Spotlight on Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
October 13 - 20, 2026

Trending

► **Hamas continues to exploit aid to the Gaza Strip to finance its governance.**

► **Hamas institutions in the Gaza Strip revive the "hunger narrative."**

► **Friction in Judea and Samaria grows during the olive harvest season.**

Overview[1]

► Israeli security forces continued to eliminate Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorist operatives, including those involved in the atrocities of the October 7, 2023 invasion and massacre.

► The Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) announced that private-sector merchants in the Gaza Strip would resume bringing in goods after a hiatus of several days, after Hamas withdrew its demand for a payment of NIS 10,000 for each truck. Hamas claimed that the payment was a "community initiative."

► The Hamas ministry of health in the Gaza Strip continued to promote its narrative of a "health and nutritional" crisis in the Strip, alleging "hundreds of deaths" from malnutrition.

► The next flotilla planned to sail to the Gaza Strip was canceled due to technical problems.

► Israeli security forces continued extensive counterterrorism operations, detaining suspects planning terrorist attacks in Judea and Samaria and inside Israel.

► Jewish settlers rioted during the olive harvest in Judea and Samaria, also attacking an American photographer and diplomatic representatives.

► Elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council were postponed. The Palestinian terrorist organizations met in Cairo but failed to agree on how to advance national reconciliation.

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

The Fighting in the Gaza Strip

► This past week Israeli security forces eliminated more than ten Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) terrorist operatives in the Gaza Strip, including those involved in the atrocities of the October 7, 2023 invasion and massacre, holding hostages and weapons production or procurement. IDF forces destroyed three Hamas weapons depots and a 1.5-kilometer tunnel that crossed the Yellow Line area and had rooms used by Hamas operatives (IDF spokesperson, October 13–20, 2026).

► Hamas revealed that Ali al-Amoudi, considered the acting chairman of the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip, was wounded in the Israeli attack on an apartment in the port area in western Gaza City on October 3, 2026. He said al-Amoudi had been in a "side area" of the apartment and had not been killed but was wounded and incurred fractures. The report contradicts previous claims by Hamas sources stating al-Amoudi had left the apartment about three hours before the attack after the detection of movements of Israeli UAVs (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 17, 2026).

► The IDF spokesperson revealed an internal Hamas document from April 2024, according to which the engineering department of the military wing proposed planting explosive devices around displaced persons camps in the Gaza Strip and detonating them as IDF forces approached. The ensuing panic and chaos would enable Hamas terrorists and leaders to escape from areas where military activity was expected. According to the document, explosive devices were to be planted along routes used by the civilian population to delay the advance of IDF forces and to stun grenades would be fired inside displaced persons camps to create panic and assist the operatives in escaping (IDF spokesperson, October 19, 2026).

Document retrieved by the IDF and made public (IDF spokesperson, October 19, 2026)

Negotiations for the Second Phase of the Ceasefire Agreement

► On the first anniversary of the Sharm el-Sheikh summit, which supported the American president's 20-point plan for a ceasefire and reconstruction of the Gaza Strip, the American State Department issued a report on the progress made since the summit as a basis for shaping the future of the Gaza Strip. It listed a continuing ceasefire, the return of all living and murdered hostages, the establishment of the Board of Peace and a Palestinian technocratic government, the formulation of a comprehensive reconstruction plan and the expansion of humanitarian aid, and a "significant decline" in Hamas theft of humanitarian aid. The State Department said those were only initial steps, adding that the reconstruction of the Strip was expected to take years and many difficulties were expected. However, it said substantial progress had been made toward establishing a demilitarized Gaza Strip in which Palestinians could live without Hamas rule and Israel could enjoy stable, sustainable security (State Department website, October 13, 2026).

► Josh Gruenbaum, a senior adviser to the Board of Peace, said the deradicalization of the Gaza Strip would not be dictated by the United States but would be led by the Palestinian national committee for the administration of the Gaza Strip. He said the committee members were familiar with the existing education system, including the one operated by UNRWA, since their children had grown up in it. The Palestinian technocratic government would be responsible for vetting teachers and candidates for positions in the civilian administration to ensure they were ideologically aligned with "the principles of the new government" (Fox News, October 13, 2026).

► The Palestinian national committee for the administration of the Gaza Strip signed a memorandum of understanding with the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) to establish a framework for technical cooperation in support of the recovery and reconstruction of the Gaza Strip. The memorandum establishes a flexible framework for technical cooperation in several key areas, including economic recovery, institutional development, municipal services, social protection, education, employment and planning, as well as essential sectoral services such as water, agriculture and energy (national committee X account, October 14, 2026).

Signing the memorandum of understanding, attended by Board of Peace representative Nikolay Mladenov (national committee X account, October 14, 2026)

► Sources in the Palestinian national committee for the administration of the Gaza Strip said its members expected progress in the transfer of administrative powers in the Strip would be made after the American midterm elections on November 3, 2026. Although the committee has been operating for ten months, its activity so far has reportedly focused on meetings and preparing work plans from its headquarters in Cairo, and it has not yet begun to administer the Strip on the ground. Its initial plans include providing aid and services and assuming responsibility for health, education and welfare. A committee member said that about 50 employees, advisers and experts currently in the Strip had been appointed, but they had not yet begun "substantive activity." A dispute was reported over the appointment of committee member deputies, including individuals associated with Mohammed Dahlan, with some claiming the appointments had not yet received final approval. According to a source in the committee, Jared Kushner oversees its activity, holds meetings with its members and its chairman and closely follows its work and preparations to assume responsibility for administering the Strip (*al-Quds al-Arabi*, October 13, 2026).

► According to claims, Israel is delaying the construction of a military post in the Gaza Strip intended for use by the international stabilization force under the Board of Peace plan. Reportedly, in early August 2026 the American Arkel International company was selected to construct a fortified compound measuring 100 by 100 meters at a site formerly used by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF). The post was intended to accommodate 150 armed soldiers who would serve as an advance force within a larger contingent of 500 soldiers from Morocco and Kosovo. However, two months later, Israel has still not approved the entry of the contractors and necessary equipment. A source claimed the delay prevented the deployment of the stabilization force, thereby also delaying reconstruction plans, the entry of construction materials and the establishment of basic infrastructure (*The Guardian*, October 14, 2026).

The Gaza Strip

Hamas Takeover of Trucks Bringing Humanitarian Aid

► On October 14, 2026, the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) announced a halt to the entry of trucks carrying commercial goods into the Gaza Strip after private-sector merchants in the Strip said Hamas extorted 10,000 shekels for every truck entering the Strip and demanded that merchants sell 30% of the goods for cash (COGAT Arabic Facebook page, October 14, 2026).

► Nahed Sheheibar, chairman of the association of private transport companies in Gaza, denied the Israeli claims. He said a meeting had been held with the Hamas ministry of national economy in Gaza and the ministry denied imposing fees on the trucks, saying instead that there had been a request for a "community contribution," which merchants were not required to pay (Masdar News, October 14, 2026).

► The Hamas government media information office in Gaza also denied the [allegedly] "baseless claims and unfounded accusations," calling them "Israeli disinformation" whose objective was to allow Israel to evade its humanitarian obligations. It claimed no taxes or levies had been collected on commercial activity during the past three years and the 10,000 shekel payment was a "voluntary community initiative." The office added that the measures concerning cash transactions were an "unavoidable necessity" for dealing with the imbalance in the Palestinian market, the shortage of cash and the widespread circulation of worn banknotes. It claimed there had been no unilateral government decision, but the measure had been adopted with the "full agreement and at the initiative of the chamber of commerce" (Hamas government media information office Telegram channel, October 15, 2026).

► Nikolay Mladenov, the Board of Peace representative in the Gaza Strip, confirmed he had received a letter from the COGAT concerning the suspension of coordination for the entry of private-sector goods into the Gaza Strip following reports of threats and coercion by Hamas. Mladenov said such conduct was unacceptable and had to stop immediately (Nikolay Mladenov's X account, October 15, 2026). In response, Hamas harshly criticized him for "adopting the Israeli narrative" and called on him to stop siding with Israel and its [alleged] "violations" of human rights. Hamas also rejected the claims that it interfered with and imposed taxes on or threatened merchants and the mechanisms for bringing private-sector goods into the Strip, and accused Israel of making a "transparent attempt" to exacerbate the

humanitarian situation and evade the commitments stipulated in the ceasefire agreement (Hamas Telegram channel, October 16, 2026).

The Amsak Amil ("Catch an Agent") channel, which exposes thieves, aid robbers and merchants who exploit the situation in the Strip, published photographs of the "war profiteers," the eight merchants authorized to bring goods into the Strip (Amsak Amil channel, October 18, 2026)

► On October 19, 2026, the COGAT announced that private-sector merchants had reported Hamas had withdrawn its demands for a payment of 10,000 shekels for each truck and for cash payments, and therefore they asked to resume coordination for bringing products into the Strip. The COGAT said coordination would resume gradually, with the initial emphasis on essential supplies for the winter season, and oversight would be tightened to ensure merchants complied with their commitments to accept payments only through documented bank transfers, to ensure Hamas did not exploit the aid mechanism for its own gain. The COGAT warned that the license of any merchant found to have paid Hamas would be revoked (COGAT X account, October 19, 2026).

The Civilian Situation in the Gaza Strip

► The COGAT reported that during the past week shipments of aid for winter continued to enter the Gaza Strip in coordination with the international community, including more than 8,000 tents and more than 250 trucks carrying winter supplies. Maintenance work was carried out on power lines, water pipes and sewage lines, and the entry of 7,500 doses of tetanus vaccine was approved (COGAT X account, October 18, 2026).

► The Hamas ministry of health in the Gaza Strip continued to promote narratives of distress in the health system and hunger:

- The ministry claimed the operation of medical services had ceased because dozens of generators were out of service and there was a shortage of spare parts needed for maintenance. Mazen al-Araishi, head of the general engineering and maintenance department in the ministry of health in Gaza, said that of 116 generators, 44 remained

operational, 68 were out of service and eight required maintenance which could not be carried out because of a lack of spare parts (Hamas ministry of health in the Gaza Strip Facebook page, October 14, 2026).

◆ The ministry of health in Gaza reported that the Rafah Crossing had been closed for a second week, and patients and wounded persons requiring medical treatment outside the Strip could not be evacuated through it. The ministry said the continued closure endangered patients' lives and prevented them from accessing medical services (Al Jazeera, October 15, 2026). Dr. Muhammad Abu Afash, chairman of the medical relief association in the Gaza Strip, alleged to the Voice of Palestine radio that 2,027 patients had died while waiting for treatment or medical evacuation outside the Gaza Strip. He claimed that more than 21,000 patients required medical evacuation and that no patient had left through the Rafah Crossing for more than five days (Wafa, October 14, 2026).

More than two thousand patients dead because of the "blockade" (Facebook page of Alaa al-Laqta, Hamas in-house cartoonist, October 15, 2026)

◆ For World Food Day, the ministry of health in Gaza issued figures allegedly indicating a deterioration in the nutrition and health of the Gazans. According to the ministry's figures, since 2024, 466 Palestinians have died from malnutrition, 157 of them children and 189 elderly. Between 2024 and August 2026, 158,001 cases of malnutrition were reportedly documented among children under the age of five, including 28,716 severe cases. According to the ministry, approximately 74,200 children will require treatment for malnutrition by April 2027 and more than 1.4 million Gazans, approximately 67% of the Strip's population, are expected to face "a nutritional crisis or worse" by the end of 2026 (ministry of health in Gaza Telegram channel, October 16, 2026).

► The World Food Programme said a funding shortage would force it to end assistance to approximately half a million Gazans. The Hamas government media information office accused Israel of responsibility for the food shortage and called on Arab and Muslim countries to

intervene to ensure continued funding for aid programs (Al Jazeera Mubasher, October 19, 2026).

► Amani al-Naouq, spokesperson for the Red Cross in the Gaza Strip, said locating, recovering and identifying the bodies of missing persons buried under the rubble could take years. She said the destruction in the Strip, the shortage of engineering equipment and advanced technological means, and the limited capabilities of the forensic medicine system hampered search and identification efforts (Safa, October 16, 2026).

Cancellation of the Flotilla to the Gaza Strip

► The Freedom Flotilla Coalition announced the cancellation of its planned attempt to reach the Gaza Strip in the fall of 2026. The organizers attributed the decision to "mechanical problems and necessary repairs" which delayed the voyage and reduced the remaining window of time, as well as two collisions with bodies of migrants who had died while crossing the Mediterranean. The coalition said that it would prepare for another attempt to reach Gaza in 2027 (Freedom Flotilla Coalition website, October 17, 2026).

Israel, Judea and Samaria

Counterterrorism

► Israeli security forces continued extensive counterterrorism activity in Judea and Samaria, detaining wanted persons and suspects involved in terrorist activity, locating weapons and confiscating funds used to finance terrorism. Five 15-year-olds from the town of Sa'ir who had formed a terrorist cell and carried out attacks were detained; a terrorist who belonged to a cell operating in Jenin and dealt arms was detained; and charitable associations with ties to terrorist organizations were raided. Inside Israel, two terrorists who were planning an attack were detained in Kafr Aqab north of Jerusalem, and two suspects planning an attack were detained during an operation on Highway 1[2] (IDF, Israel Police and Israel Security Agency spokespersons, October 13–20, 2026).

Settler Terrorism

► This past week violence and attacks by Jewish rioters continued in Judea and Samaria. According to Palestinian reports, Jewish settlers set fire to a vehicle belonging to Palestinian civil defense volunteers during an attack in the town of Turmus Ayya, north of Ramallah; the Palestinian Red Crescent reported that three Palestinians were wounded in an attack by Jewish rioters in Asira al-Qibliya, south of Nablus (Nablus News Telegram channel, October 16, 2026).

[2] Highway 1 runs east to west from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem to the Jordan Valley.

Reportedly, about 80 armed and masked Israeli rioters attacked residents of the village of Abu Falah, northeast of Ramallah, during the olive harvest. They burned olive trees and threw rocks at Palestinians, wounding two people, including an American press photographer. IDF forces arrived at the scene, fired tear gas and warning shots and, according to the army, also shot at a person perceived as a threat (Reuters and IDF spokesperson, October 17, 2026). In the village of al-Taybeh, Jewish rioters attacked diplomatic representatives. The IDF spokesperson said the representatives' tour had not been coordinated with the army in advance and the incident would be investigated (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, October 17, 2026).

Settlers attack American journalist in the West Bank
(Facebook page of Alaa al-Laqta, Hamas' in-house cartoonist, October 18, 2026)

Elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council

► Following the postponement of the elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council until September 2027, a round of Egyptian-mediated talks was held in Cairo by Fatah, Hamas, PIJ and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), with the aim of advancing the internal Palestinian reconciliation and preparing for the elections. The talks reportedly focused on ending the internal Palestinian schism, reorganizing the PLO and the Palestinian National Council, the possibility of establishing a unity government and arranging the election mechanisms. There were disagreements over the composition of the participants in the dialogue, particularly the inclusion of the current associated with Mohammed Dahlan, and over whether the talks would lead to binding agreements and the establishment of an interim leadership (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 14, 2026).

► Hamas said a delegation headed by senior political bureau member Zaher Jabarin had completed its round of meetings in Egypt with representatives of Fatah, PIJ, the PFLP and the reformist trend in Fatah. Hamas noted the need for a comprehensive national dialogue, reform of the PLO to ensure representation for all the organizations, elections to Palestinian

institutions and the formulation of a joint strategy for the campaign against Israel; the participants agreed to continue the dialogue (Hamas Telegram channel, October 17, 2026).

► According to reports, after three days of talks in Cairo the Palestinian organizations had failed to agree on a date for convening a national conference, despite the "positive atmosphere" of the discussions. Senior Fatah figure Jibril Rajoub said the organizations were waiting for an Egyptian invitation to resume the dialogue, which would focus on formulating a political plan, bringing Hamas into the PLO and the possibility of moving the presidential and parliamentary elections forward. Rajoub reiterated the status of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and said contacts with Hamas would continue in preparation for a broad national conference. He said that PIJ secretary general Ziyad al-Nakhalah said he had no reservations about the proposals raised, while the PFLP had shown "openness and national responsibility" (*al-Quds al-Arabi*, October 18, 2026).