

Spotlight on Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

August 18 – 25, 2026

Trending

- ▶ **Kites were flown from the Gaza Strip into the Gaza border area.**
- ▶ **Contacts were held to establish a joint Palestinian slate ahead of the Palestinian Legislative Council elections.**
- ▶ **The number of violent armed clashes between clans and families in the Gaza Strip increased.**
- ▶ **The Turkish IHH continues to operate in the Gaza Strip.**

Overview¹

- ▶ IDF forces continued operations to neutralize terrorist threats and operatives involved in the October 7 terrorist invasion and massacre.
- ▶ Four kites, without incendiary materials or weapons, crossed the Gaza Strip border in the Be'eri and Nahal Oz area (the central Gaza Strip). Hamas described the event as "children playing with kites" and used by Israel as a "pretext" to continue its "aggression" against the Gaza Strip.
- ▶ Hamas' internal security and military intelligence forces have been conducting interrogations, using torture and collecting money at Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis.
- ▶ Militias operating in cooperation with Israel carried out arrests inside the Gaza Strip.
- ▶ The international stabilization force slated to operate in the Gaza Strip is taking shape. Albania and other countries are expected to join the force.
- ▶ A former senior Palestinian Authority police officer was eliminated in Jenin after he tried to stab soldiers. Two terrorist attacks were attempted in Judea and Samaria; an Israeli civilian was injured.
- ▶ Hamas is conducting contacts for an alliance with Muhammad Dahlan and other movements to present an alternative to the Fatah leadership ahead of the elections. 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.

Palestinian Authority is considering postponing the elections. Palestinian Authority Vice President Hussein al-Sheikh criticized the American administration and claimed allowing Hamas to participate in the upcoming Palestinian Legislative Council elections was a mistake.

The Fighting in the Gaza Strip

The IDF

► This past week IDF forces continued operations to eliminate terrorist operatives who infiltrated areas behind the Yellow Line. During IDF operations in the central camps area and the southern Gaza Strip east of the Yellow Line, the forces sealed two Hamas tunnels whose total length was more than two kilometers (IDF spokesperson, August 19, 2026). IDF forces operating in the Shati and Deir al-Balah areas attacked two Hamas weapons depots which had dozens of Kalashnikov assault rifles, ammunition magazines and other military equipment. The weapons were concealed in two mosques which served as shelters for Hamas operatives (IDF spokesperson, August 24, 2026).

► On August 18, 2026, four *nukhba* commanders from the Beit Lahia battalion of the Hamas military-terrorist wing were eliminated in the Shati area. They were a company commander and three platoon commanders, including one who participated in the atrocities of the October 7 2023 terrorist invasion and massacre. On August 19, a platoon commander in the Hamas military-terrorist wing who participated in the atrocities was eliminated in the Nuseirat area. A police station in the Daraj Tuffah area in the northern Gaza Strip was attacked and at least four Hamas terrorist operatives and another operative from the Popular Resistance Committees were eliminated (IDF spokesperson, August 19, 2026). The ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip announced that eight police officers had been killed in the attack on the municipal police headquarters in Gaza City, including the acting commander of the Gaza District police, the head of the District police operations department and the director of the District women's police (Palestinian Police Telegram channel, August 19, 2026).

► Khalil al-Hayya, head of the Hamas political bureau, condemned the escalation of Israeli activities since August 18 and claimed it "proved" that Israel disregarded the mediation efforts and guarantees. He said that made it the responsibility of the mediators and guarantors to compel Israel to stop its "aggression" and protect the agreement from collapse (Hamas Telegram channel, August 19, 2026).

► Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem condemned the Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip, calling them "Israeli government disregard for the calls for a ceasefire" from the mediators and

guarantor countries, including the American call on August 17. Qassem held the Board of Peace responsible for the escalation and accused its officials of making statements contradicting the understandings which had been reached and giving Israel backing for the escalation and continuation of the attacks. In response to a report from Israeli security officials who said the policy of targeted killings in Gaza had received a green light from the Americans (Kan website, August 19, 2026), Qassem said the statement contradicted all the agreements, the mediators' statements and the commitments of the American administration itself. He called on the Board of Peace to take a position regarding the killings and abandon its bias in favor of the Israeli position (Hazem Qassem's Telegram channel, August 18-19, 2026).



"The killing of Gaza policemen"

(Facebook page of Alaa al-Laqta, Hamas' in-house cartoonist, August 19, 2026)

► Four kites from the Gaza Strip were identified in Kibbutz Be'eri and Kibbutz Nahal Oz.² They were found to be unarmed (IDF spokesperson, August 21, 2026). Following the incident, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held a situation assessment, where it was decided that if the launches into Israel did not stop immediately, the IDF would increase targeted killings of those responsible and evacuate the population from areas from which kites, UAVs and balloons were launched (Israeli Prime Minister's Office, August 23, 2026). In response, Hamas claimed that the IDF airstrike on the central Gaza Strip district, which is densely populated by residents and displaced persons, because "children had been playing with kites," was an act of "aggression." It claimed that Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's threats to attack areas of the Gaza Strip and displace their residents while using "children's games as a pretext," showed his intention to continue the "aggression" and pursue schemes of displacement on "flimsy pretexts" (Hamas website, August 23, 2026).

² See the July and May 2018 ITIC reports, [Institutionalizing arson terrorism: what began as a local initiative has been turned by Hamas into the leading modus operandi in its policy of controlled violence against Israel. Kites are launched under the central direction of Hamas' military wing, and its operatives participate in the launchings](#) and ["Molotov kites" – a new means of causing damage to Israel as part of the violent demonstrations of the "Great Return March"](#).

Negotiations for the Second Phase of the Ceasefire Agreement

► Israeli media reported that Kosovo and Morocco had sent an advance force to the base in Kiryat Gat ahead of the establishment of the international stabilization force. The full Moroccan force which is expected to arrive in Israel has recently completed its training. Albania is the next country expected to join the stabilization force soon, along with countries such as Kazakhstan, Burundi and Uganda, while Indonesia has withdrawn from participation in the force (I24 channel, August 21, 2026).

The Gaza Strip

The Civilian Situation

► The Gaza Strip municipalities association warned of the collapse of water, sanitation and waste removal services due to a severe shortage of industrial fuel and oils. According to Khan Yunis Mayor Alaa al-Din al-Batta, the municipalities provide approximately 140,000 cubic meters of water and pump 60,000 cubic meters of sewage every day and remove approximately 3,000 cubic meters of waste, but fuel was provided for only 40 of approximately 700 generators and none for waste removal vehicles since March. A shutdown could lead to water shortages and sewage flowing into the streets and displaced persons camps, causing outbreaks of disease (Al Jazeera, QudsN, August 18, 2026).

► The shortages also affect the public health system. The director of the medical relief society, Dr. Muhammad Abu Afash, reported that more than 13 mobile clinics in the border areas had ceased operations and the al-Rimal Medical Center in Gaza City had closed completely. He said that shortages of medicines and medical equipment had forced medical teams to triage patients and had put patients' lives at risk (aljazeera.net, August 18, 2026).

► UNRWA media advisor Adnan Abu Hasna said the continuing shortage of maintenance materials for generators, vehicles and operational equipment had a negative impact on the agency's ability to provide services. UNRWA employs 11,000 workers, serves 280,000 school children and handles 15,000 clinic visits a day. About half of its 11 health centers have been damaged, seven of its emergency shelters remain without a regular supply of water and electricity and garbage trucks and water tankers have been put out of service because of a shortage of spare parts and hazardous materials (*al-Araby al-Jadeed*, August 19, 2026).

► The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that Gazans are still exposed to airstrikes, shelling and gunfire which cause casualties, including

children. The office said the remains of 50 people, including 19 children, who had been trapped for more than two years, were recently found under rubble in Gaza City and brought for burial. It also reported that 94% of Gazans needed shelter and basic household supplies and the living conditions of almost two thirds of the families staying in tents and temporary shelters were deteriorating (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 21, 2026).

International Hamas Activity

► Khalil al-Hayya, head of the Hamas political bureau, and several senior Hamas figures met with Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad bin Abdulrahman Al Thani on August 19, 2026 to discuss developments in the Gaza Strip. Al Thani praised Hamas' decision to accept the roadmap for the second phase of the ceasefire agreement and said he hoped the move would help the Gazans and fulfill the Palestinians' aspirations for security and stability (Qatari foreign ministry X account, August 19, 2026).

► Senior Hamas figure Osama Hamdan met in Baghdad on August 21 with Hadi al-Amiri, secretary general of the pro-Iranian Iraqi militia, the Badr Organization. They discussed international and regional developments, the situation in the Palestinian territories and the Israel's [alleged] violations "against the Palestinian people and the peoples of the region." Those present noted their continued support for the Palestinian people and their legitimate rights and their opposition to the plots of the Zionist entity and the countries that sponsor it (Hadi al-Amiri's media office Facebook page, August 21, 2026).

Civilian Governance

► An increase in violent clashes between clans and families was reported in the Gaza Strip, which included the use of firearms, injuries and fatalities, roadblocks, burning tires and threats of revenge. Following the incidents, the national gathering of clans, tribes and families in Gaza announced the withdrawal of clan protection from anyone who used weapons in disputes and clan support for the activity of the security forces, and called on the "organizations" to withdraw their protection from members involved in such incidents. The ministry of the interior and national security in Gaza called on families to act responsibly, adding that the police would take legal action against those who opened fire, permanently confiscate weapons used during clashes and not permit the disruption of public order and social cohesion (*al-Ayyam*, August 20, 2026; *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 22, 2026; ministry of the interior and national security Telegram channel, August 18, 2026).

► On August 20, the ministry of health in Gaza reopened the interventional radiology (angiography) department at al-Shifa Medical Complex, with generous support from the IHH's Ankara branch. Dr. Muhammad Abu Salmiya, director of al-Shifa Medical Complex, called it "a qualitative leap and a message of hope" for Gazans. He thanked the IHH and its branch in Ankara and the Medics Humanitarian Aid Foundation for their continued support for the public health sector. Alaa Abu Hashem, an engineer and IHH project director, said supporting the public health sector in Gaza was one of the organization's highest priorities (government media information office Telegram channel, August 20, 2026).

► On August 23, 2026, the ministry of health in Gaza announced the resumption of several laboratory tests at the central laboratory of the Turkish al-Sadaqa Hospital, after technical and engineering teams had repaired and restarted diagnostic equipment damaged during the war (Gaza ministry of health Telegram channel, August 23, 2026).

Military Governance

► According to a joint IDF and Israeli Security Agency (ISA) statement, intelligence information showed that the Hamas internal security and military intelligence forces conducted interrogations, used torture and collected money at Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis, including in the Yassin building and another building converted into an interrogation center. According to the statement, Hamas operatives, some of them masked, maintain a permanent presence in the compound and their use of the hospital for governance and security purposes frightens and harms patients and medical staff. The IDF said it was part of broader Hamas exploitation of civilian facilities because of its concern over losing control of the Gaza Strip (IDF spokesperson, August 20, 2026).

► A commander in "resistance security" claimed information had led to the exposure of a Gazan in Khan Yunis suspected of collaborating with Israel (al-Akhres Telegram channel, August 20, 2026). The Arabi21 website reported that fighters from 10 families who had operated under the command of Ashraf al-Mansi, commander of the Popular Army – Northern Forces militia in northern Beit Lahia, surrendered to the security forces in the Gaza Strip together with their wives and children (Arabi21 website, August 21, 2026). Al-Mansi's militia said it had expelled more than 10 families from its areas of operation after it had been established that they were trying to "sabotage public order" (Popular Army – Northern Gaza Strip District Facebook page, August 21, 2026).

► A security source in Gaza said the security forces had received 83 calls from members of the "collaborating gangs" who wanted to surrender. He added that dozens of families had surrendered to the security forces during the previous two days and the consequences were being addressed. He said that so far the security forces had received 19 operatives, who "underwent special interrogations and provided very important information" (Safa, August 22, 2026).

The Militias Cooperating with Israel

► On August 19, it was reported that near the Yellow Line in the Mawasi area of Khan Yunis, Sabri Abd al-'Al, a Hamas police officer in the Rafah police with the rank of lieutenant colonel, and an employee of the al-Aqsa aid security company were abducted from their families' tents. According to initial reports, "an Israeli special force" had abducted them (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 19, 2026; Ma'an, August 19, 2026), but a photograph was later published showing the two being held by Ghassan al-Dahini's militia, which operates in eastern Rafah (People's Shield Forces Union Facebook page, August 20, 2026; GazaMNet Facebook page, August 20, 2026).

► On August 20, it was reported that the militias had abducted Yahya Awni Shahin from his home in eastern Deir al-Balah and taken him beyond the Yellow Line (Hamza al-Masri's Telegram channel, August 20, 2026; journalist Osama al-Kahlout's Facebook page, August 20, 2026).

► On August 21, the "counterterrorism forces" (the military wing of Ghassan al-Dahini's Popular Forces militia) announced it had arrested a senior Hamas figure, S.N., at his home in southwestern Khan Yunis after he had been accused of planning to attack the Popular Forces militia and to rebuild Hamas' capabilities (People's Shield Forces Union Facebook page, August 21, 2026).

► Ashraf al-Mansi's Popular Army, Northern Forces militia reported that its special forces had arrested several Hamas members. The militia also reported that it had arrested three Hamas operatives who were accused of blocking roads, undermining local security and attempting to disrupt the forces' activities. The three are being held in detention pending trial (Popular Army, Northern District Facebook page, August 22-23, 2026).

Israel, Judea and Samaria

Terrorist Attacks

► On August 21, 2026, during IDF operations in the Jenin area, a terrorist armed with a knife attempted to stab an IDF soldier. The terrorist was shot and killed; there were no Israeli

casualties (IDF spokesperson, August 21, 2026). The Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) said he was Fathi Khazem and claimed he was killed when IDF forces entered his home in Jenin. The PIJ claimed he had been "executed in front of his family." The organization eulogized Khazem, noting he was the father of Raad Khazem, who carried out the shooting on Dizengoff Street in Tel Aviv in April 2022; of Abd al-Rahman Khazem, a PIJ terrorist operative killed during an IDF operation in Jenin in September 2022; and of Shimaa Khazem, who is being held in an Israeli prison (PIJ Telegram channel, August 21, 2026). Fatah also eulogized Khazem, who had previously been a senior Palestinian Authority officer with the rank of colonel, and called him "a senior operative and loyal member" (Wafa, August 21, 2026).

► On August 23, 2026, there was a stabbing near a supermarket in the village of al-Auja, located on Route 90 in eastern Israel. A young Israeli was injured. The terrorist, a 16-year-old boy, fled but was apprehended several hours later in al-Auja (IDF spokesperson, August 23, 2026).

► On August 23, 2026, an attempt was made to seize a weapon from an IDF soldier at the Rimonim Junction, northeast of Ramallah. The soldier shot and neutralized the terrorist (IDF spokesperson, August 23, 2026).

► On August 24, 2026, the terrorist's son, Hammam Khazem, who said he intended to avenge his father's death, was detained (IDF spokesperson, August 25, 2026).

Counterterrorism

► An investigation by the security forces revealed that Abdullah Jarjawi, a 20-year-old resident of Segev Shalom, was suspected of planning a car bomb attack at the Forum club in Beersheba. Jarjawi, who was detained on July 19, 2026, was influenced by ISIS-affiliated and other online content and was in contact with a person who represented himself as a Palestinian terrorist operative. Reportedly, he had a weapon and ammunition, and was manufacturing explosives for an explosive device (Israel Police spokesperson, August 18, 2026).

Settler Terrorism

► Palestinian medical sources reported that at least 12 Palestinians were injured in an attack by Jewish settlers between the villages of al-Mughayyir and Abu Falah in the Ramallah area (al-Jazeera Mubasher, August 20, 2026).

► IDF forces were called to the area of the village of Sa'ir on August 21, 2026, when Palestinians threw rocks at Israeli civilians who were on an unauthorized excursion on the outskirts of the village; several Israelis were injured. A security officer opened fire and wounded Palestinians. A

fire was reported in a building under construction and firefighting forces operated at the scene (IDF spokesperson, August 21, 2026). Hamas claimed that Karim Sanad Shalalda had been shot and killed in the incident (Hamas in Judea and Samaria Telegram channel, August 21, 2026).



"Settlers besiege towns in the West Bank" (Alaa al-Laqta's Facebook page, August 21, 2026)

► Palestinian sources reported an increase in hostile activity by Jewish settlers at several locations in Judea and Samaria over the weekend. In the Hebron and Masafer Yatta area, a quarry was set on fire, herds were brought onto agricultural land and a UAV was used against shepherds and livestock. In the Nablus area, Palestinians were reportedly attacked in Beit Furik, council member Ibrahim Khatatbeh was injured and homes in Qusra were surrounded, leaving them without electricity and water. In the Ramallah area, a new outpost was reportedly established on land belonging to Turmus Ayya and a vehicle was attacked and overturned between al-Mughayyir and Abu Falah. In the Jordan Valley, settler activity and the establishment of an outpost near residents' homes were reported in Khirbet Samra and in the Wadi Qana area. In the Qalqilya area, the road connecting Salfit and Qalqilya was reportedly blocked (Hamza al-Masri's Telegram channel, August 21, 2026; Nablus News Telegram channel, August 22, 2026).

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

International Political Activity

► PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas and eight Arab and Islamic countries welcomed the joint statement by seven Western countries opposing the E1 plan and called on Israel to cancel it immediately. The condemnations were issued following a tender for the construction of 1,234 housing units of approximately 3,400 units planned between Ma'ale Adumim and east Jerusalem. Opponents claim the construction would sever territorial contiguity between the

northern and southern West Bank, isolate east Jerusalem from its "Palestinian surroundings" and undermine the establishment of a Palestinian state with the 1967 borders. Abbas and the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, Indonesia and Pakistan called on the international community to move from condemnations to practical measures, including imposing sanctions on parties involved in advancing the settlements and ending support and funding for their activities (Wafa, August 21, 2026).

► A Fatah delegation which included PA VP Hussein al-Sheikh, intelligence chief Majed Faraj and Palestinian National Council chairman Rawhi Fattouh, arrived in Cairo on August 23 for meetings with senior Egyptian officials and the "Palestinian organizations." The delegation met with Egyptian General Intelligence Service chief Hassan Rashad to discuss developments in Judea and Samaria and the upcoming Palestinian elections. It was reported earlier that Fatah had canceled the meeting which was scheduled to take place with Hamas but would hold its meetings with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and Muhammad Dahlan (QudsN X account, August 22, 2026; Youm7, August 23, 2026).

PA Elections

► Fatah is examining the possibility of postponing the elections because there is no mechanism which would enable them to be held in Jerusalem, and at the same time is working to formulate slates of candidates. The movement reportedly wants Marwan Barghouti to head its slate for the Legislative Council, although according to the report he wants to run only in the presidential election. The decision was made to establish a separate slate of independent candidates and the possibility of adding representatives of organizations which are members of the PLO is being examined. A meeting is expected to be held by a Fatah Central Committee delegation headed by Hussein al-Sheikh and a delegation from the Democratic Reform Current headed by Samir al-Mashharawi, Muhammad Dahlan's deputy. The purpose of the meeting is to promote unity within Fatah and in the Palestinian position, with Egyptian mediation efforts (Quds News Network, August 23, 2026; PNN, August 24, 2026).

► PA VP Hussein al-Sheikh criticized the American administration and claimed it had made a mistake by allowing Hamas to participate in the upcoming Palestinian Legislative Council elections. He claimed Hamas had reached understandings with the United States according to which the movement would not compete in the elections under its own name or in its current structure, but affiliated candidates would be able to run within a new political framework (commentator and journalist Khaled Abu Toameh's X account, August 23, 2026).

► A source reported that broad agreement had been reached to advance the establishment of a joint Palestinian slate ahead of the Legislative Council elections. Representatives of Hamas, the PIJ, the PFLP, the Popular Resistance Committees and the DFLP (Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine) participated in the discussions, along with the Democratic Reform Current in Fatah, which is affiliated with Muhammad Dahlan, and independent representatives. According to the report, the intention is to establish as broad a national slate as possible, based on an agreed platform rather than the allocation of quotas among the movements. The participants sought to avoid a dispute over the number of seats allocated to each movement and to present a joint framework which would also include candidates without party affiliations. Consultations will continue until August 25 and a coordinating committee will be established to enable additional parties to join (QudsN, August 20, 2026).