



Spotlight on the Israel-Palestinian Conflict

July 23 - 30 , 2024

Overview¹

► **The southern arena:** This past week IDF operations focused on the areas of Khan Yunis and Rafah in southern Gaza Strip. The forces also attacked Hamas facilities in civilian compounds. Two IDF soldiers were killed in combat. The Palestinian organizations continued firing rockets at Israeli territory; no casualties were reported.

► **Negotiations for a ceasefire and the release of the hostages:** IDF forces rescued the bodies of five Israeli hostages killed by Hamas and held by since October 7, 2023, kept in a tunnel in the humanitarian area of Khan Yunis. Hamas claimed that Israel had set new demands for the negotiations.

► **The situation in the Gaza Strip:** The World Health Organization announced it would send more than one million doses of polio vaccine to the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian water commission and UNICEF signed an agreement to provide a response for the water problem in the Gaza Strip.

► **"The day after" the war:** Senior Fatah figure Muhammad Dahlan denied a report that he would head a Palestinian security force which would enter the Gaza Strip after the withdrawal of the IDF forces.

► **Israel, Judea and Samaria:** Palestinian terrorists carried out two shooting attacks this past week, wounding four IDF soldiers: three were wounded near Nebi Elias, and one when an IDF post near Nablus was attacked. The Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria. Palestinian Islamic Jihad operatives tried and failed to launch rockets into Israeli territory from Tulkarm. The Palestinian security forces attempted to detain wanted terrorists and clashed with armed operatives.

► **The Palestinian Authority:** The Palestinians condemned Prime Minister Netanyahu's speech before Congress.

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The Southern Arena

IDF operations in the Gaza Strip

► This past week IDF operations focused on the Khan Yunis and Rafah areas in the southern Gaza Strip. Ground and air forces attacked terrorist operatives, destroyed terrorist facilities and rocket launchers and located a large number of tunnels and weapons. During the week, two IDF soldiers were killed.²

► **Khan Yunis:** On the night of July 29, 2024, the IDF forces completed the operation in the Khan Yunis area which began on July 22, 2024. They killed more than 150 terrorist operatives, destroyed tunnels, weapons warehouses, attacked dozens of terrorist facilities and found weapons including shoulder-fired missiles, grenades and rifles, and other military equipment (IDF spokesperson, July 29-30, 2024). On July 27, 2024, the IDF ordered the evacuation of the southern neighborhoods of Khan Yunis because rockets were fired at Israeli territory from the area (IDF spokesperson, July 27, 2024).



Right: IDF forces in Khan Yunis (IDF spokesperson, July 29, 2024). Left: Evacuation map of the southern neighborhoods of Khan Yunis (IDF spokesperson July 27, 2024)

► **Rafah:** IDF forces operating in Rafah killed dozens of armed terrorist operatives in clashes and airstrikes, destroyed terrorist facilities, and located long-range rocket launchers, mortar shells, IEDs and large quantities of weapons. They located a tunnel shaft and large quantities of weapons in a children's room in a building in Tel al-Sultan (IDF spokesperson July 29-30, 2024) On July 25, 2024, an IDF soldier was killed and two others were injured when they inhaled toxic gases. In another incident, an IDF soldier was killed by an anti-tank missile in Rafah (IDF spokesperson, July 25, 2024).

► **The northern Gaza Strip:** On July 26, 2024, IDF forces destroyed a Hamas attack tunnel in Beit Lahia. The tunnel was more than a kilometer long and its exit point was in a residential

² On July 27, 2024, an IDF fighter died who had been critically wounded by an anti-tank missile in Rafah on July 20, 2024, (IDF spokesperson, July 27, 2024).

area. Weapons, anti-tank missiles, electricity and means for prolonged stay were found inside the tunnel (IDF spokesperson, July 26, 2024).



Detonating the tunnel in Beit Lahia (IDF spokesperson, July 26, 2024)

► **The central Gaza Strip:** On July 28, 2024, the Palestinians reported that the IDF had ordered the evacuation of the al-Bureij refugee camp, the al-Dawah area and the eastern parts of the al-Nuseirat refugee camp. Documentation was published of thousands of residents leaving the areas (Quds Agency Telegram channel, July 28, 2024).

Attacks on Hamas in Deir al-Balah

► On July 27, 2024, Israeli Air Force planes attacked the Khadijah school in Deir al-Balah, where Hamas operated a command and control facility. The attack killed Hamas terrorist operatives who were hiding and operating from the facility and destroyed large quantities of weapons. The IDF emphasized that before the attack, steps were taken to reduce possible harm to civilians, including using weapons adapted to the type of attack (IDF spokesperson July 27, 2024). The Hamas government media information office claimed three missiles were used in attack and that at least 36 people were killed, including women and children (Hamas government media information office, July 27, 2024).

Rocket fire from the Gaza Strip

► This past week the Palestinian organizations in the Gaza Strip continued firing rockets into Israeli territory:

- ◆ **July 26, 2024:** Three rockets were launched at Ashqelon. One was intercepted, the other two fell in open areas. There were no casualties; a fire broke out to the north of the Gaza Strip (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, July 26, 2024).
- ◆ **July 28, 2024:** Two rockets were fired from the Jebalya region at Nativ HaAsara. One fell in an open area, and the other in the Gaza Strip. No casualties or damage were reported (Israeli media, July 28, 2024). The Jerusalem Brigades, the military wing of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), claimed responsibility for firing a barrage of rockets at

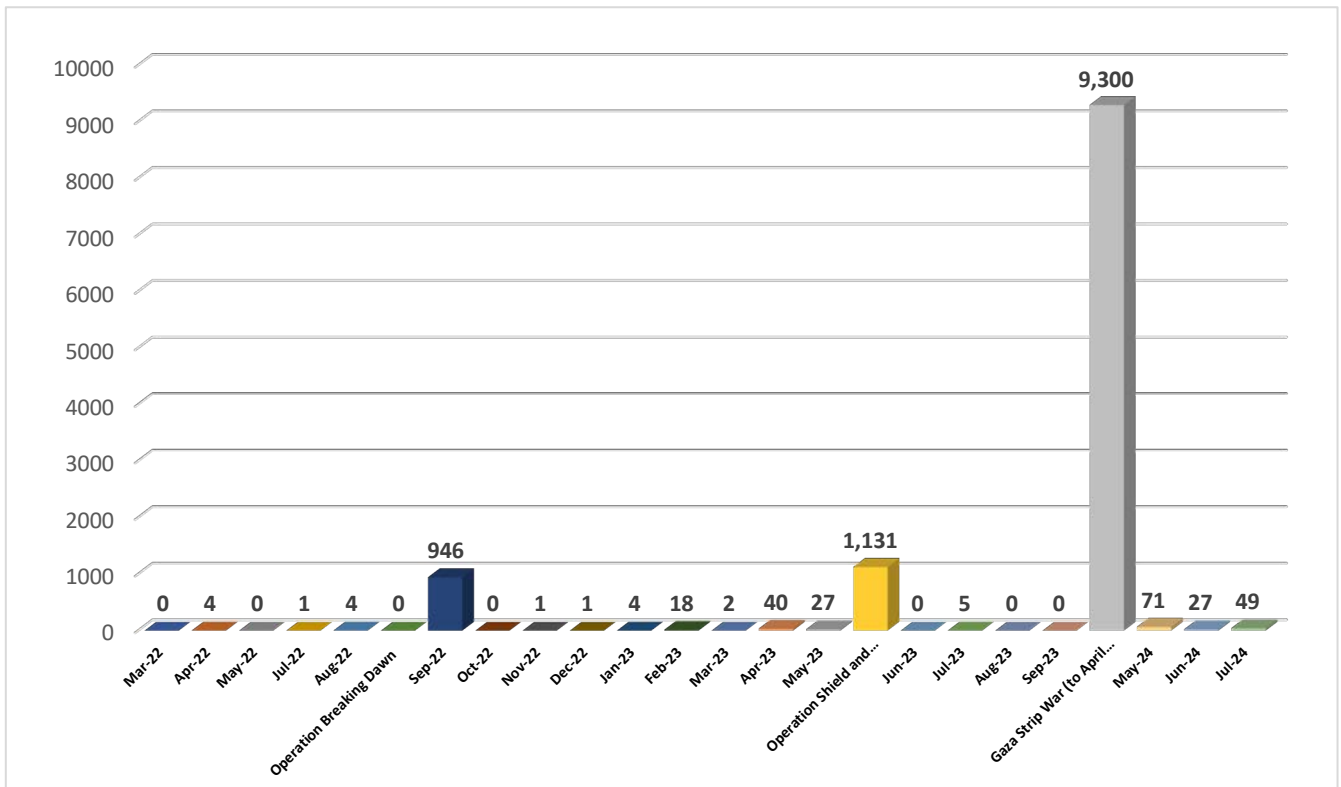
the cities, towns and villages surrounding the Gaza Strip (Jerusalem Brigades Telegram channel, July 28, 2024).

► On July 24, 2024, several rockets were fired from the humanitarian area in Khan Yunis. The rockets did not cross into Israeli territory and fell near UNRWA's al-Qarara school in Khan Yunis. Representatives from the international aid organizations reported that two civilians were killed and several injured when the rockets fell (IDF spokesperson, July 25, 2024).

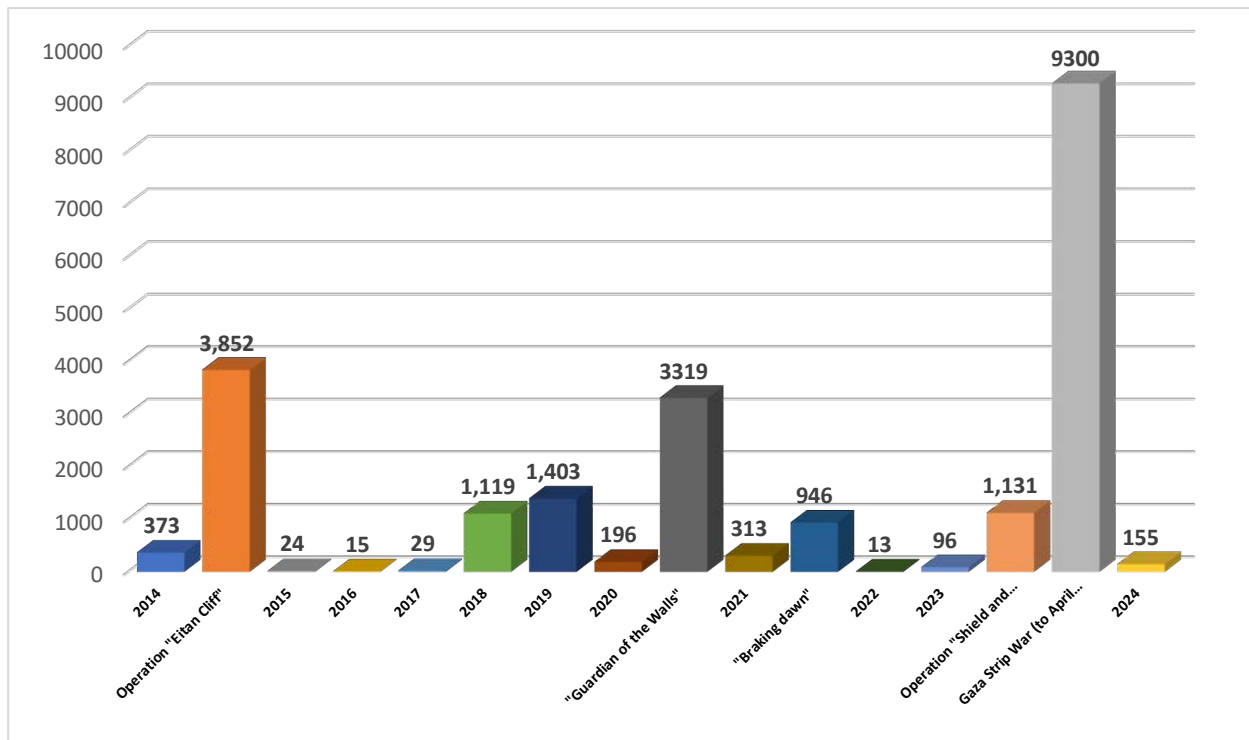


The trajectory of the rocket launches that which near the school in Khan Yunis (IDF spokesperson, July 25, 2024)

Monthly Distribution of Rocket Fire



Annual Distribution of Rocket Hits



* Distribution for 2024 begins in May

The hostages and a ceasefire agreement

► On July 24, 2024, Israeli security forces operating in the area of the humanitarian area in al-Mawasi in Khan Yunis rescued the bodies of five Israelis who were murdered in the October 7, 2023 terrorist attack and massacre, and whose bodies were abducted to the Gaza Strip. The bodies were hidden inside a 20-meter-deep, 200-meter-long tunnel which contained several rooms (IDF spokesperson, July 25, 2024).



**The opening of the tunnel where the bodies of the hostages were found
(IDF spokesperson, July 25, 2024)**

► According to reports, Hamas told Egypt it was waiting for the IDF to cease operations in the Gaza Strip in order to continue negotiations for the release of the hostages. Hamas presented a number of demands, including the evacuation of the Philadelphia Axis, the reopening of the

Rafah Crossing without an IDF presence, freedom of movement in the Gaza Strip, the release of about a thousand Palestinian prisoners in exchange for a third of the living Israeli hostages, and the daily entry of 600 trucks carrying humanitarian aid and merchandise for the 42 days of the first phase of the ceasefire (al-Ghad TV, July 23, 2024).

▶A "highly placed source" said Egypt was committed to reaching a proposal for an immediate ceasefire and guarantees for the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip. According to the source, "the proposal would include a complete withdrawal from the Rafah Crossing and a guarantee of freedom of movement for Gazans" (al-Qahera al-Akhbariya, July 26, 2024).

▶A Western, a Palestinian and two Egyptian "sources" claimed that Israel had requested changes to the ceasefire agreement and the release of the hostages and warned that the request would make it difficult to reach an agreement. According to the Palestinian and Egyptian "sources," Israel demanded to inspect and screen the civilian population that would return to the northern Gaza Strip, and Hamas rejected the demand. The Egyptian "sources" also stated that Hamas disputed Israel's demand to maintain control of the Gaza border with Egypt (Reuters, July 26, 2024).

▶On July 28, 2024, a meeting was held in Rome with the participation of Mossad Director David Barnea, CIA Director William Burns, Qatari Prime Minister Muhammad al-Thani and Egyptian General Intelligence Head Abbas Kamel, in an attempt to advance the negotiations. After the meeting, senior Hamas figures continued to accuse Israel of raising difficulties to reaching an agreement:

◆ Hamas claimed it had been updated by the mediators about the talks in Rome, and according to Hamas, Prime Minister Netanyahu "returned to the strategy of delay and avoiding reaching an agreement." According to Hamas, Israel was posing new conditions and withdrawing from the conditions proposed by President Biden (Hamas Telegram channel, July 29, 2024).

◆ Senior Hamas figure Mahmoud Mardawi claimed that Israel set new conditions for the release of Palestinian prisoners and had vetoed some of the names. He added that Israel also wanted to keep IDF forces in the Netzarim Corridor to monitor the return of the displaced Gazans to the northern Gaza Strip, which violated the agreement. He said Hamas was waiting for the mediators to implement what had been agreed upon in the Biden proposal (al-Araby TV Telegram channel, July 29, 2024).

◆According to a "senior Palestinian figure," the mediators summed up the meeting in Rome for Hamas, stating that Israel "maintains its previous position with regard to the prisoners," including its refusal to release some of the prisoners who were serving prison terms and prisoners who still had more than 15 years left to their sentences. He said Israel still demanded that some of the released prisoners be deported to the Gaza Strip or abroad, adding that Israel did not agree to withdraw from the Philadelphia Axis or the Rafah Crossing, and demanded that the passage to the northern Gaza Strip be monitored to prevent the transfer of weapons (al-Mayadeen, July 29, 2024).

The Gaza Strip

Palestinian casualties

►The Hamas-controlled ministry of health in the Gaza Strip reported at 2:00 p.m., July 30, 2024, that since the beginning of the war, 39,400 Palestinians had been killed and 90,996 injured (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, July 30, 2024).

The situation in the Gaza Strip

►The director of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, announced that the organization would send more than one million doses of polio vaccine to the Gaza Strip. However, he said that while no cases had yet been recorded in the Gaza Strip, there was concern for the health of thousands of children if immediate action were not taken. He noted that because of the damage to the public health system, the lack of medical equipment and the mass displacement, polio vaccination in the Gaza Strip had decreased from 99% before the war to 86% today (The Guardian, July 26, 2024).

►The Palestinian water commission and UNICEF signed a \$7 million agreement financed by the World Bank to provide an emergency response to the water problems in the Gaza Strip. The agreement includes the supply of 5,000-liter water tanks and ten-liter water bottles for the displaced. In addition, fuel to operate water and sanitation facilities, and personal hygiene kits will be distributed (Wafa, July 23, 2024).

►On July 24, 2024, Elon Musk announced that his Starlink satellite Internet service had begun operating in a hospital in the Gaza Strip. He said activating the service had been carried out with the support of Israel and the UAE (Elon Musk's X account, July 24, 2024). UAE Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed al-Nahyan thanked Musk for activating the system at a UAE field hospital in the Gaza Strip (Reuters, July 26, 2024).

- ▶The Deir al-Balah municipality announced the construction of a new desalination plant in cooperation with Doctors Without Borders. The desalination plant is located at the town's school and will be used by more than 7,000 children who stay at the school and other schools in the area (Deir al-Balah municipality Facebook page, July 28, 2024).
- ▶The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that 16 of Gaza Strip's 36 hospitals were still partially functional, but some provided only minimal health services, and 12 were only partially accessible because of insecurity and damage to infrastructure (OCHA website, July 26, 2024).
- ▶Rafah Mayor Ahmed al-Sofi claimed that since the beginning of the Israeli security forces' operations in Rafah in May 2024, more than 70% of the district's infrastructure had been destroyed, including roads, water and sewer networks, water tanks, wells and municipal facilities. He accused Israel of [allegedly] using a policy of scorched earth which had caused widespread destruction in the district (Shehab Agency July 24, 2024).
- ▶Palestinian Minister of Education Amjad Barham claimed that 278 of the 309 schools in the Gaza Strip had been completely or partially destroyed since the beginning of the war. He added that a number of universities had been severely damaged because of the destruction to facilities, the burning of books and libraries, and the denial of access to students and teachers (PA ministry of education, July 23, 2024).

The Issue of "The Day After"

- ▶The Wall Street Journal reported Hamas had agreed that Muhammad Dahlan, a senior member of Fatah in exile and the former head of security for the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the Gaza Strip, would command a security force which would enter the Strip as part of an interim solution to the end of the war. "Arab officials" said that Dahlan would command a Palestinian security force of 2,500 operatives and work in cooperation with an international force after the withdrawal of the IDF from the Strip. According to the "officials," Israel, the United States and Egypt would supervise the force, which would not be a significant part of the PA, and that if the process was successful, the force's powers would be expanded and it would participate in the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip. Senior Hamas figure in the Gaza Strip Bassem Na'im said that the movement preferred an overall vision for the "day after" the war, which would be based on the "national interest and a general national consensus" (Wall Street Journal, July 25, 2024).

► Muhammad Dahlan denied the report and said he had no interest in a security, government or executive position in the Gaza Strip. He said he was working to end the war, would not support any option that was not part of "national Palestinian understandings," and called for the formulation of an international plan which would lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state (Muhammad Dahlan's X account, July 25, 2024).

Israel, Judea and Samaria

Terrorist attacks

► Palestinian terrorists carried out two shootings, wounding four IDF soldiers. An IDF soldier who was fatally injured in the vehicle ramming attack at the Nir Zvi Junction on July 14, 2024, died of his injuries.

Shooting near Nebi Elias

► On the morning of July 25, 2024, shots were fired from a passing vehicle at an IDF force near Nebi Elias, east of Qalqilya, wounding three IDF soldiers. Israeli security forces launched a manhunt for the perpetrators, raided villages in the region and imposed a blockade on Qalqilya (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, July 25, 2024). Hamas claimed responsibility for the shooting near the town of Azoun, calling the attack a "natural response to the ongoing crimes and massacres in the Gaza Strip" and a "clear message through gunfire" to Minister Ben-Gvir that the "settler attacks on al-Aqsa Mosque" would not go unpunished (Hamas Telegram channel, 25 in July 2024).

Shooting near Nablus

► On July 27, 2024, shots were fired at an IDF position at one of the entrances to Nablus, wounding an IDF soldier. In IDF assessment the shots were fired from the Nablus area and the Israeli security forces instituted a search (IDF spokesperson, July 27, 2024).

Claims of responsibility for terrorist attacks

► The Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military wing, claimed responsibility for the IED that exploded near the fence separating Israeli territory from the PA on July 23, 2024, in which two workers contracted by the Ministry of Defense were injured. According to the claim, operatives from the Jenin district "trapped a Zionist force in a three-way ambush near the border separation fence, where they detonated an IED to lure the occupation forces." It was further claimed that the operatives "surprised the force that was advancing to repair the fence with a second IED which injured two soldiers." The terrorist operatives then detonated a third IED

"while the rescue teams were rushing to treat the wounded soldiers, which led to the injury of an army officer" (Hamas Telegram channel, July 23, 2024)

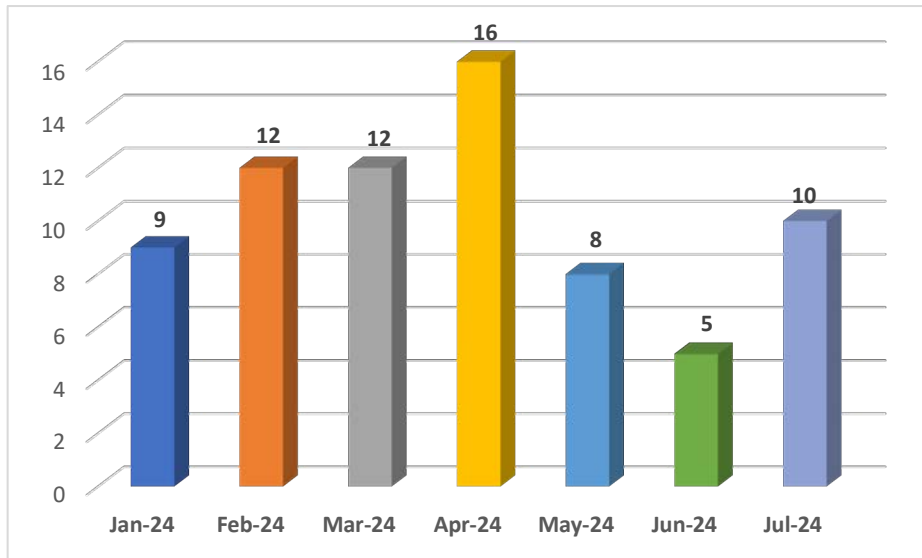
►The al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades (AAMB) claimed responsibility for shooting at the Salem Crossing, the community of Mevo Dotan and the community of Gan Ner [which is inside Israeli territory] (Hamza al-Masri's Telegram channel, July 23, 2024). No injuries or damage were reported.

Senior Hamas officials foment violence in Judea and Samaria

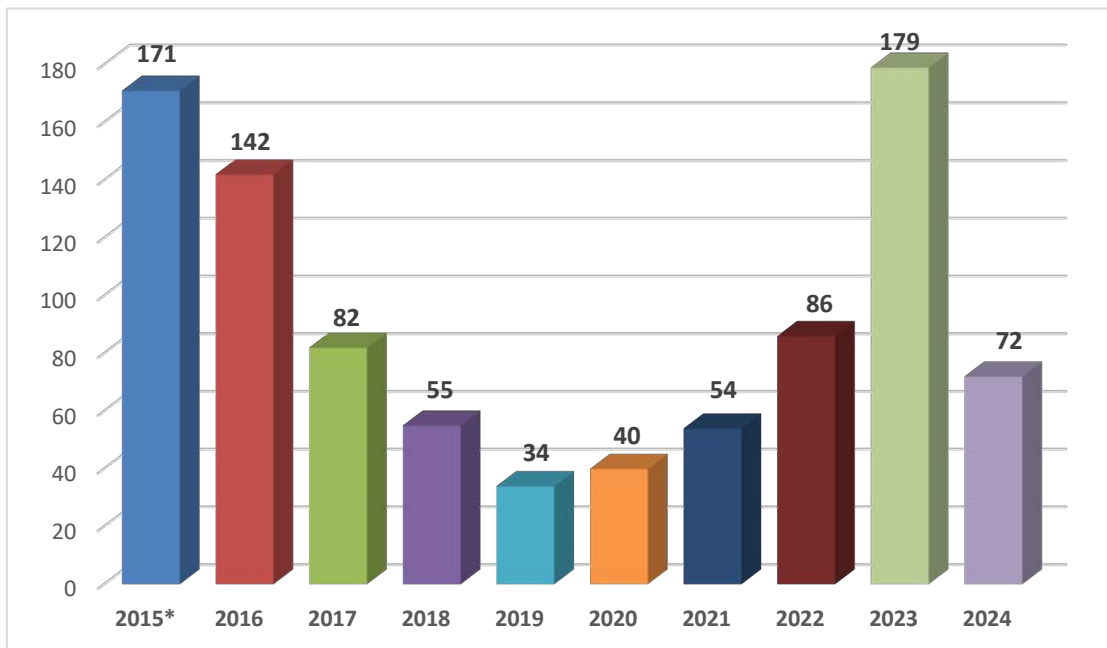
►Zaher Jabarin, head of Hamas in Judea and Samaria, claimed all the "resistance factions" coordinated on the ground and that the entire Palestinian people stood united behind the "resistance." He added that the "resistance" in Judea and Samaria would "fight the battle despite all the force of the occupation" and the "shameful" support of America (Hamas in Judea and Samaria Telegram channel, July 25, 2024).

►Senior Hamas figure Abd al-Rahman Shadid said that the "resistance" in Judea and Samaria "proved its strength and influence in the fight against the occupation." Regarding Minister Ben-Gvir's call to "permit Jewish prayer in the Temple Mount compound," according to al-Aqsa TV, he said that "such statements and the violations against al-Aqsa Mosque motivate the 'resistance' to carry out additional attacks." He claimed that Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades' recent actions in northern Judea and Samaria showed the Palestinian people would continue to fight and "defend their rights." He added that it was up to the youth of Judea and Samaria to "confront the occupation and defend the honor of our people" (al-Aqsa TV Telegram channel, July 25, 2024).

Critical terrorist attacks, 2024³



Annual distribution of critical terrorist attacks



³ A critical attack is defined by the ITIC as involving shooting, stabbing, a vehicular attack, the use of IEDs, or a combination of the above. 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.

Since the beginning of the war, approximately 4,440 wanted persons have been detained, of whom more than 1,850 were Hamas operatives (IDF spokesperson, July 23-30, 2024):

- ◆On July 23, 2024, the Israeli security forces completed a counterterrorism activity in the Tulkarm camp, eliminating several senior terrorist operatives, including Ashraf Nafea , the commander of Hamas' military wing in the camp, and Muhammad Awad the commander of the AAMB in the camp. During the operation, the forces blew up Nafea's hideout, which was mined with explosives (IDF spokesperson, July 23, 2024). According to reports, the fighters located rockets inside vehicles, along with explosives and IEDs. "Sources" in the PA security forces said that PIJ operatives had tried and failed to fire rockets at Israel from the Tulkarm area. PA security force operatives located the launcher (Israeli media, July 23, 2024).
- ◆On July 24, 2024, Israeli security forces operated in Tubas and detained two wanted Palestinians. During the operation, Palestinian terrorists opened fire at the forces and an IDF fighter was wounded. The forces returned fire and killed an armed Palestinian, who was identified as a PA customs employee. According to reports, he was Abd al-Nasser Sirhan, 23 years old, a resident of the Balata refugee camp, and was killed after confronting "Israeli special forces." During the operation the detention of released prisoners Sameh Daraghma and Abu al-Sa'id was reported (Jumaa al-Dheisheh Telegram channel and the Tubas Telegram channel, July 24, 2024). According to the AAMB, Sirhan was one of its operatives in the refugee camp (elaqsa_1965 Telegram channel of the AAMB, July 24, 2024).



Mourning notice issued by the AAMB for the death of Sirhan (elaqsa_1965 Telegram channel of the AAMB, July 24, 2024)

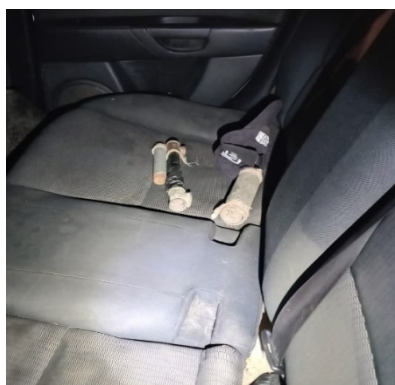
- ◆ On July 27, 2024, the Israeli security forces operated in the Balata refugee camp in Nablus. Armed terrorist operatives opened fire on them, and in response an Israeli Air Force UAV attacked the terrorists (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, July 27, 2024). According to the ministry of health in Ramallah, Luay (Abbasi) Masha, 17 years old, was killed in the airstrike, Ali Bassem Hashash, 24 years old, was killed by the Israeli security force operations in the camp, and that other residents were injured (Palestinian Center for Communications Telegram channel, July 27, 2024) The AAMB and the PIJ's military wing claimed Masha as one of their operatives (Jerusalem Brigades in Judea and Samaria Telegram channel, July 27, 2024).



Right: Ali Hashash (@hhebaa1z' X account, July 27, 2024).

Left: Luay Masha with a PIJ flag (@douneedmyname's X account, July 27, 2024)

- ◆ On the night of July 23, 2024, Israeli security forces detained two 19-year-old brothers from Ramallah on suspicion of membership in a terrorist squad which carried out seven attacks by throwing IEDs and Molotov cocktails at Israeli vehicles in the Beit El area in recent weeks. No casualties or damage were reported in the attacks. Four IEDs and a ready-to-use Molotov cocktail were found in the detainees' possession (Israel Police Force spokesperson's unit, July 24, 2024).



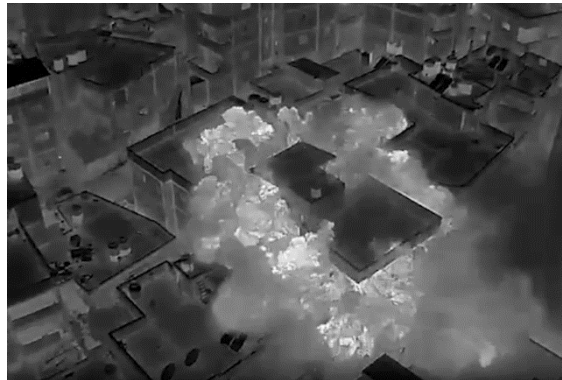
IEDs found in the suspects' car (Israel Police Force X account, July 24, 2024)

- ◆ On the night of July 23, 2024, the Israeli security forces detained five terrorist operatives near Tulkarm. Two were residents of the village of Seida and suspected of the IED attack

near the community of Hermesh on July 18, 2024, in which four Israelis were injured (Israel Police Force X account, July 24, 2024).

Israeli security forces demolish house of terrorist who killed two Israeli civilians

►On July 24, 2024, the Israeli security forces operating in Qalandiya demolished the house of Muhammad Manasra, who carried out the shooting attack at the Eli gas station on February 29, 2024, murdering two Israeli civilians. During the operation the forces detained several Palestinians suspected of terrorist activity (IDF spokesperson, July 24, 2024).



Demolishing Manasra's house (IDF spokesperson, July 24, 2024)

Activities of the Palestinian security forces

►On July 26, 2024, the Palestinian security forces attempted to arrest Muhammad Jabr, Jerusalem Brigades commander in the Tulkarm area, at Thabat Thabat Hospital in Tulkarm. Local residents rioted against the PA security force operatives allowing Jabr to escape from the hospital. He went to the Nour Shams refugee camp where he was received with cheers (Quds Agency Telegram channel, July 26, 2024). "Sources" said that he was injured when an IED exploded in his hand, and when the security forces learned he was in the hospital, they surrounded it to detain or eliminate him (al-Jazeera, July 26, 2024). Hamas condemned the "pursuit and arrest of 'resistance fighters,'" claiming that all Palestinians had to unite to denounce such actions and act decisively to stop them. Hamas also praised the quick response of the local residents who prevented the arrest and called on the PA's security forces to "release the imprisoned 'resistance fighters' " (Hamas Telegram channel, July 26, 2024). The PIJ's Jerusalem Brigades in Jenin warned the PA security forces not to continue "the abuse" and said they would respond with gunfire to any attack (al-Shahed, July 27, 2024).



Residents in front of PA security forces during the attempted arrest at the hospital (Palestinian Communications Center Telegram channel, July 26, 2024)

► On July 26, 2024, operatives of the Palestinian security forces tried to arrest Amran Muslimani, a commander in the Jerusalem Brigades' Tubas Battalion who was also wanted by Israel. Riots broke out between the operatives of the PA security forces and Tubas Battalion terrorist operatives, and young people blocked roads and set tires on fire (al-Araby al-Jadeed, July 26, 2024; Quds Agency, July 26, 2024).

► On July 29, 2024, the Palestinian security forces arrested Tareq al-Balidi from the Jerusalem Brigades' Tulkarm Battalion in the Tulkarm refugee camp. Riots broke out in the camp and the Muqata building in Tulkarm was attacked. A PA security force operative was wounded when an IED exploded near Hasuna Square in Tulkarm (Amman News July 29, 2024). The PIJ operatives in the Tulkarm refugee camp called on local residents to maintain public order and Palestinian unity "despite the mistakes." They threatened that unless al-Balidi was released, whoever held him would be responsible for the consequences (Tulkarm Battalion X account, July 29, 2024). The "youth of uprising and revenge, Tulkarm," warned that unless al-Balidi was released, they would declare an uprising (Nablus al-Thuwwar X account, July 29, 2024).

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

Reactions to the speech given by Netanyahu before the Congress

► On July 24, 2024, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed a joint session of the United States Congress. He spoke about the war in the Gaza Strip and called for the demilitarization of Gaza, the establishment of a civilian government and the continuation of Israel's security control over the Strip (Israeli media, July 24, 2024) The speech provoked condemnations from the Palestinians:

- ◆ Nabil Abu Rudeineh, spokesman for Mahmoud Abbas, said that "only the Palestinian people and the PLO, which is the only legitimate representative of the Palestinians, will decide who rules them." He reiterated the Palestinian position that "the only solution to achieving security and stability is the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital" (Reuters, July 24, 2024).
- ◆ According to the Fatah Movement, "what happened in Congress was a circus led by Netanyahu" (Bethlehem Agency Telegram channel, July 24, 2024).
- ◆ Hamas claimed that Prime Minister Netanyahu tried to "play with emotions, distort the facts and promote the false Israeli narratives regarding October 7 [2023]" and "lies about his efforts to free the hostages and he misleads Israeli, American and international public opinion." According to Hamas, Netanyahu should have been arrested as a "war criminal" and sent to the International Criminal Court instead of being allowed to address Congress. Hamas reiterated that "the Palestinian people are entitled to self-determination and they will determine who rules them" (Hamas Telegram channel, July 25, 2024).
- ◆ Hamas spokesman Jihad Taha said that Netanyahu delivered a speech of defeat after more than nine months of the "resistance's" firm stand and it was designed to justify [alleged] "massacres of civilians." He also praised the pro-Palestinian demonstrations during the speech (Palestinian Communications Center Telegram channel, July 24, 2024).
- ◆ Izzat al-Rishq, a member of Hamas' political bureau, said that "criminal Netanyahu's speech was a party of lies and contempt for the intelligence of the people of the world" (Izzat al-Rishq's Telegram channel, July 24, 2024).
- ◆ Senior Hamas figure Osama Hamdan said that Netanyahu's speech "expresses his crisis and understanding that America is changing." He claimed that the speech included "many lies" regarding the return of the hostages and that Netanyahu "tried to market the Zionist entity as an authentic Middle Eastern state, which is a lie." Hamdan added that the day after the war would be a "purely Palestinian day" and that "the Palestinians are capable of managing themselves and do not need Netanyahu to teach them" (Watan Agency Telegram channel, July 25, 2024).
- ◆ According to the PIJ, Netanyahu's speech was "full of lies and slander, whether related to the war in the Gaza Strip, or about the beheading and killing of innocents." According

to the PIJ "Netanyahu's lie that his army did not kill a single civilian in the attack on Rafah, and is not waging a war of hunger and extermination in the Gaza Strip, testify to his shameless mockery and contempt for the world." It was further claimed that the speech "made it unequivocally clear that he does not intend to end the aggression in the Gaza Strip or to stop the war, and that his trip to the United States was intended to obtain an American mandate to expand the war to the entire region" (PIJ Telegram channel, July 25, 2024).

- ◆Mustafa Barghouti, secretary general of the Palestinian National Initiative Movement, called it "a disgusting speech full of lies within a shameful forum of the American Congress, which hosted and gave a platform to war criminal Netanyahu, who [allegedly] commits genocide, ethnic cleansing, collective punishment and starvation." He emphasized they would deal with Netanyahu's vision by establishing a national reconciliation government "that would thwart his plots and plans" and unify the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria (Mustafa Barghouti's X account, July 24, 2024).

Political activity

►On July 26, 2024, the UN Security Council met to discuss the situation in the Middle East and the Palestinian issue. Riyad Mansour, the Palestinian delegate to the UN, called for a halt to the "terrible Israeli attack" on the Gaza Strip and said that an immediate ceasefire was the first way to stop the Gazans' suffering. He defended UNRWA's activities and claimed that Israel spread "baseless accusations" against it. The Algerian representative called for opening all border crossings with the Gaza Strip and allowing UNRWA and other organizations to provide aid, including conducting a large-scale vaccination campaign to prevent the spread of polio. The Chinese representative called for the United States to exert greater pressure on Israel for an immediate ceasefire and for an international peace conference to set a timetable for the implementation of the two-state solution (Wafa, July 26, 2024).

►Hussein al-Sheikh, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee, held separate talks with the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, Oman, Algeria, Morocco, Iraq and Tunisia with the aim of encouraging Arab, regional and international efforts to stop "Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people." He said that the talks were also intended to increase activity in international institutions and bodies for that purpose (Hussein al-Sheikh's X account, July 27, 2024).

►Mahmoud Abbas response to the decision of UNESCO's World Heritage Committee to include the St. Hilarion Monastery/Tel Umm Amer in the Gaza Strip on the list of world heritage sites in danger (Wafa, July 26, 2024). The PA foreign ministry welcomed the decision of the World Heritage Committee to declare the Old City of Jerusalem, the Old City of Hebron and the site of the agricultural terraces in Batir as Palestinian sites of exceptional global value designated for preservation (PA foreign ministry, July 23, 2024).