return;" confirmed the Palestinians' right to "resist" the occupation and end it in accordance with international laws and the UN Charter; agreed to work to lift the "barbaric" siege on the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria and to deliver unlimited humanitarian and medical aid (Sada News, July 22, 2024). Husam Badran, a member of Hamas' political bureau, denied the publications and claimed that the statement signed by the organizations "was clear and does not correspond to what was published" (Hamas website, July 23, 2024). The PIJ also stated that "the information published was inaccurate" and they did not agree to "any version that determines international decisions which would lead to for the recognition of the legitimacy of the occupying Zionist entity, and we refuse to accept any version that guarantees recognition, directly or indirectly, of Israel" (al-Mayadeen, July 23, 2024).

►During the meeting in Beijing, Jamil Mazhar, the PFLP deputy secretary, said they had to "be united in the face of aggression because it is our only guarantee for achieving our main national goals." He called for the establishment of a national consensus government, whose roles and priorities were to unify Palestinian institutions, support the stability of the Palestinian people and meet their needs, and prepare for general elections (PFLP Telegram channel, July 22, 2024).

►Before the meeting began, Fatah criticized Hamas after it became clear that Musa Abu Marzouq would head the delegation in place of Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau. A "Palestinian source" said that the PA leadership regarded it as a negative sign, indicating Hamas' lack of seriousness in ending the schism (Sky News in Arabic, July 17, 2024). The Fatah movement also stated that "we have much information which casts doubt on the reconciliation with Hamas (al-Hadath, July 21, 2024).

The issue of "the day after" the Gaza Strip War

►Muhammad Mustafa, PA prime minister, said that the Gaza Strip was a central part of the "national project" and that a Palestinian state would not be established without it. He claimed the Gaza Strip was the government's top priority and it wanted to provide relief services and achieve national unity and reconstruction while preparing plans to reintegrate workers in the Gaza Strip. He added that the Palestinians did not want a weak, tottering state, but an independent, sovereign state with a strong and productive society (Wafa, July 17, 2024).

►At the weekly cabinet meeting, Muhammad Mustafa said that the government, its various ministries and bodies, had prepared plans to deal with the urgent needs in the Gaza Strip. He noted that in preparation for the possibility of a ceasefire, the government had already begun to develop a plan for reconstruction in cooperation with international bodies, including UN agencies, the EU and the World Bank (Wafa, July 16, 2024).

►Nabil Abu Rudeineh, spokesman for Mahmoud Abbas, said that only the Palestinian people and their leadership represented by the PLO had the right to determine the fate of the Palestinians on their land. He noted that the leaked plans indicated the United States was holding discussions about a plan which included the future of Gaza Strip in cooperation with other parties, adding that the plan would not be considered legitimate or be accepted by the Palestinians. Abu Rudeineh added that the priority now was to stop the "Israeli aggression and the [alleged] massacres" of the Palestinian people and not to talk only about "the day after the war" (Wafa, July 20, 2024).

►According to reports, the UAE expressed its willingness, in principle, to participate in a multinational force to stabilize the Gaza Strip after the war. According to Lana Nusseibeh, the UAE ambassador to the UN, her country and the United States were holding talks on the issue. She said the UAE would be prepared to consider participating in the force alongside Arab and international partners, on the condition it received an invitation from the PA. She said that for the process to succeed it had to be led by the United States. According to the report, details related to the multinational force, including whether it would be a military or police force, were still under discussion (Financial Times, July 19, 2024).

Israel, Judea and Samaria

Terrorist attacks

►This past week there were three terrorist attacks, in which six Israelis were injured.

IED explosion near Meirav

►On the morning of July 23, 2024, an IED exploded near the community of Meirav while employees of a defense ministry contractor were working at the site; two Israeli citizens were injured. The security forces initiated a search for those responsible (Israeli media, July 23, 2024).

IED near the settlement of Hermesh

►On July 18, 2024, an IED exploded close to an Israeli vehicle near the community of Hermesh in Samaria. Two soldiers and two civilians were injured. Israeli security forces searched the area (IDF spokesperson, July 18, 2024). On July 20, 2024, Hamas' military wing claimed responsibility for detonating an IED to attack a vehicle belonging to "occupation soldiers." According to the announcement, Hamas operatives in Tulkarm planted the device between the village of Barta'a and Hermesh and managed to "successfully return to their base." Hamas also threatened that "the next few days will bring only death to the occupation soldiers" and that the operations would continue throughout Judea and Samaria until the Israeli leadership "submits to the demands of the resistance" (Hamas in Judea and Samaria Telegram channel, July 20, 2024).

Attempted stabbing in Netiv HaAsara

► Before noon on July 22, 2024, a Canadian citizen armed with a knife arrived at the entrance gate of Moshav Netiv HaAsara, immediately north of the Gaza Strip. He shouted slogans about "killing civilians in the Gaza Strip" and threatened the soldiers at the gate; he was shot and killed. No casualties or damage were reported. According to reports, he came from Israel and not from the Gaza Strip (Israel Police Force X account, IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel and Israeli media, July 22, 2024). Hamas welcomed the "heroic stabbing operation inside the settlement of Netiv HaAsara, in which several settlers were wounded." Hamas called the [attempt[ted] attack a "legitimate response to the continued crimes of the occupation, the [alleged] genocide in the Gaza Strip, the continued damages caused by the settlers in the West Bank and the continued damage caused by the occupation army to our holy places, both Islamic and Christian" (Hamas Telegram channel, July 22, 2024).



The knife carried by the Canadian (Israel Police Force X account, July 22, 2024)

Suspected terrorist operative detained

► On July 8, 2024, the body of an Israel Prison Service worker was found in his home in the community of New Givon with numerous stab wounds. On July 22, 2024, the Israeli Security Agency and the Israel Police announced that Ibrahim Mansour, a Palestinian in his twenties from the village of Bidu and suspected of committing the murder, had been detained. According to reports, he was affiliated with Hamas and had been under administrative detention for incitement, and was released in April 2024 (Israel Police Force X account and Israeli media, July 22, 2024).

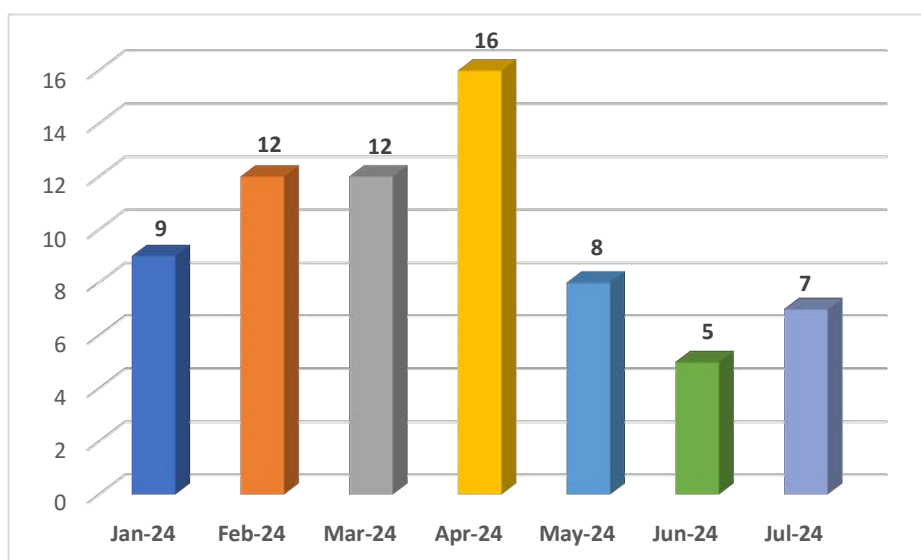
Infiltration of Telem

► On the night of July 16, 2024, a Palestinian who had infiltrated the community of Telem in Mount Hebron was located. He fled when an attempt was made to arrest him. A knife and firecrackers were discovered at the scene (Israeli media, July 16, 2024).

Hamas claims responsibility for shooting

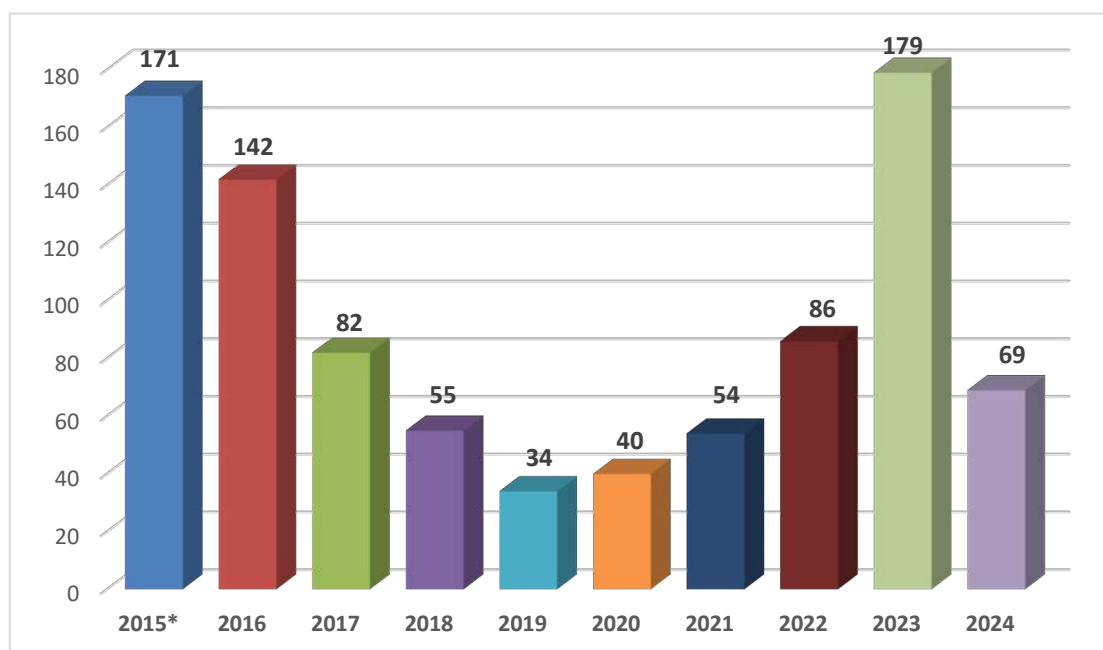
► On July 17, 2024, Hamas' military wing claimed responsibility for a shooting in which three Israeli civilians were injured. The attack was carried out near the Ramin Junction, west of the settlement of Shavei Shomron, on July 16, 2024. According to the claim of responsibility, "the heroic operation comes as revenge for the blood of the martyrs, for the massacres of the occupation in Gaza and the West Bank, and for the violations committed against the male and female prisoners in the prisons of the occupation." The message also referred to the IEDs used to attack IDF soldiers in Jenin, Tulkarm and Tubas in recent weeks (Hamas in Judea and Samaria Telegram channel, July 17, 2024).

Critical terrorist attacks, 2024²



² A critical attack is defined by the ITIC as involving shooting, stabbing, a vehicular attack, the use of IEDs, or a combination of the above. 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. Since the beginning of the war, approximately 4,400 wanted persons have been detained, of whom more than 1,850 were Hamas terrorist operatives (IDF spokesperson, July 16-23, 2024):

- ◆On the night July 22, 2024, the Israeli security forces launched a counterterrorism operation in the Tulkarm refugee camp. They attacked armed operatives and destroyed explosives planted under streets. An Israeli Air Force UAV attacked a number of terrorist operatives, including operatives who had attacked Israel. According to reports, one of the dead was Ashraf Nafe', head of Hamas' military wing in the Tulkarm refugee camp. He was in contact with Hamas figures abroad and responsible for manufacturing IEDs used to attack IDF forces and the recruitment of terrorist operatives. Muhammad 'Oud was also killed; he carried out shootings and was involved in raising funds for terrorist attacks and purchasing weapons (IDF spokesperson, July 23, 2024). IDF spokesperson published a video for the international media showing an armed woman with medical insignia next to the wanted terrorists before they were eliminated (IDF spokesperson's X account for the international media, July 23, 2024). Palestinian media reported the death of Ashraf Nafe', aka Azkiham, commander of the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades in the Tulkarm refugee camp, and Muhammad 'Oud, aka Abu Abdo, the commander of the al-

Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades in Tulkarm (al-Aqsa Channel, July 23, 2024; Safa, July 23, 2024). In addition, according to reports, Muhammad Badi' and two girls, Roza Jum'ah Salem and Bayan Jum'ah Salem, were killed (Salem Rabih's X account, July 23, 2024). A Palestinian "security source" confirmed that Ashraf Eid Zaher Nafe' and Mohammad Ibrahim 'Oud were killed and the IDF took their bodies. The Palestinian Red Crescent reported that Iman Abdullah Salem, 56 years old, was killed by Israeli security forces (Wafa, July 23, 2024). Hamas' military wing confirmed the death of Ashraf Nafe', the commander of the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades in the Tulkarm camp, and of Muhammad 'Oud and Muhammad Badi' of the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades. Hamas accused Israel of a "cowardly assassination" and warned that the attack "would only increase the determination of the people to continue on the path of resistance" (Hamas' Telegram channel, July 23, 2024). The PIJ issued a mourning notice for the casualties and accused Israel of "criminal executions" (PIJ Telegram channel, July 23, 2024).



Right to left: Muhammad Badi', Muhammad 'Oud and Ashraf Nafe' (Quds Agency Telegram channel, July 23, 2024). Left: An armed female operative wearing a medical uniform next to wanted Palestinians before the attack (English X account of the IDF spokesperson, July 23, 2024)

- ◆ According to reports, on July 21, 2024, Israeli security forces exposed a Hamas cell at Birzeit University which was planning to carry out an attack. The investigation revealed that the suspects were acting on instructions from Hamas headquarters in Turkey to provide facilities for attacks on Israelis, were preparing to carry out an attack and transferred funds to terrorist operatives in the field. The suspects were detained and weapons and large sums of money transferred from Hamas headquarters were found in their possession (Israeli Security Agency spokesman's unit and Israeli media, July 21, 2024)



**Members of the Hamas squad from Birzeit University
(Israeli Security Agency spokesman's unit, July 21, 2024)**

- ◆ According to reports, on July 22, 2024, Israeli security forces prevented an abduction and detained two suspects, Muhammad Tariq, 19 years old, and Amin Qattash, 20 years old, from the Aqabat Jabr refugee camp near Jericho. They had formed a terrorist cell, recruited operatives and purchased weapons. They planned to abduct Israelis and shoot at IDF forces and attack them with IEDs. Weapons, vests, radios and uniforms were seized and a pit was discovered where they planned to hide the hostages. Another suspect is being held by the Palestinian security forces (Israeli Security Agency spokesman's unit, July 22, 2024). On July 20, 2024, Palestinian media reported that Israeli special forces had raided the Aqabat Jabr refugee camp and detained 14 young men; eight people were injured, one of them seriously (al-Quds Telegram channel and al-Fajar TV, July 20, 2024).



**Weapons discovered in the possession of the terrorist operatives in Aqabat Jabr
(Israeli Security Agency spokesman's unit, July 22, 2024)**

Activities of the Palestinian security forces

- On July 17, 2024, Palestinian security forces confiscated and destroyed explosives near the al-Ahmadin Square in Tubas. They also confiscated IEDs in Iktaba in Tulkarm and in Nablus. According to reports, the IEDs were intended to be used to attack the Israeli security forces (al-Aqsa TV Telegram channel, July 17, 2024; Ahrar Beit Furiq, July 18, 2024).



Neutralizing the charges in Nablus (Palestinian Media Center Telegram channel, July 18, 2024)

►Palestinian politician Omar 'Asef, a member of the Palestinian National Democratic Movement, claimed the activities of the Palestinian security forces were a "free service for the occupation" and the PA was "behaving nicely" to ensure that it would be awarded a role after the war in the Gaza Strip. He claimed that hardly a day went by without the forces' confiscating IEDs planted by "resistance activists," while the PA "tries to pretend it is protecting the residents from harm" (al-Shahed Agency, July 21, 2024).

►Following the arrest of the suspects from the Aqabat Jabr refugee camp, Adham Abu Salamia, an Internet celebrity from the Gaza Strip (whose X account has 890,000 followers), criticized the PA security forces for providing Israel with information about the "resistance fighters." He wrote that the detention was carried out "using information described as golden, provided to Israel by Mahmoud Abbas' security forces," and that was why Prime Minister Netanyahu did not want to dismantle the PA. In responses to the post, the PA was accused of treason and the "resistance" was called on to take action against it (Adham Abu Salmiya's X account, July 22, 2024).

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

The advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice

►On July 19, 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague published an advisory opinion regarding Israeli control of the territories of Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem, in accordance with the request of the United Nations General Assembly in December 2022. The judges ruled that Israel's continued presence in the occupied Palestinian territories was illegal and constituted annexation and a violation of the Palestinian right to self-determination, so it had to leave the territories as soon as possible. Israel also had to immediately stop its settlement policy, remove all the settlers and provide compensation for any damage caused

by the occupation. In addition, the UN and international organizations were obligated not to recognize the situation caused by Israel's illegal presence in the territories, and called on the UN and the Security Council to consider steps and actions to end Israel's presence in the occupied territories. The opinion will be forwarded to the UN General Assembly and the Security Council for decision (ICJ X account, July 19, 2024).

►The Palestinians welcomed the opinion:

- ◆The Palestinian "presidency" called the court's opinion "a victory for justice," as it confirmed that "the Israeli occupation was illegal" and Israel had to end its presence in the Palestinian territories and immediately stop any activity in the settlements and evacuate them. The presidency called on the international community to obligate Israel to end "the occupation and its colonial project" absolutely and immediately, without restrictions or conditions (Wafa, July 19, 2024).
- ◆Hussein al-Sheikh, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee, called the ICJ opinion "a historic victory for the rights of the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination." He added that the international community had to respect the opinion and force Israel to end the occupation of the Palestinian territories (Wafa, July 19, 2024).
- ◆The PA foreign ministry welcomed the ICJ advisory opinion, claiming that the only solution consistent with international law was for Israel to end its "illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories" immediately and unconditionally and dismantle the "racist colonial system it has been enabling for decades in all its legal and material aspects." The foreign ministry also assigned the international community and the United Nations the full responsibility to put an end to "the historical injustice," and to implement the law to fulfill Palestinian rights and achieve a just peace for all (Wafa, July 19, 2024).
- ◆ Hamas welcomed the ICJ opinion, stating that it confronted the international system with the need to act immediately "to end the occupation and translate the ICJ opinion into action on the ground." Hamas called on the UN General Assembly and Security Council to take the necessary steps to "end the occupation" and accused Israel of ignoring the court's "decisions" while accusing it of anti-Semitism (Hamas Telegram channel, July 19, 2024).
- ◆The Fatah movement welcomed the opinion and noted that it was an unprecedented decision confirming the rights of the Palestinians, and especially their right to establish a sovereign state with Jerusalem as its capital. Fatah stated that the decision came as a

result of "the continuous sacrifice of the Palestinian people and tireless diplomatic efforts" and that it was a blow to Israel's efforts to "systematically destroy the idea of a Palestinian state" (Wafa, July 19, 2024).

Knesset decision against the establishment of a Palestinian state

► On July 18, 2024, the Knesset approved a decision opposing the establishment of a Palestinian state (Israeli media, July 18, 2024). The decision provoked sharp criticism from the Palestinians:

- ◆ Nabil Abu Rudeineh, spokesman for Mahmoud Abbas said "there will be no peace or security for anyone without the establishment of a Palestinian state in accordance with international legitimacy." He said the decision "proves Israeli stubbornness to push the entire region into the abyss" and added that the Israeli government did not want peace, which would not be achieved "without the establishment of an independent Palestinian state." Abu Rudeineh noted that 149 UN member states had already recognized a Palestinian state and called on the states that have not yet done so to recognize it and support its acceptance as a full UN member (Wafa, July 18, 2024).
- ◆ Hussein al-Sheikh, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee, said that the decision "proves the racism of the occupying state while ignoring international law and legitimacy, its insistence on perpetuating the policy of occupation and the lack of a partner to reach peace on the Israeli side." He called on the countries of the world to recognize a Palestinian state as a response to the Knesset decision and preserve the two-state solution (Ramallah News Facebook page, July 18, 2024).
- ◆ The PA foreign ministry condemned the Knesset's decision and accused it of "official Israeli defiance of the international community." The ministry called on the international community to initiate measures to keep the establishment of a Palestinian state from depending "on the consent of the occupying power." The foreign ministry also stated that "the realization of the Palestinian state is a decision that belongs only to the Palestinian people" (Wafa, July 18, 2024).
- ◆ Hamas called it "an invalid decision by an occupying entity which has no right to the Palestinian land," adding that the "resistance" would continue its struggle against the "Zionist terrorist government's war of genocide" and the Knesset's decision showed contempt for UN resolutions (Hamas Telegram channel, July 18, 2024).

- ◆ Taher al-Nunu, Isma'il Haniyeh's media advisor, called on all Arab countries to examine their relations with the Israeli government. He said that the more the "resistance" demonstrated greater "flexibility" in the negotiations, the more the Israeli government would delay and disrupt the agreement (al-Jazeera Mubasher, July 18, 2024).

Senior PA figures meet with foreign political representatives

► On July 22, 2024, Mahmoud Abbas met in Ramallah with Vladimir Safronkov the Russian envoy for the Middle East peace process, and with Gocha Buachidze Russia's "ambassador to Palestine." Mahmoud Abbas briefed them on the situation in the Palestinian territories and on the continuation of "Israeli aggression" against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. He emphasized the need to end the "aggression," provide humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip, complete the Israeli withdrawal from the Strip and stop the "Israeli attacks" in Judea and Samaria. Safronkov said Russia strongly supported the rights of the Palestinian people (Wafa, July 22, 2024).



Mahmoud Abbas with the Russian envoy (Wafa, July 22, 2024)

► Hussein al-Sheikh, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee, and Nabil Abu Rudeineh, spokesman for Mahmoud Abbas, met with the Russian envoy Safronkov. They discussed developments in the Gaza Strip and efforts to achieve a ceasefire agreement. They also discussed the "Israeli escalation" in Judea and Samaria and the Knesset's decision against a Palestinian state. According to reports, they agreed that "the two-state solution was a strategic choice that had to be worked for" (Wafa, July 22, 2024).

► On July 18, 2024, Muhammad Mustafa, PA prime minister, met with American Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD). Mustafa reviewed efforts to stop the "genocidal war" against the Gazans and increase humanitarian aid efforts for the Gaza Strip. Referring to the issue of "the day after," he said that the PA had not left the Gaza Strip, since it was responsible for providing it with all basic services including health, education, water, electricity [sic], reconstruction programs, comprehensive aid and the consolidation of institutions (Wafa, July 18, 2024).

►On July 17, 2024, Riyad Mansour, the Palestinian delegate to the UN, participated in the Security Council discussion on the situation in the Middle East. He claimed that the killing in the Gaza Strip was "the most extensive genocide ever recorded" and accused Israel of "repeatedly and openly committing crimes against the world." According to Mansour, Israel "uses hunger, dehydration and the spread of disease as weapons in war" (Wafa, July 17, 2024).