



# Palestinian Terrorism, 2019 Overview and Trends

January, 2020

## The Situation on the Ground

### Overview

Two main trends in attacks characterized Palestinian organized and popular terrorism in 2019: **in Judea and Samaria, the annual decline in the scope of popular terrorism and its lethality continued; in the Gaza Strip there was a significant rise in the scope and intensity of terrorism and violence, especially rocket fire.** In 2019 1,403 rockets and mortar shells were fired at Israel, an almost unprecedented number (with the exception of Operation Protective Edge, 2014).

► The reduction in the scope of terrorism and the level of its lethality during the past year again illustrated **Hamas' failure to export terrorism to Judea and Samaria**, while at the same time prompting a lull arrangement with Israel through Egyptian mediation. The main reason for Hamas' failure was **the great effectiveness of the counterterrorism activities of the Israeli security forces** (with the contribution of the counterterrorism activities of the PA security services). In November 2019 Nadav Argaman, head of the Israel Security Agency, said that **in 2019 the Agency had prevented more than 450 significant terrorist attacks**, among them showcase attacks which were liable to have had many victims. Thus it can be determined that **the relative quiet in Judea and Samaria in 2019 was to a great extent misleading, while beneath the surface attempts to carry out terrorist attacks continued.**

► The relatively small number of terrorist attacks also reflected the absence of public readiness in Judea and Samaria to take a significant part in terrorism and protest activities against Israel. Apparently the Palestinian public in Judea and Samaria continues to be more invested in matters of daily life and **the attempts made to recruit them to take to the streets for protests and rage were met with a limited response** (including on "national days" and during prominent events). However, given the fundamental hostility to Israel, **the Palestinian public supports the terrorist attackers and helps them escape from the**

**Israeli security forces.** Those who do manage to escape capture **are venerated and respected by the Palestinian street and become role models.**

► **Given the declared policy of support for popular terrorism (the so-called "popular resistance"<sup>1</sup>), the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Fatah continued to encourage popular terrorism activity and at the same time to foster the shaheed culture in various ways:** by giving political and media support to popular terrorism; glorifying the terrorists, including in the formal and informal Palestinian educational system; giving financial support to the families of shaheeds, wounded terrorists, and Palestinian terrorists in Israeli prisons; financing and rebuilding the houses of terrorists razed by Israel as a form of punishment; the participation of senior PA and Fatah figures in the funerals held for terrorists; visiting the **families of terrorists who had been called; giving awards, and more.**

► **In that way the PA and Fatah increased the population's fundamental hostility to Israel, especially the younger generation. However, fostering the shaheed culture and supporting terrorist attackers was not manifested by the Palestinians' massively joining popular terrorism attackers.**

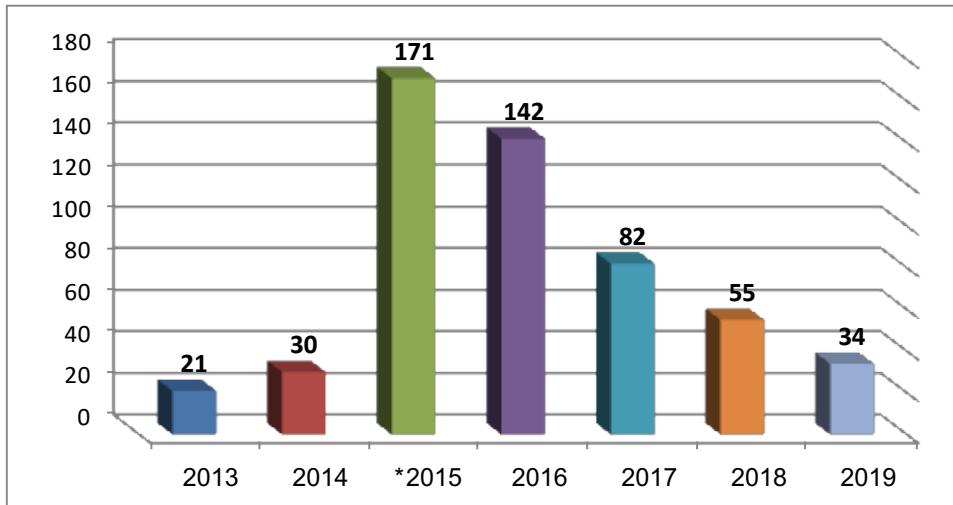
## Judea and Samaria

**The annual trend of decline in the number of terrorist attacks in east Jerusalem and inside Israel continued in 2019. In the past year there were 34 significant terrorist attacks, compared with 55 in 2018. The level of the lethality of the attacks also declined: in 2019 five Israelis** (four civilians and one IDF soldier) were killed, 12 in 2018. Most of the attacks were within the framework of **popular terrorism.**<sup>2</sup> However, this past year **a large, established PFLP network was exposed**, two of whose operatives carried out the lethal IED attack at Ayn Bubin (one Israeli civilian killed and two wounded).

<sup>1</sup> For further information, see the January 17, 2018 bulletin, "The PLO's Central Council and Mahmoud Abbas call for the continuation and strengthening of [so-called] 'peaceful popular resistance' [i.e., popular terrorism]."

<sup>2</sup> **Popular terrorism (the so-called "popular resistance")** is carried out by individuals for the most part, but sometimes by squads. The attackers are not supported by the established terrorist organizations. They throw stones and Molotov cocktails, carry out stabbing attacks, vehicular attacks and sometimes shooting attacks. The established terrorist organizations have often tried to claim responsibility for "successful" popular terrorism attacks.

## Annual distribution of significant terrorist attacks

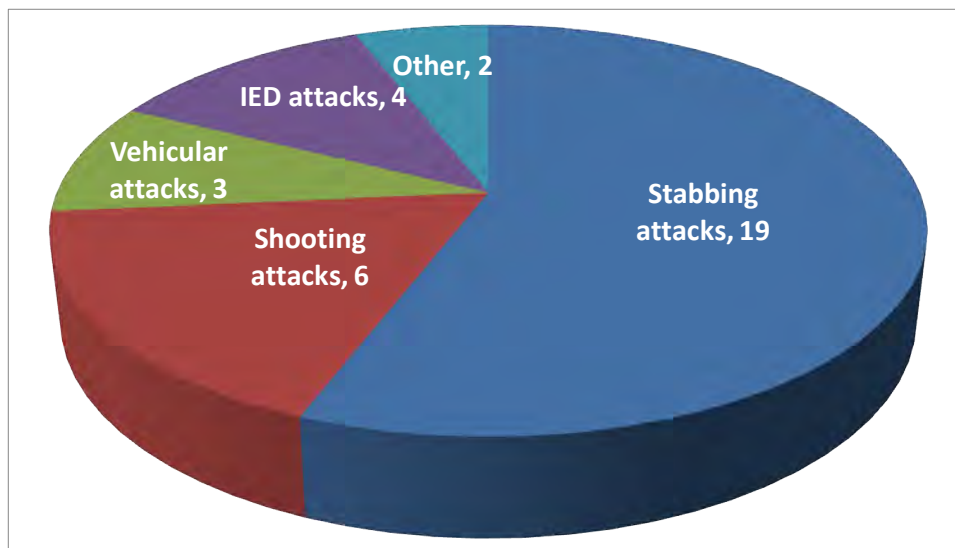


\*134 significant attacks were carried out between October and December, 2015, which were the first three months of the wave of popular terrorism. The other 37 were carried out between January and October 2015, when the wave of popular terrorism began.

► On the operative level, there were several characteristics of popular terrorism in Judea and Samaria in 2019:

◆ **Type of attack:** Stabbing attacks continued as **the most common form of attack** (58%). **Nineteen stabbing attacks** were carried out in 2019 (22 in 2018). In 2019 there were five shooting attacks (13 in 2018), and three vehicular attacks (13 in 2018).

## Distribution of types of terrorist attacks, 2019



◆ **The lethality of the attacks:** **Five Israelis** were killed in terrorist attacks in 2019 (four civilians and one IDF soldier), **12 killed in 2018** and 18 in 2017. Thus **79 Israelis**

**(civilians and members of the security forces) were killed between the wave of popular terrorism which began in October 2015 and the end of December 2019).**

◆ **The geographic distribution of the attacks:** Most of the attacks (11) in 2019 were carried out in **Greater Jerusalem**, and second was **the Ramallah area** (6). However, in the Hebron area there was a significant decline in the number of attacks in 2019 (three). Inside Israel<sup>3</sup> there were two stabbing attacks, three in 2018. There was one near Modi'in (and another during an organized uprising of Palestinian terrorist prisoners in an Israeli jail).

◆ **The personal profile of terrorist attackers remained similar to that of previous years:** Most of them were **young men** in their twenties, **most of them without a criminal or security record and without organizational affiliation.** Regarding their motives, apparently, as in previous years, **most motives were ideological (nationalistic) or personal, but they were not religiously motivated.**

## Gaza Strip

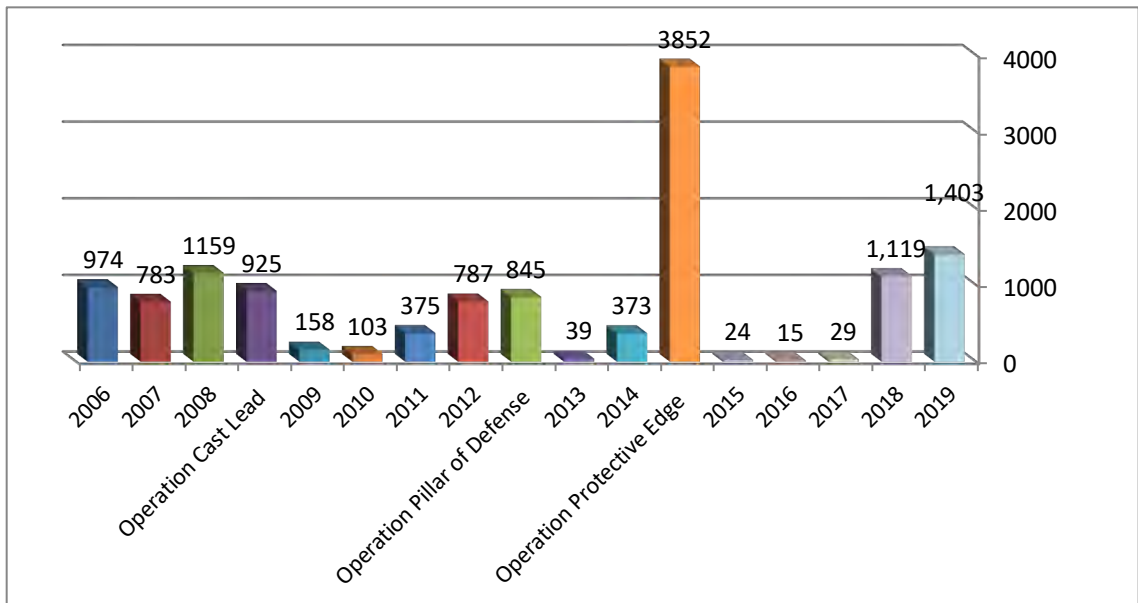
**In 2019 in the Gaza Strip there was an increase in rocket and mortar shell attacks.** There were **three rounds of escalation** in which Israel was attacked with massive rocket and mortar fire. **Between the rounds there was sporadic but continual rocket and mortar fire.** The rocket fire and the violent weekly return marches **disrupted the daily life of the residents of Israel's south, especially those living in the communities near the Gaza Strip.**

► **In 2019 1,403 rockets and mortar shells were fired.** In 2018, the first year of the return marches, **1,119 rockets and mortar shells were fired.** **In 2019 most of the hits were short-range. Most of the rockets were intercepted by the Iron Dome aerial defense system, or landed in open areas in the western Negev.** In most instances the IDF responded by attacking terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip, mostly with aircraft. Most of the targets attacked belonged to Hamas, which Israel considers responsible for what happens in the Gaza Strip.

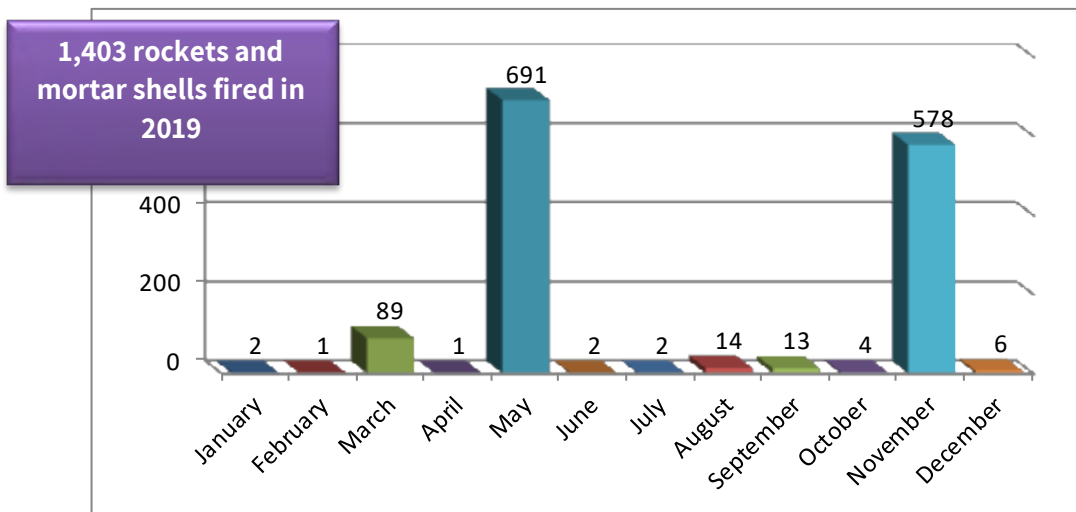
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<sup>3</sup> "Inside Israel" refers to the Israeli communities which are not part of the greater Jerusalem area, which has its own unique characteristics.

## Annual distribution of rocket fire from the Gaza Strip



## Monthly distribution of rocket and mortar fire



► **In 2019 return marches were held almost every week** (with some exceptions). Hamas played a central role in the marches (although the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and other organizations also participated). During 2019 **an average of 5,000 Palestinians participated**, but towards the end of the year, when participants began to feel that the marches had exhausted themselves, the number declined.

► **The marches were accompanied by a variety of violent activities:** the border fence was sabotaged; attempts were made to break into Israeli territory; shots were fired at IDF soldiers and hand grenades and IEDs were thrown by rioters near the fence; IED and incendiary kites

and balloons were launched, and more. During the year **31 return march participants were killed** (most of them affiliated with various terrorist organizations, especially **Hamas**).

### Global jihad activity in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip

► **In 2019 no organized network of ISIS or any other jihadist organization was identified in Judea and Samaria.** In the Gaza Strip the activities of the Salafist-jihadist organizations were not prominent. The connection between the jihadists in the Gaza Strip and ISIS operatives in the Sinai Peninsula was tenuous, especially because of the intensive counterterrorism activities carried out by the Egyptian security forces. In 2019 no rockets were launched into Israel by jihadists from the Sinai Peninsula.

### Assessment of trends and violence, 2019

► **In ITIC assessment popular terrorism will continue in Judea and Samaria in its present form** (stabbing attacks, vehicular attacks and shooting attacks), with fluctuations in quantity and quality. The scope of popular terrorism was influenced by the effectiveness of the Israeli security forces, the **economic situation in Judea and Samaria and the possible disappearance of Mahmoud Abbas from public life.** Economic difficulties damaging the fabric of daily life and the PA and Fatah's war of inheritance are liable to lead to an increase in terrorism.

► Given a possible arrangement in the Gaza Strip and a calming of the situation on the ground, **Hamas and the PIJ can be expected continue their efforts to recruit and direct terrorist networks in Judea and Samaria,** mainly from the Gaza Strip and Turkey. As in previous years, the success of their efforts will depend to a great extent on **the effectiveness of the Israeli security forces' counterterrorism activities** (and to a lesser extent the readiness of the PA security services to continue their cooperation with the Israeli security forces).

► the **Gaza Strip** there is currently **a lull on the ground** which can be expected to continue in view of the (minimalist) arrangement which is being formulated with Egyptian mediation.<sup>4</sup> However, **rocket fire can be expected to continue (to a lesser degree), as can expressions of violence along the border fence,** for two main reasons: **Hamas has not fully abandoned the use of violence** to leverage concessions from Israel; and **the PIJ** (and with it the "rogue"

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<sup>4</sup> For further information, see the December 15, 2019 bulletin, "Hamas's perception of the lull agreement with Israel, recently discussed in Cairo."

terrorist organizations and operatives), which have their own political agenda, **may again disrupt the lull**, as the did throughout 2019.

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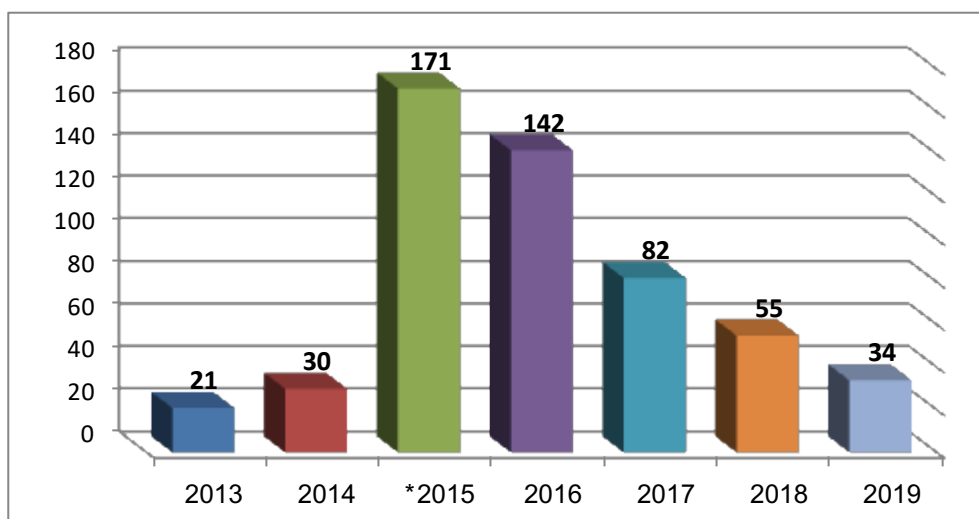
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## Popular Terrorism in Judea and Samaria

### Overview

In 2019 popular terrorism ("the popular resistance") continued, supported by the PA and Fatah, although the number of terrorist attacks declined significantly, compared with 2018. The decline was consistent after popular terrorism peaked in 2015 (See graph below). In 2019 Palestinians carried out 34 significant attacks<sup>5</sup> of various types, most of them stabbing attacks. The level of lethality of the attacks also declined. Five Israelis were killed in popular terrorism attacks in 2019 (four civilians and one IDF soldier), compared with 12 in 2018. Some of the attacks were more military-style than popular, the most prominent of which was the planting of an IED at Ayn Bubin, carried out by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) (one civilian killed and two wounded.)

### Annual distribution of significant terrorist attacks: a continual decline since October 2015



\* There were 134 terrorist attacks carried out between October and December 2015, the first three months of the wave of popular terrorism. The remaining 37 were carried out between January and October 2015.

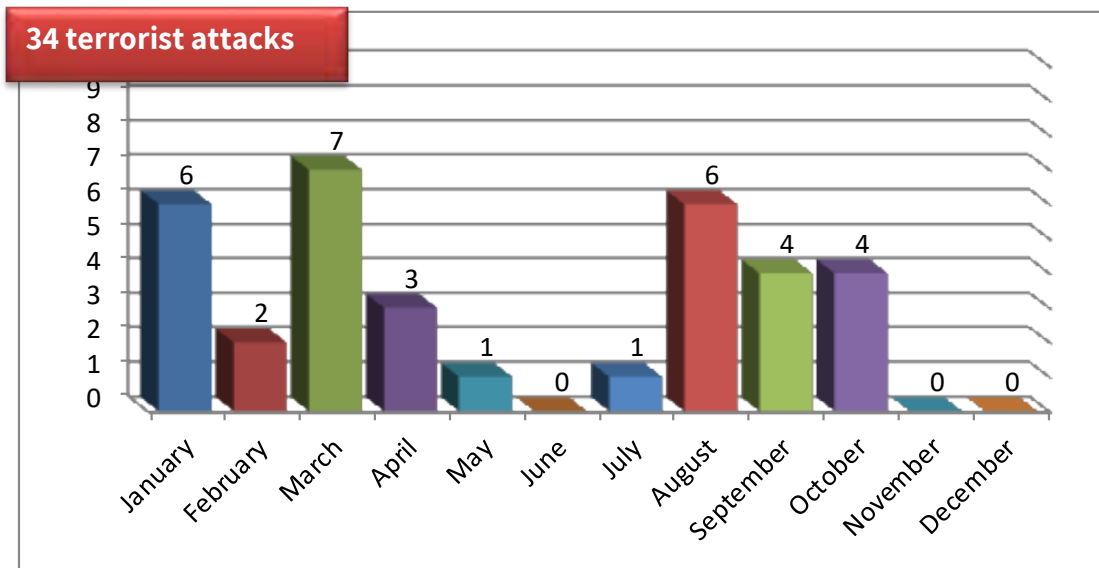
► As in previous years, most of the terrorist attacks in 2019 were carried out by lone terrorists as part of the "popular resistance" strategy which had been embraced by the PA and Fatah. However, a few of the attacks were more military in nature and were carried out by organized squads. A prominent attack (August 2019) was the IED placed

<sup>5</sup>A significant attack is defined by the ITIC as involving shooting, stabbing, a vehicular attack, the use of IEDs, or a combination of the above. Stones and Molotov cocktails thrown by Palestinians are not included.

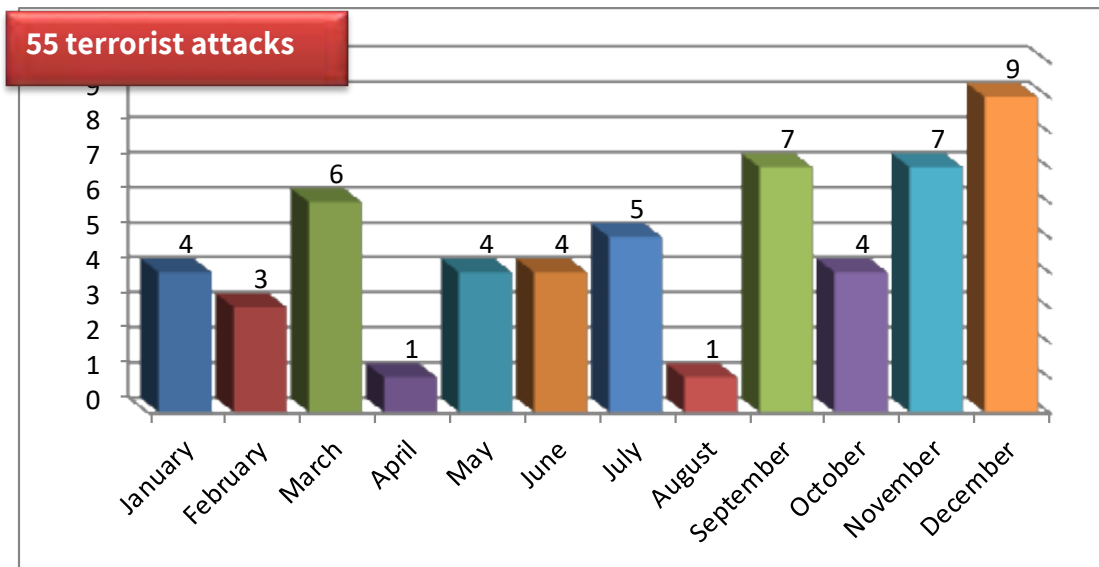


**and detonated by a large PFLP network.** Also notable was finding the perpetrators of a series of attacks on Israeli buses carried out in the Ramallah region. Shooting attacks were carried out by two Palestinians, one of them a lawyer, **who held senior positions in the Authority for Prisoners and Released Prisoners, a institution subordinate to the PLO (and in effect to the PA).** One of them was **Zakariya Zubeidi**, who had an extensive record of implementing terrorist attacks, in and after the second intifada (2000-2005).

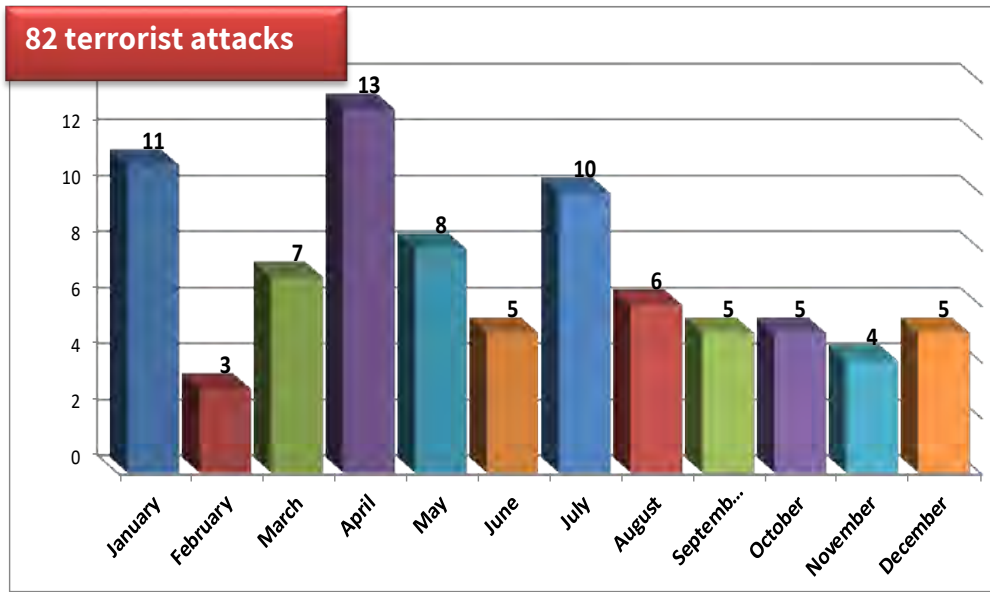
### Monthly distribution of significant terrorist attacks, 2019



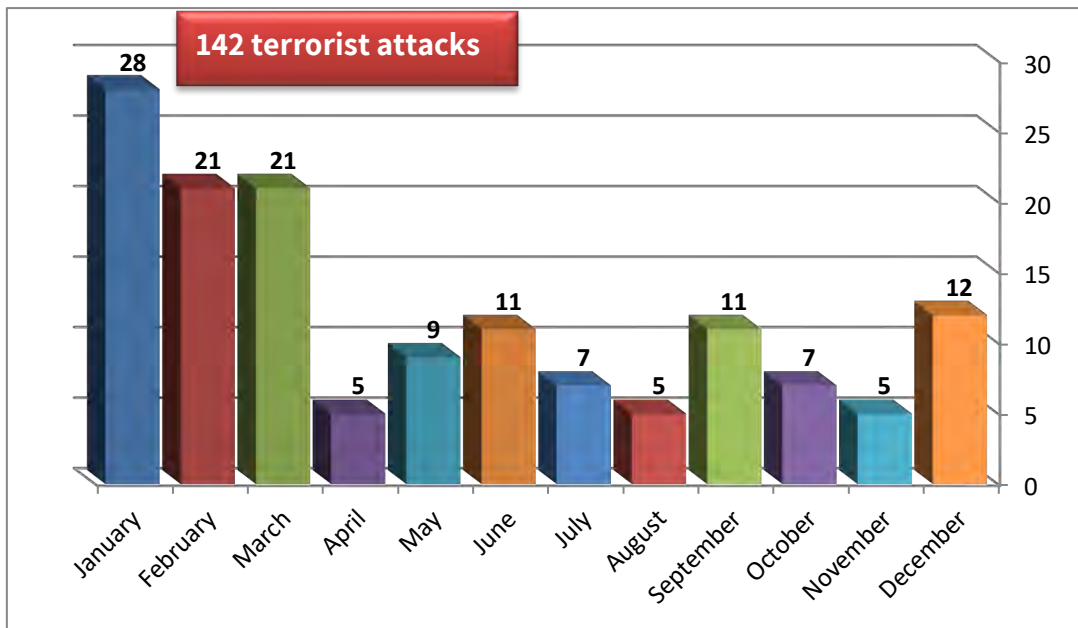
### Monthly distribution of significant terrorist attacks, 2018



### Monthly distribution of significant terrorist attacks, 2017



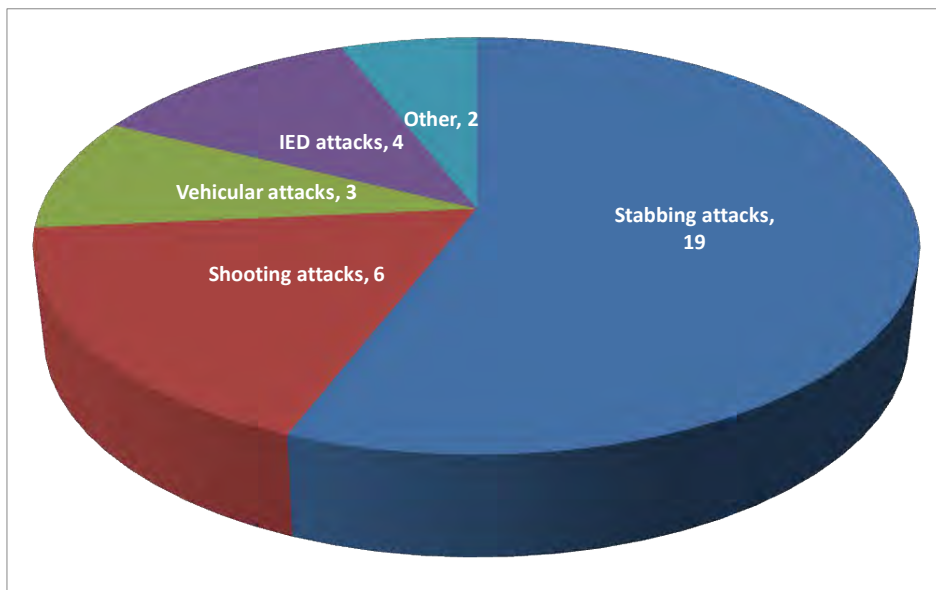
### Monthly distribution of significant terrorist attacks, 2016



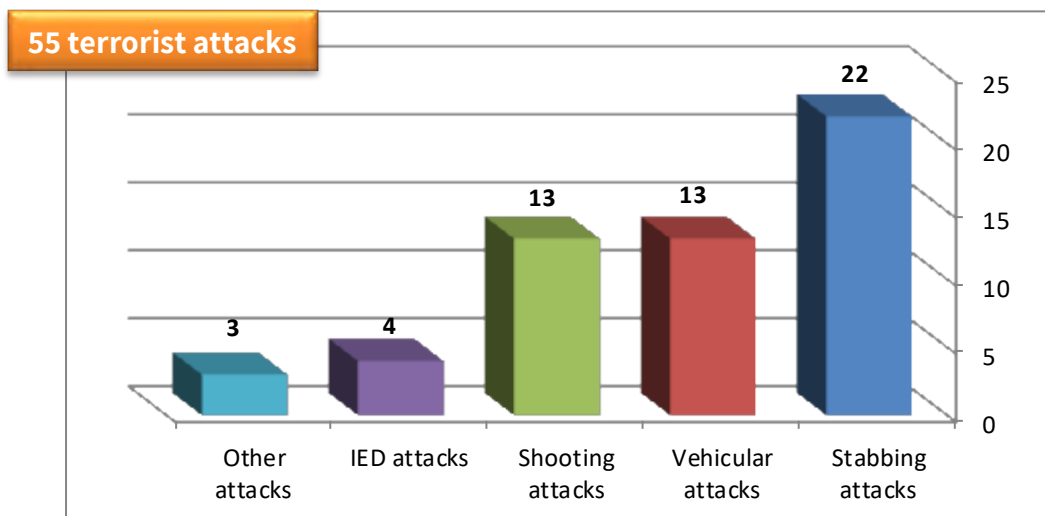
## Modus operandi

**Stabbing attacks continued to be the most common form of popular terrorism attacks in 2019. During the past year 19 stabbing attacks were carried out (22 in 2018). However, in 2019 the relative number of stabbing attacks rose to 58% of the total number. The number of other significant attacks was far lower: in 2019 there were **six shooting attacks** (15% of the total), **three vehicular attacks** (9% of the total), **four IEDs planted** and **two other types of attacks.****

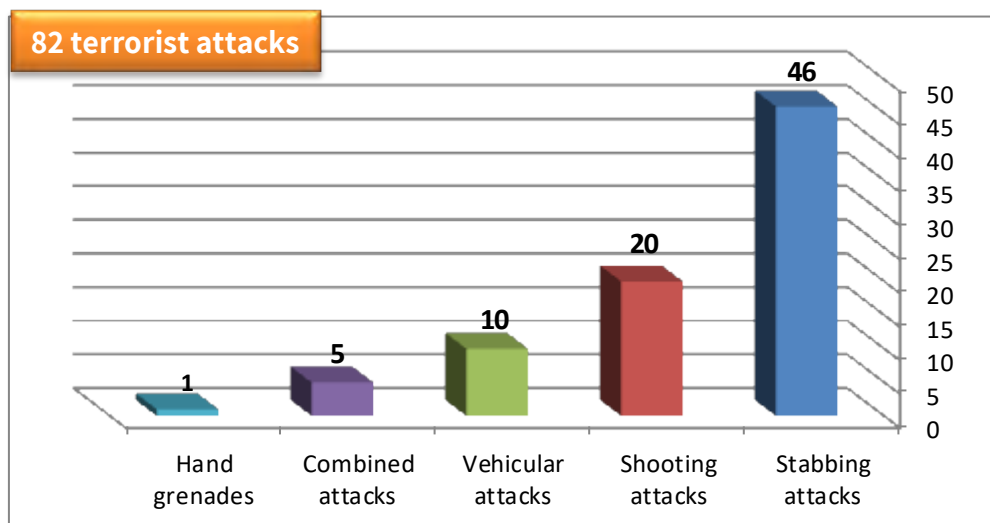
**Distribution of types of attacks, 2019**



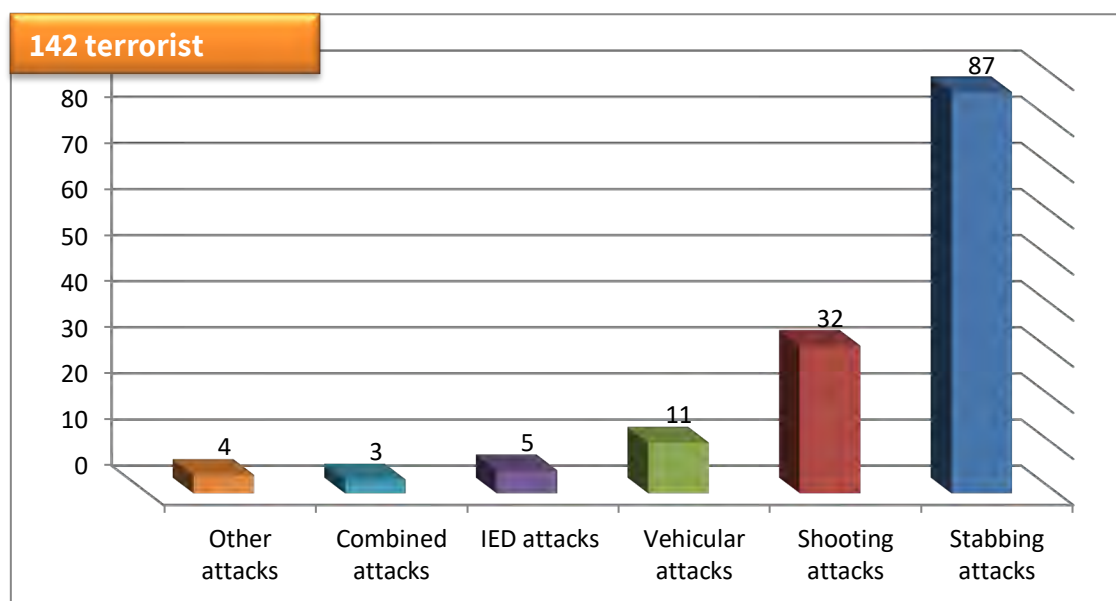
**Distribution of types of attacks, 2018**



### Distribution of types of attacks, 2017



### Distribution of types of attacks, 2016



### Comparison of the relative weight of the different types of terrorist attacks in percentages

Year	Vehicular attacks	Stabbing attacks	Shooting attacks	Combined attacks	IED attacks	Other attacks
<b>2019</b>	9%	56%	17%	3%	12%	3%
<b>2018</b>	24%	40%	24%	0	7%	5%
<b>2017</b>	12.2%	56.1	24.4%	6.1%	0	1.2%

## Stabbing attacks

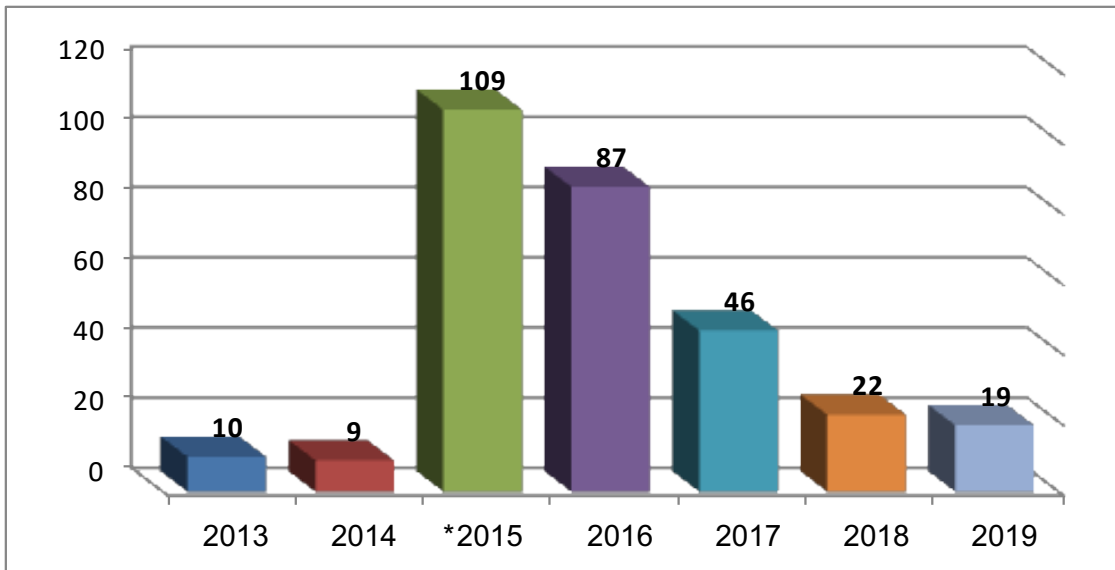
### Overview

► Stabbing attacks are generally carried out by lone attackers who do not belong to an established terrorist organization or network. Stabbing attacks are very popular because of the relative ease of carrying them out. Stabbing attacks do not require the purchase of a weapon because in most instances it can be found at home (knife, scissors, screwdriver, axe, or any other sharp object). They also do not require extensive preparations. On the other hand, stabbing attacks have disadvantages, from the perpetrator's perspective: the number of victims is usually relatively small (compared with shooting or vehicular attacks) and the risk of the attacker's losing his life or being wounded during the attack or its prevention is relatively high.

**During the past year stabbing attacks continued as the most common popular terrorism modus operandi.** In 2019 there were **19 stabbing attacks** (compared with 22 in 2018). Despite the decline in their number, their relative weight in the overall number of popular terrorism attacks rose and **they accounted for 56% of the total.** To that should be added the many attacks that were prevented when **knives or other sharp objects were found in the possession of Palestinians**, mainly during searches at crossing points or roadblocks. Prominent this past year was **the relatively high number of women who attempted to carry out stabbing attacks**, some of them caught by Israeli security forces before the attempt. Also noteworthy was the young age of many of the attackers.

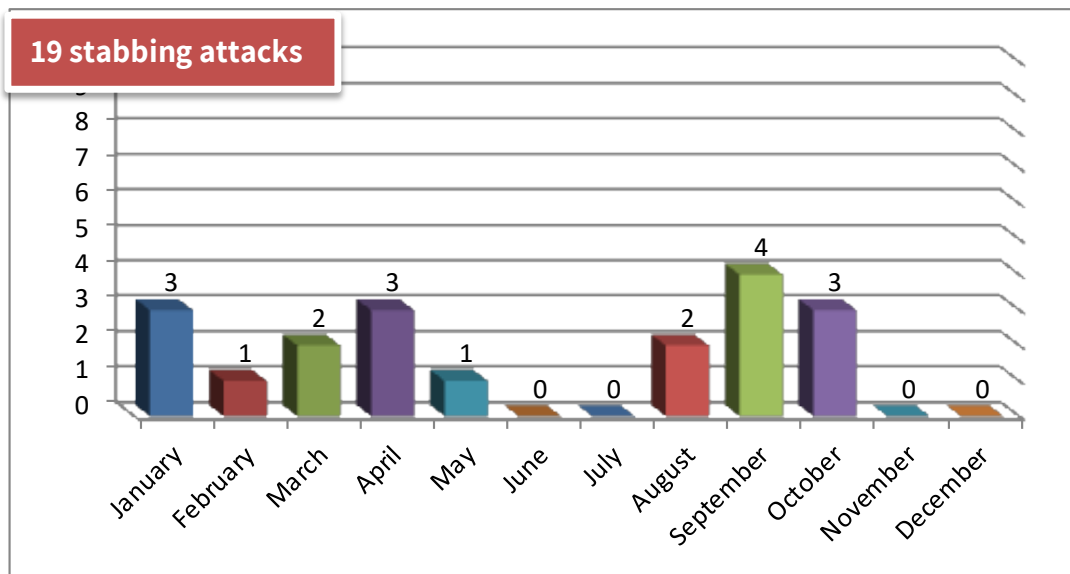
► **Two Israelis were killed in stabbing attacks (of the five killed this past year).** Most of the stabbing attacks were carried out at the friction points between the Israeli security forces and the Palestinian population, mainly at the crossings and examination posts, and the attacks mainly targeted the Israeli security forces. One stabbing attack was carried out in west Jerusalem (Ain Yael, February 7, 2019) and another in the Ktsiot Prison in Israel, where a prison guard was attacked with a sharp object (March 24, 2019).

### Annual distribution of stabbing attacks

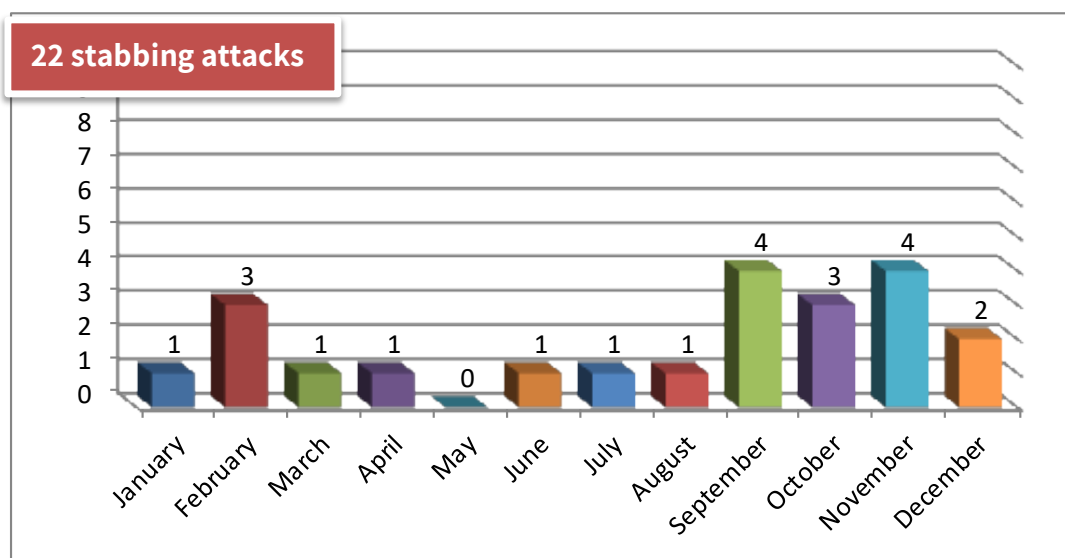


\* Between October and December 2015, at the height of the wave of popular terrorism, 92 stabbing attacks were carried out. The remaining 17 were carried out between January and October 2015.

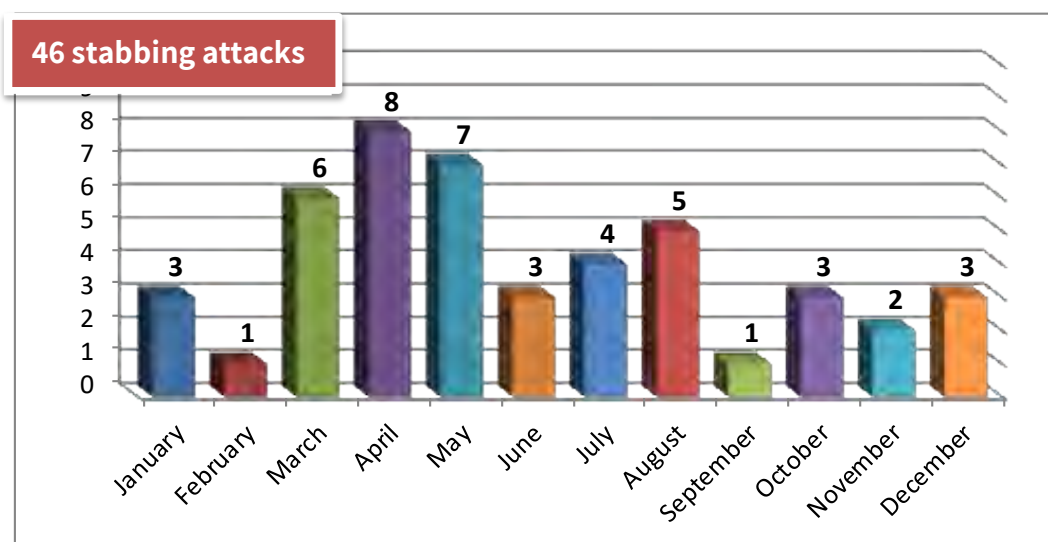
### Monthly distribution of stabbing attacks, 2019



### Monthly distribution of stabbing attacks, 2018



### Monthly distribution of stabbing attacks, 2017



### Prominent stabbing attacks

- ▶ On **January 11, 2019**, a Palestinian tried to stab IDF soldiers manning a roadblock in Kiryat Arba. The soldiers and a civilian present at the time shot and wounded him; he was evacuated to a hospital. No Israeli casualties were reported (IDF spokesman, January 11, 2019).
- ▶ On the evening of **January 21, 2019**, a Palestinian drove from the direction of Nablus to the IDF roadblock near a traffic circle south of Nablus. When asked for identification he exited his vehicle and tried to stab an IDF soldier. He was shot and killed (IDF spokesman, January 21, 2019).



**The knife used by the attacker  
(IDF Twitter account, January 21, 2019).**

► On **January 30, 2019**, a young Palestinian girl went to the al-Zaim roadblock (between Jerusalem and Ma'aleh Adumim). She ran towards the Israeli security forces holding a knife with the intention of stabbing a soldier. A civilian security guard shot and killed her (Israel Police Force Twitter account, January 30, 2020).



**The knife of the Palestinian girl who attempted to carry out a stabbing attack at the al-Zaim roadblock (Israel Police Force Twitter account, January 30, 2018).**

► On the morning of **February 7, 2019**, a young Israeli woman left her place of work to commune with nature in the region of the Ain Yael in west Jerusalem, near the Biblical Zoo. When she did not return her relatives reported her missing. Her body was found in the evening with signs of a violent attack. On February 8 a Palestinian from Hebron was detained. Two days later and after he reconstructed the murder, the Israel Security Agency determined that the killing had been carried out for nationalistic motives (Israel Security Agency media unit, February 10, 2020).





**Ori Ansbacher, from Tekoa, a 19-year-old Israeli woman stabbed to death  
(Israeli media, February 8, 2019).**

► On **April 20, 2019**, a Palestinian aroused the suspicions of Border Police fighters at a post near the Tapuah Junction, in the Ariel region. They chased him as he fled. When one of the fighters tried to block his path he pulled a knife and tried to stab him. The Border Police fighter shot and mortally wounded the Palestinian (Israeli media, April 20, 2019).



**The knife found in the Palestinians' possession  
(QudsN Twitter account, April 20, 2020).**

► On **May 31, 2019**, a Palestinian terrorist armed with a knife entered the Old City of Jerusalem through the Nablus Gate, and stabbed an Israeli civilian. As he fled he stabbed another civilian. Police pursued and neutralized him. The two wounded Israelis were evacuated to a hospital, one in critical condition (Israel Police Force Facebook page, May 31, 2019).



**The knife used in the double stabbing attack in the Old City of Jerusalem (Israel Police Force, May 31, 2020).**

► On **August 8, 2019**, the body of a young Israeli man who had been stabbed to death was found on the road leading to the community of Migdal Oz (Gush Etzion). He was Dvir Shorek, an IDF soldier who lived in the community of Ofra. According to the initial investigation, that evening he got off a bus from Jerusalem which stopped near the community's southern entrance. He walked up the path to Migdal Oz and a Palestinian terrorist stabbed him and then fled the scene in a vehicle driven by another Palestinian. On August 10, 2019, two suspects were detained. They were from the village of Bayt Kahil (near Hebron, about 6 miles from the site of the stabbing attack).



**Right: Dvir Shorek, who was killed in a stabbing attack in Gush Etzion. Left: The detention of two Palestinians suspected of the murder (IDF spokesman, August 8, 2020).**

► On **August 15, 2019**, two young Palestinians stabbed and seriously wounded an Israeli policeman near the Chain Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem. One of them was shot to death and the other, who was mortally wounded, later died. The policeman was evacuated to a hospital. A passerby was wounded in the leg (Shehab Twitter account, August 15, 2019).

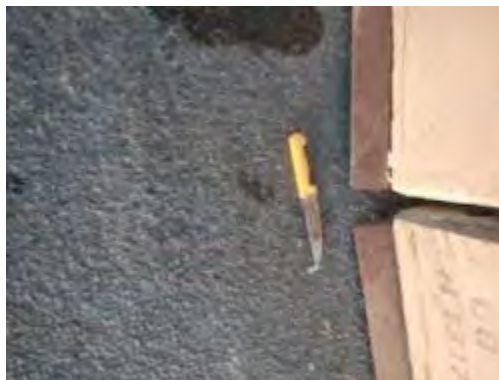


**The stabbing of the policeman documented by a security camera (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, August 15, 2019).**



**The knives used by the two terrorists (Israel Police Force website, August 15, 2019).**

► On **September 18, 2019**, a Palestinian woman walked to the Qalqilya roadblock and entered the lane reserved for cars. Israeli security forces, who found her actions suspicious, called on her to halt. She did not heed the call and took out a knife. She was shot and wounded (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, September 18, 2019). She was evacuated to a hospital where she later died (Wafa, September 22, 2019).



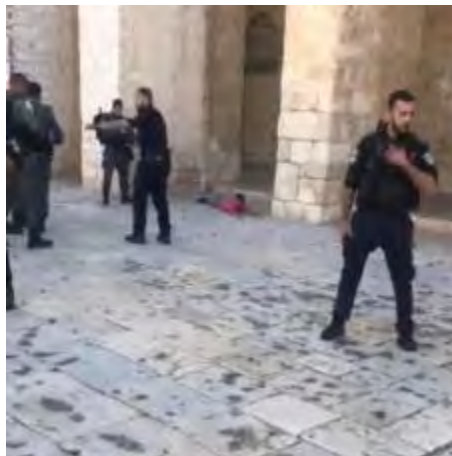
**The knife found in the possession of the Palestinian terrorist (Israel Police Force, September 18, 2019).**

► On **September 25, 2019**, a 13-year-old Palestinian stabbed and seriously wounded a young Israeli woman who was waiting at a bus stop near Modi'in. The attacked tried to escape and was caught a few hundred yards away by Border Police fighters. The woman was taken to a hospital (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, September 25, 2019). A Border Police fighter incurred minor injuries while overcoming the stabber. The stabber was taken for interrogation (Border Police Facebook page, September 25, 2019).



**Right: The scene of the stabbing attack at the Maccabim Junction (Ultra Palestine website, September 25, 2019). Left: The knife used by the stabber (Israel Police Force, September 25, 2019).**

► On **September 26, 2019**, a 13-year-old Palestinian went to the Chain Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem and tried to stab police who were securing the site. They resisted him and he fled to the Temple Mount. The police fired into the air and managed to apprehend him. A policewoman was slightly injured while overcoming the Palestinian (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, September 26, 2019).



**The scene of the attack. At the top center the attacker can be seen lying on the ground between two pillars (Facebook page of silwanic.net, September 26, 2019).**

► On **October 28, 2019**, a Palestinian armed with a knife attacked a team of Border Police fighters engaged in operational activity near the Flowers Gate in east Jerusalem. Unable to

harm the fighters, he escaped through the alleys of the Old City and entered one of the houses. The fighters shot and wounded him. The attacker was apprehended and detained (Israel Police Force Twitter account, October 28, 2019).

► On **October 30, 2019**, a Palestinian woman went to a roadblock near the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron. She tried to stab one of the Border Police fighters stationed at the site. She was shot and critically wounded (Border Police spokesman's unit, October 30, 2019).



**The knife found in the possession of the Palestinian terrorist who tried to stab a Border Police fighter (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, October 30, 2019).**

## Shooting attacks

### Overview

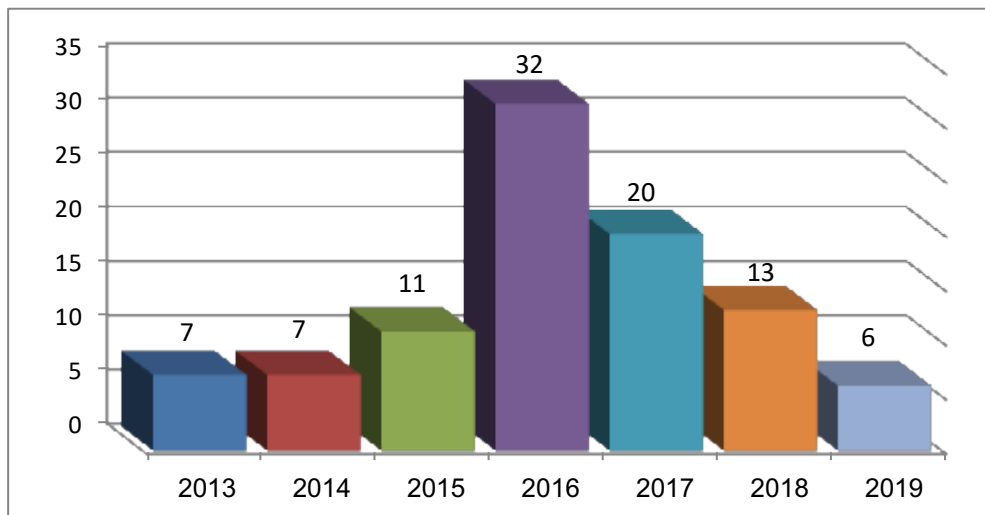
► Shooting attacks are generally carried out with standard or improvised light arms in a variety of circumstances: in an ambush, at an individual or gathering, in a drive-by shooting or by a sniper. In most cases shooting attacks are not spontaneous, but rather require preparations (acquiring the weapon, collecting information). Therefore are sometimes carried out by more than one person. In many instances, shooting attacks allow the attackers to escape and sometimes to continue and perpetrate other attacks. Usually shooting attacks are carried out by local squads and initiatives, but there have been cases where shooting attacks were directed by the established terrorist organizations. The PA and Fatah regard shooting attacks as part of the "popular resistance" and the terrorists who carry them out are venerated and supported.



**During the past year there was a sharp decline in the number of shooting attacks and in their lethality. During the year six shooting attacks were carried out, compared with 13 in 2018 and 20 in 2017.** Shooting attacks accounted for 17% of the terrorist attacks carried out in 2019. No one was killed, as opposed to 2018, when five people were killed. **Most of the shooting attacks targeted Israeli vehicles or communities.** The shooting attacks were carried out between January and March 2019, and since then have stopped.

► **Apparently the counterterrorism activities of the Israeli security forces had a decisive effect on the decline in the number of shooting attacks. The case of the series of shooting attacks against Israeli buses in the Ramallah region was solved: two Palestinians were behind the attacks, both of them with senior positions in the PA.**<sup>6</sup>

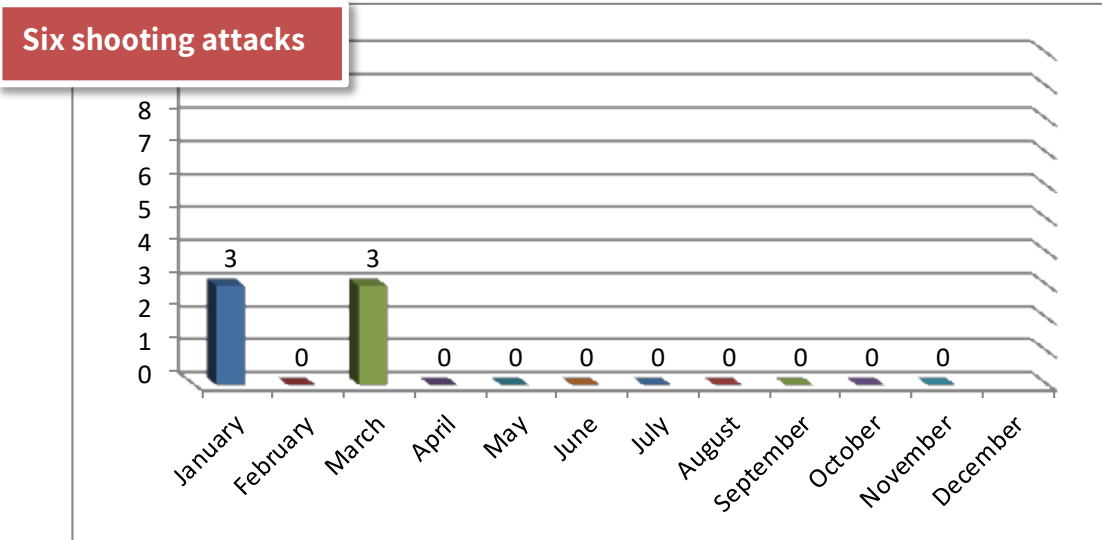
### Annual distribution of shooting attacks



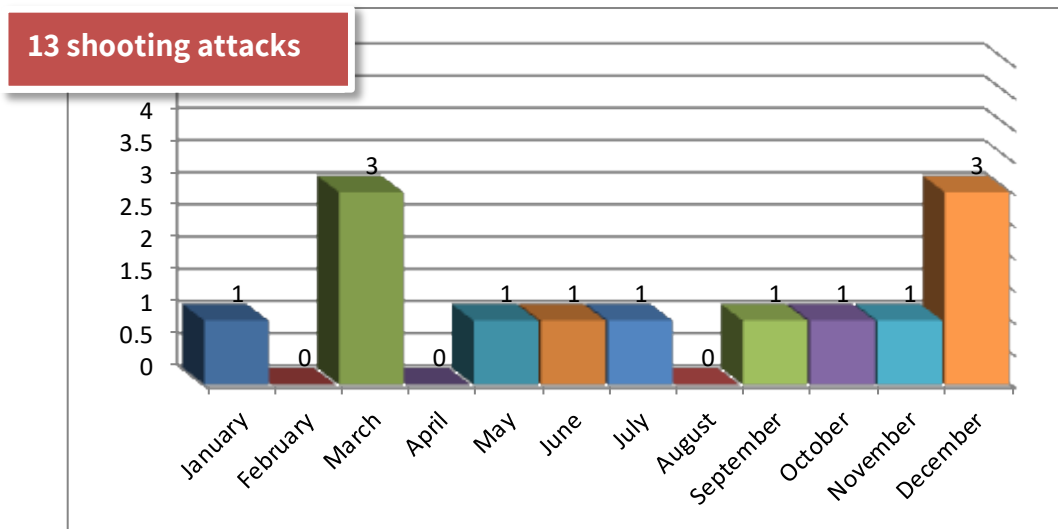
\* **Note: During the last three months of 2015 five shooting attacks were carried out as part of the wave of popular terrorism. In the previous months (between January and the beginning of October) six shooting attacks were carried out.**

<sup>6</sup> For further information, see the June 19, 2019 bulletin "Solving a series of shooting attacks in the Ramallah area revealed they were carried out by two senior figures in the PA's Commission for Detainees and Ex-Detainees. One was Zakaria Zubeidi, who was deeply involved in terrorism during and after the second intifada."

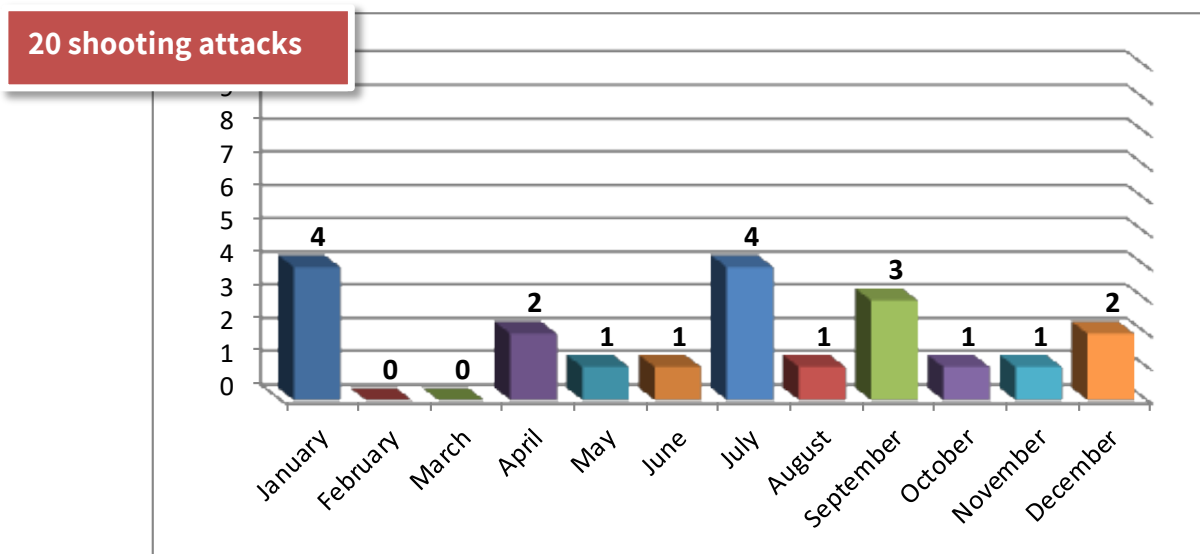
### Monthly distribution of shooting attacks, 2019



### Monthly distribution of shooting attacks, 2018



## Monthly distribution of shooting attacks, 2017



### Notable shooting attacks

► On **January 6, 2019**, an Israeli bus was attacked near the community of Beit El (north of Ramallah). The driver incurred minor wounds; the front windshield was damaged. The Israeli security forces conducted a search for the shooters (IDF spokesman, January 6, 2019). It was later discovered that the shots had been fired by two Palestinians with senior positions in the Authority for Prisoners and Released Prisoners. One of them was a lawyer (see below).



**The shooting attack targeting an Israeli bus near Beit El (Filastin al-A'an Twitter account, January 5, 2019).**

► On **March 11, 2019**, an Israeli vehicle was targeted in a shooting attack near the village of Iskaka (east of Ariel in Samaria). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged. The



Israeli security forces conducted searches in Iskaka and found a hand gun and other weapons (IDF spokesman, March 12, 2019).

► On the evening of **March 25, 2019** (during a round of escalation in the Gaza Strip) shots were fired from the village of Dura (north of Jerusalem) at the committee of Beit El. A child incurred minor injuries to his arm. The identification of the shooter is unknown.

Graphs page 22

### **Finding the perpetrators of the shooting attacks**

► On February 27, 2019, **the Israeli security forces detained Zakaria Zubeidi and Tareq Barghout, two highly-placed figures in the Authority for Prisoners and Released Prisoners (which in effect is under PA control). The two were involved in a series of shooting attacks targeting Israeli buses in the Ramallah region. Zakaria Zubeidi has an extensive record of terrorist attacks, beginning with the second intifada (2000-2005).**

► According to the Israel Security Agency's investigation, one of the shooting attacks was carried out on **November 7, 2018**, and another, similar attack on **January 5, 2019**. Another, carried out on **December 27, 2018**, failed. Tareq Barghout confessed to carrying out a shooting attack targeting an Israel Police Force patrol car in Jerusalem on November 19, 2016. To carry out the attacks **the two used Zakaria Zubeidi's vehicle, which he had received from the PA**, replacing its license plates with Israeli plates. They surveilled the area where they planned to attack and of their preferred targets, and collected intelligence. After their detention they surrendered an M16 assault rifle and magazines, which they had used in the shooting attacks (Israel Security Agency, May 20, 2019).

► **Notable was the fact that they chose to attack buses.** Besides disrupting movement along the roads in Judea and Samaria, **a shooting attack on a bus can result in the deaths of many passengers, which could cause the security situation in Judea and Samaria to deteriorate.**<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For further information, see the see the June 19, 2019 bulletin "Solving a series of shooting attacks in the Ramallah area revealed they were carried out by two senior figures in the PA's Commission for Detainees and Ex-Detainees. One was Zakaria Zubeidi, who was deeply involved in terrorism during and after the second intifada."



**Right: Zakaria Zubeidi when he commanded Fatah's military wing in Jenin (QudsN Twitter account, November 29, 2016). Left: Zakaria Zubeidi and east Jerusalem lawyer and partner in shooting attacks, Tareq Barghout (Facebook page of Bilal Awad, February 27, 2019).**

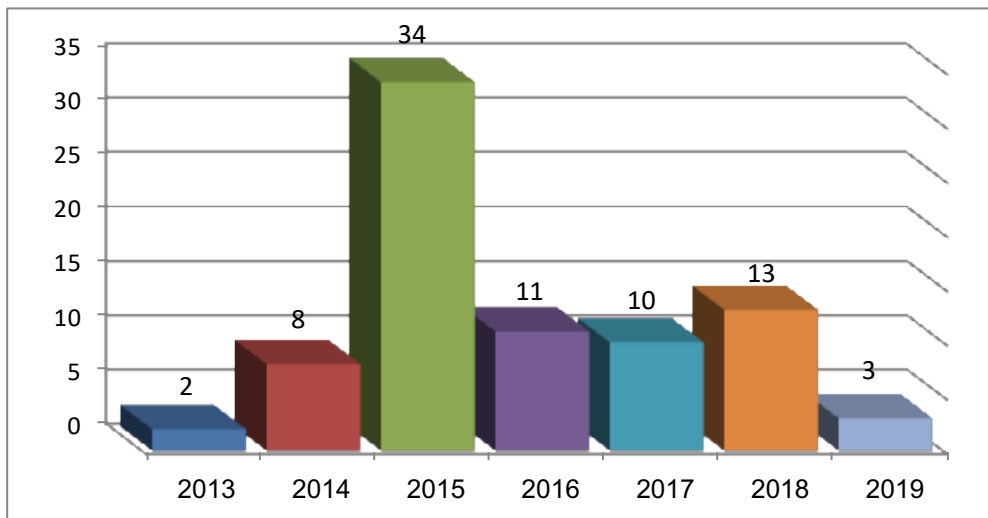
## Vehicular attacks

### Overview

► Vehicular attacks are usually carried out by lone terrorists. Most of the time they are spontaneous and do not require preparations or early organization, which makes them difficult to prevent. Knives and/or guns were found in some of the vehicles used for attacks, which could indicate that a combined attack had been planned.

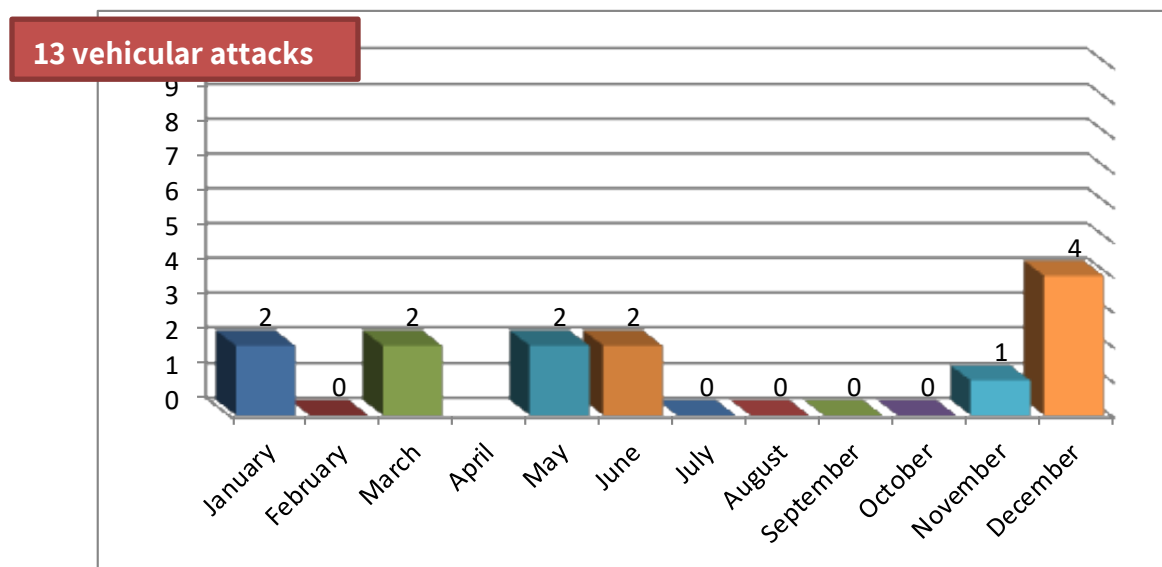
**In 2019 there was a significant decline in the number of vehicular attacks. Three were carried out**, two of them targeting IDF soldiers and one civilians waiting at a bus stop. Several people were injured in the three vehicular attacks. In recent years vehicular attacks were a common form of popular terrorism, although not to the same extent as stabbing and shooting attacks. Vehicular attacks have the potential to harm many people (as opposed to stabbing attacks, whose lethality is relatively lower).

### Annual distribution of vehicular attacks

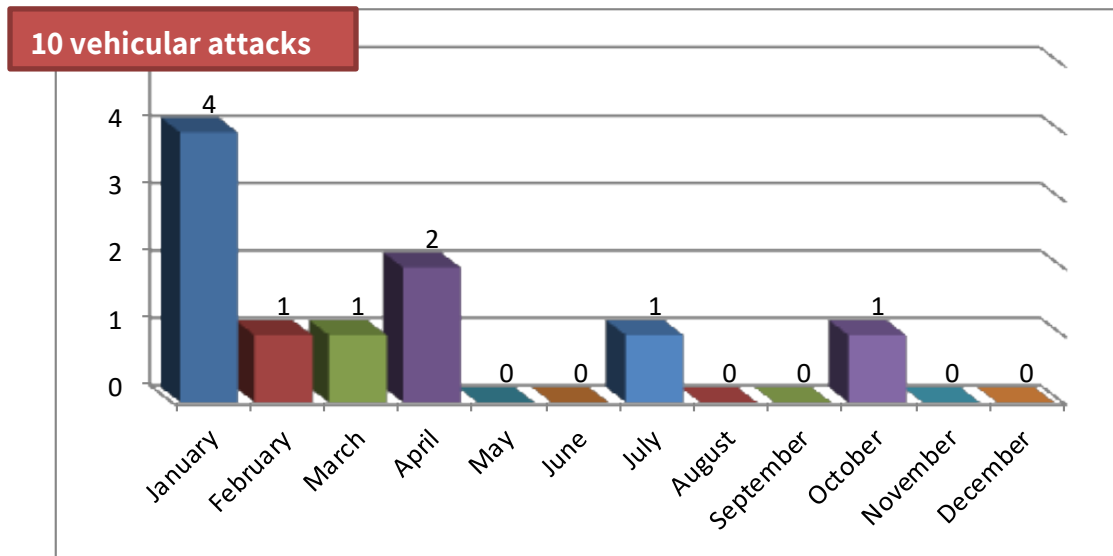


\*During the last three months of 2015, 26 vehicular attacks were carried out as part of the wave of Palestinian terrorism. Between January and October there were eight.

### Monthly distribution of vehicular attacks, 2018



## Monthly distribution of vehicular attacks, 2017



### Significant vehicular attacks

► On **March 4, 2019**, Israeli security forces carried out detentions in the village of Ni'ma (west of Ramallah). As they left the village they stopped at the side of the road because of a technical fault of one of the vehicles. While waiting for the vehicle to be repaired a car came speeding out of the village carrying three Palestinians and **tried to ram into them**. The IDF force shot at the car, killing two and slightly wounding one. The attack seriously wounded an IDF officer, and a Border Police fighter incurred minor injuries (IDF spokesman, March 4, 2019). According to the initial investigation, beforehand the vehicular attack the Palestinians in the car had thrown Molotov cocktails on route 443 (the Jerusalem-Modi'in road). Additional Molotov cocktails were found in the vehicle (IDF spokesman, March 4, 2019).



**Right: The scene of the vehicular attack near the village of Ni'ma (QudsN Facebook page, March 4, 2019). Left: The vehicle used by the Palestinians to carry out the vehicular attack (Ma'an, March 4, 2020).**

► On **July 7, 2019**, a Palestinian vehicle hit several IDF soldiers who were conducting security activity. The soldiers were standing at the side of the road between Hizma (near Pisgat Ze'ev,

north of Jerusalem) and Anatot. The Palestinian driving the car saw soldiers, rammed into them and drove away. A few kilometers from the scene of the attack he abandoned the vehicle, took a different vehicle and drove north. Five soldiers were injured in the attack, three of them seriously. Following an intelligence-operational activity of the Israeli security forces a Palestinian suspect was detained (IDF spokesman, July 7, 2019).



**The scene of the vehicular attack in the Hizma area north of Jerusalem (Royanews, July 7, 2019).**

► On **August 16, 2019** a Palestinian terrorist carried out a vehicular attack near the community of Elazar in the Gush Etzion area. He rapidly drove a stolen vehicle into a bus top where a number of civilians were standing, hitting two. After the attack the vehicle turned over at the side of the road. While trying to open the door the Palestinian was shot and killed by an Israeli policeman. The attack wounded two Israelis: a man was seriously wounded and his sister incurred moderate wounds (IDF spokesman, August 16, 2019).

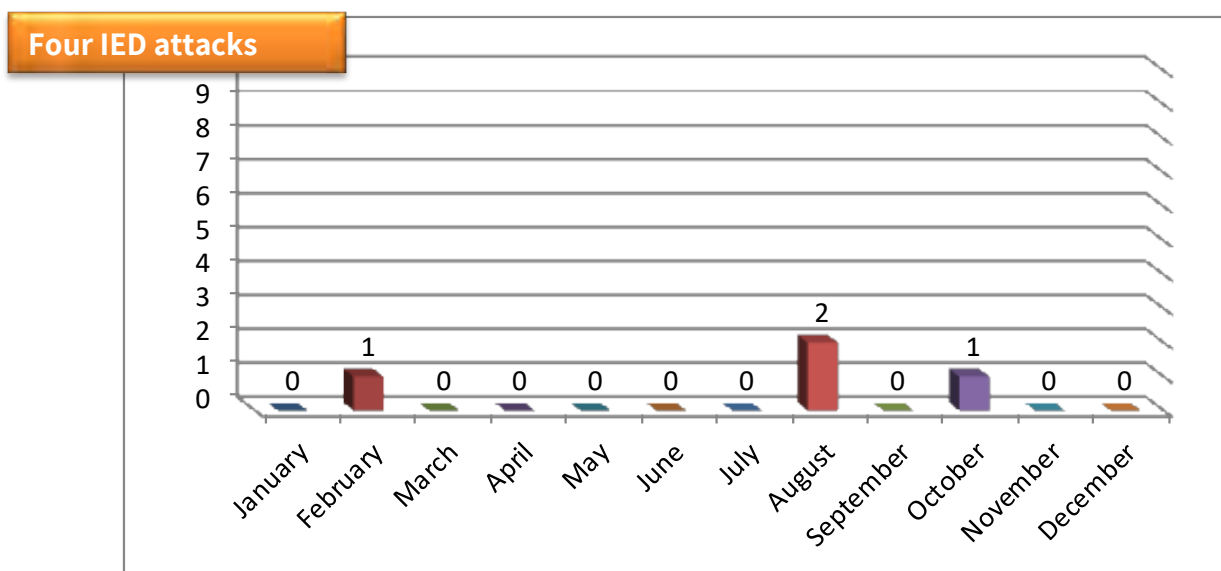


**Right: Security camera documentation of the vehicular attack immediately before it occurred (Israel Police Force Twitter account, August 16, 2019). Left: The car after the attack, upside down in a ditch at the side of the road (IDF Facebook page, August 16, 2019).**

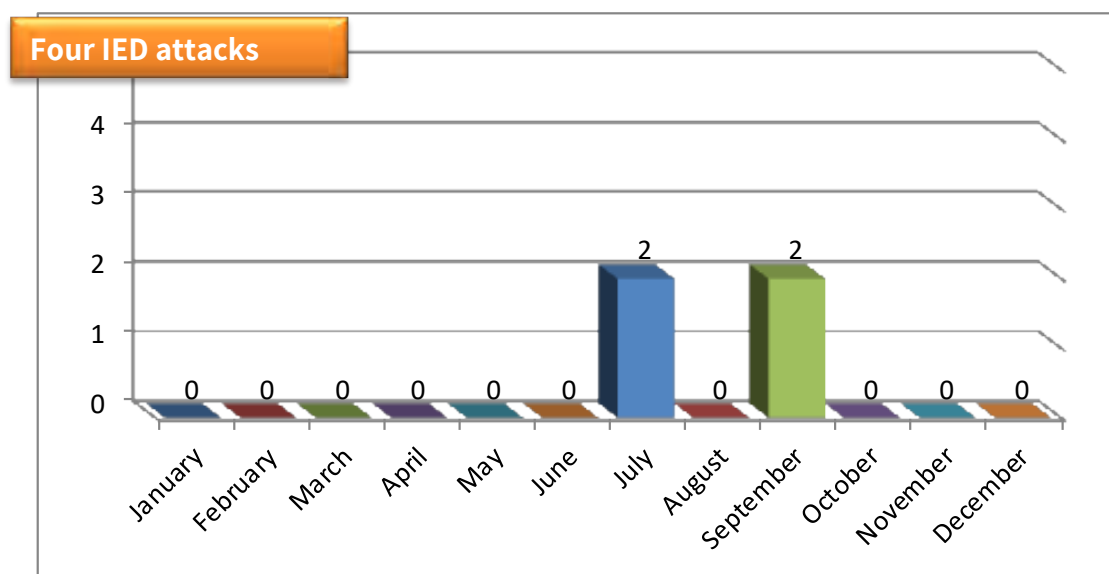
## Planting IEDs

**Most of the IEDs used to attack the Israeli security forces are detonated during counterterrorism and routine security activities.** During the past year there were at least four significant attacks. In the absence of a relevant data base of planting IEDs to attack Israeli security forces **the number may be far higher.** An exceptional attack carried out in 2019 was the IED detonated by remote control **to attack a family who had gone to swim** in the Danny Spring (Ayn Bubin near the community of Dolev, northwest of Ramallah). The girl was killed and her brother and father were wounded.

### Monthly distribution of IED attacks, 2019



### Monthly distribution of IED attacks, 2018



## Significant IED attacks

► On **February 4, 2019**, two Palestinians rode a motorcycle to the Jalameh crossing (near Jenin) and threw an IED at IDF soldiers. The soldiers responded with gunfire, killing one terrorist and critically wounding the other. No casualties to IDF forces were reported (IDF spokesman, February 4, 2019)

► On the morning of **August 23, 2019**, an IED was detonated to attack three people, a father, his son and daughter, who were visiting the spring of Ayn Bubin (the Danny Spring) near the community of Dolev (northwest of Ramallah). Rina Shnerb, 17, was killed, and her father and brother were seriously wounded. According to the IDF spokesman the IED was detonated by remote control on the path leading to the site (IDF spokesman, August 23, 2019).



**Right: The path leading to the spring where the IED was detonated. Left: Rina Shnerb, 17, killed in the attack (QudsN Facebook page, August 23, 2019).**

► Approximately two months after the attack, during a routine Israeli security force activity, **the squad of Palestinian terrorists who carried out the attack were apprehended**. They belonged to **a large network of PFLP operatives**. The squad planned other terrorist attacks, including shooting attacks and abductions. During interrogation the squad surrendered another IED

## Other attacks

### Combined stabbing and shooting attack

► On **March 17, 2019**, a combined attack was carried out at two sites in the Ariel region in **Samaria**. A Palestinian walked from the direction of the village of Salfit to a bus stop in Ariel, where two IDF soldiers secured the location. The Palestinian stabbed one of them to death, grabbed his weapon and continued walking north. He used the stolen weapons to shoot at three civilian vehicles driving on the road. The driver of the first car was shot and killed. The



terrorist stole one of the three vehicles and drove towards the Gitai Avisar Junction, shooting at vehicles as he drove. He slowed down at the junction, shot at a soldier and drove away. Near the village of Burqin he abandoned the stolen vehicle (IDF spokesman, March 19, 2019). Two IDF soldiers and a civilian were killed in the attack, and a soldier was critically wounded.



**Right: The scene of the stabbing attack. Left: Another scene from the combined attack near Ariel (Palinfo Twitter account, March 17, 2019).**

### **Attack at the Allenby Crossing**

► On August 21, 2019, a resident of Nablus, 35 years old, returned from Jordan via the Allenby Crossing. When he reached the terminal **he attacked an IDF soldier with the cable of a cellphone charger and tried to strangle him.** The soldier managed to get away. The team securing the terminal detained the Palestinian. According to the initial investigation, the Palestinian had gone to the terminal to attack and Israeli (IDF spokesman, spokesman for the Crossings Authority, August 21, 2019).

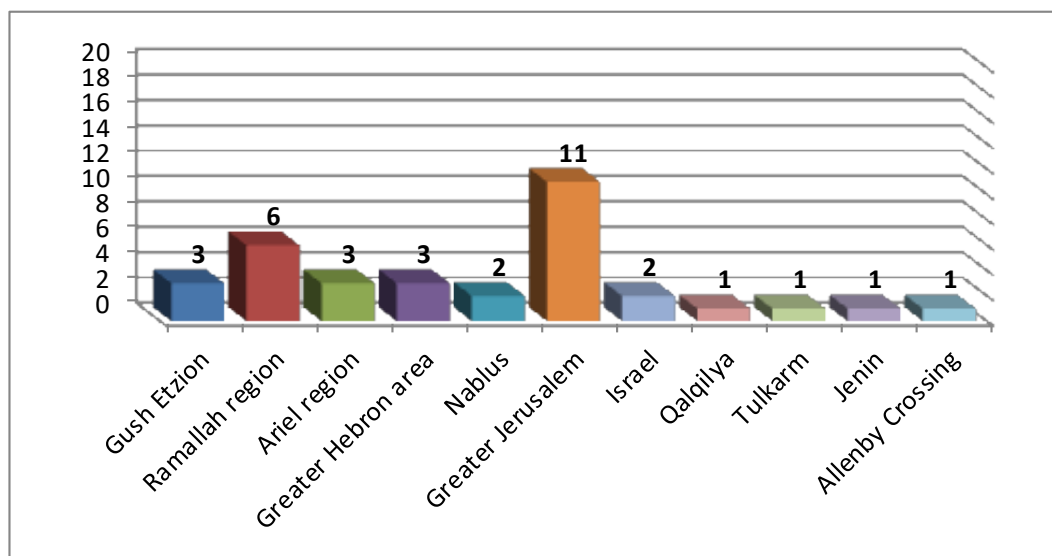


## Geographical Distribution of the Terrorist Attacks

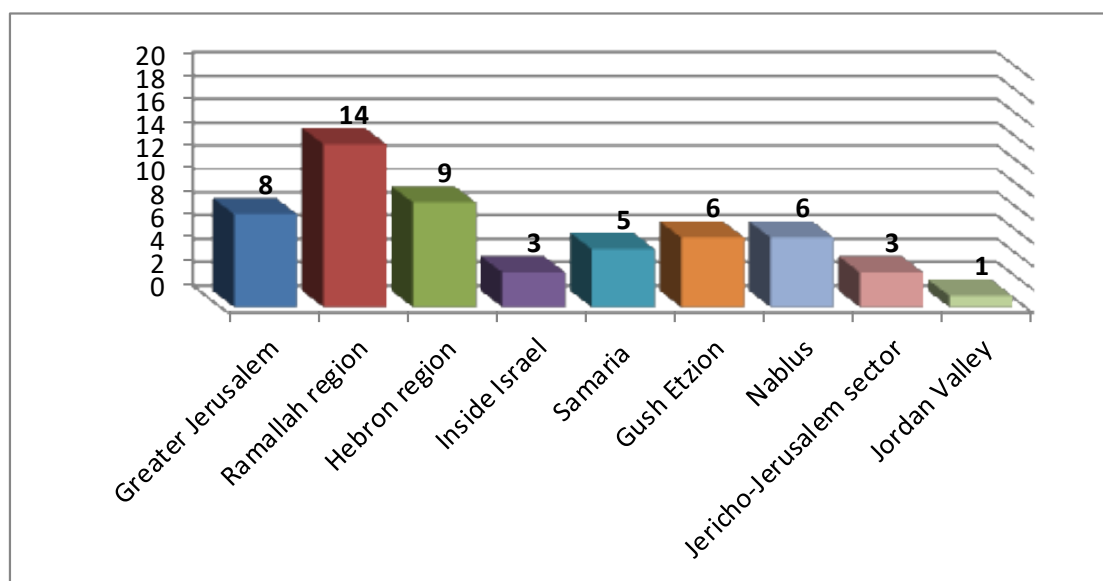
### Geographical distribution of the attacks

**Most of the terrorist attacks in 2019 were carried out in Greater Jerusalem (11 attacks),** as opposed to 2018, when most of them were carried out **in the Ramallah region**. In the Ramallah region **six terrorist attacks** were carried out in 2019 (14 in 2018). **In the Hebron region** there was a decline in the number of attacks carried out (three), although during the year many stabbing attacks were prevented at the Hebron roadblocks, especially near the Cave of the Patriarchs.

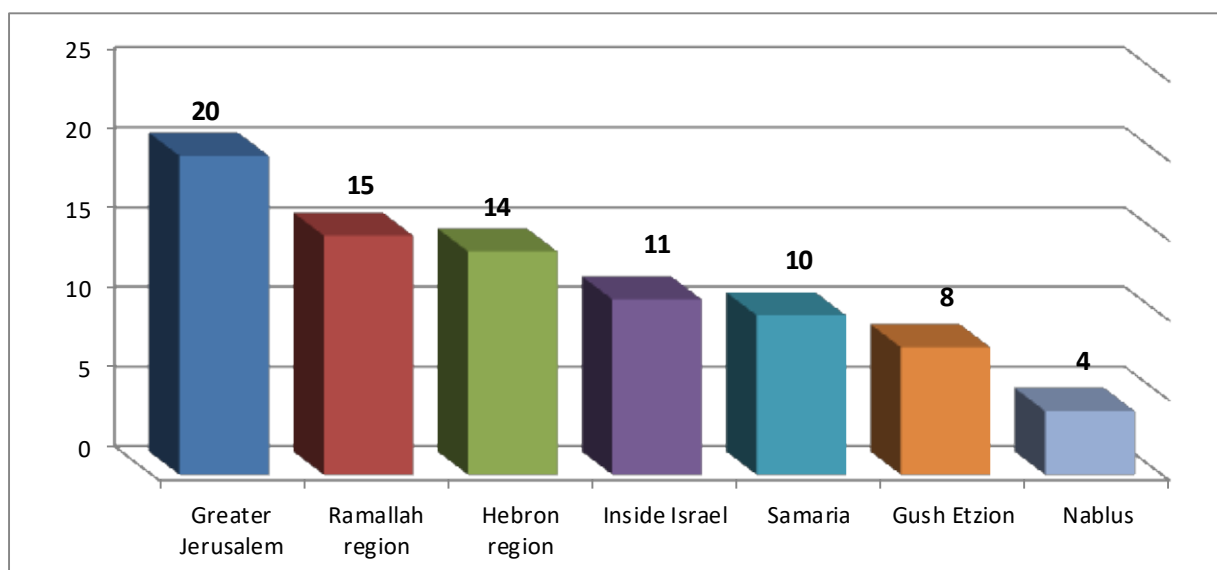
#### Focal points of terrorist attacks, 2019



#### Focal points of terrorist attacks, 2018



### Focal points of terrorist attacks, 2017



### Focal points of terrorist attacks, 2019

► **Greater Jerusalem:** In 2019 Greater Jerusalem once again became the preferred arena for popular terrorism (as it had been in 2017). In 2019 **11 terrorist attacks were carried out in Greater Jerusalem, about a third of the total**. Ten were carried out in and around **east Jerusalem**. One was carried out in west Jerusalem (Ein Yael), as opposed to 2018 when eight terrorist attacks were carried out in Greater Jerusalem, and 20 in 2017.

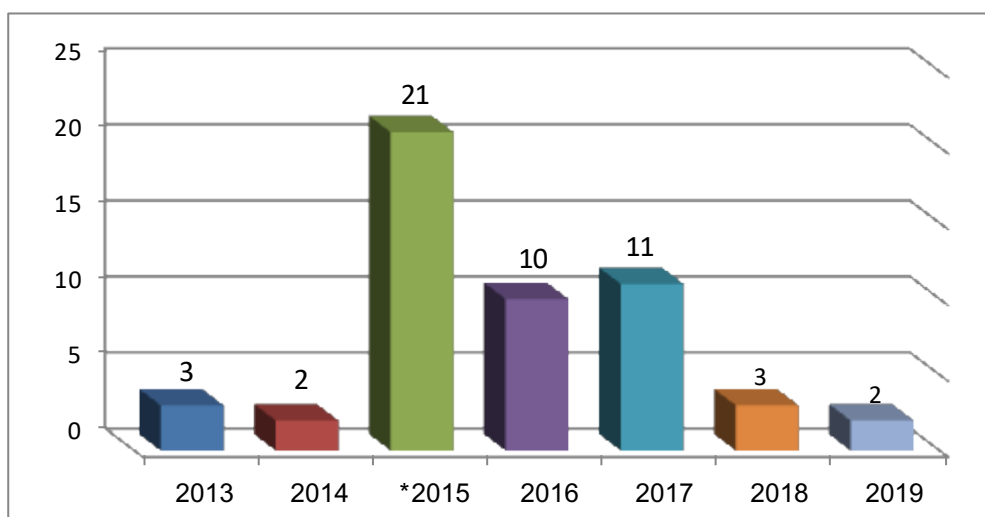
► **Hebron and the surrounding area:** In the past the region was mainly a focal point for clashes between the Palestinian population on the one hand and the Israeli security forces and settlers on the other. However, **in 2019 there was a significant decline in the number of attacks**. Three attacks were carried out, compared with nine in 2018 and 14 in 2017. **In all probability the decline was the result of the effective counterterrorism activities of the Israeli security forces, since many attacks were prevented, most of them stabbing attacks.**

► **The greater Ramallah region:** In 2018 the greater Ramallah region was a focal point for lethal shooting attacks. However, in 2019 there was a decline in the number of attacks and the degree of their lethality. In 2019 six shooting attacks were carried out, compared with 14 in 2018 and 15 in 2017.

## Terrorist attacks inside Israeli territory<sup>8</sup>

► **In 2019 the decline in the number of attacks carried out inside Israel continued.** One of the attacks was in the Modi'in region near Judea and Samaria, and the other was in an Israeli jail (prisoners attacked guards in the Ktsiot jail). That was in comparison with three attacks in 2018, 11 in 2017, ten in 2016 and 21 in 2015.

### Annual distribution of terrorist attacks inside Israel



**\*Note: Between October and December 2015, the beginning of the wave of popular terrorism, 20 terrorist attacks were carried out inside Israel. Between January and the beginning of October 2015 only one attack was carried out inside Israeli territory.**

### ► Terrorist attacks inside Israel were the following:

- ◆ On **March 24, 2019**, during the transfer of Hamas security prisoners from one wing of the Ktsiot prison to another, **two prisoners attacked Israeli Prison Service guards with shanks**, wounding one in the neck and the other in the arm. Eleven prisoners were injured while the guards overcame the attackers, three of them seriously. The following day there was an attempted stabbing attack by a prisoner.
- ◆ On **September 25, 2019**, a 13-year-old Palestinian stabbed a young Israeli woman standing at a bus stop at the Maccabim Junction in Modi'in. The attacker tried to flee but was caught a few hundred yards from the site by Border Police fighters. The young woman was taken to a hospital in serious condition (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, September 25, 2019). A Border Police fighter was injured while the attacker was being overcome. The attacker was taken by the Israeli security forces for interrogation (Border Police Facebook page, September 25, 2020).

<sup>8</sup> "Inside Israel:" all Israeli territory with the exception of Greater Jerusalem.



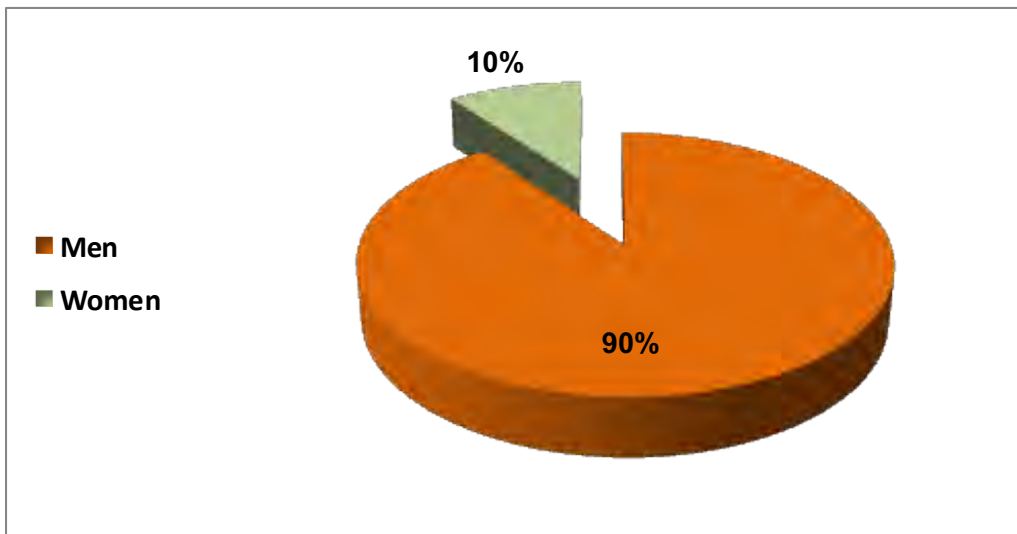
**Right: The scene of the stabbing attack at the bus stop at the Maccabim Junction near Modi'in (Ultra Palestine website, September 25, 2019). Left: The knife used by the stabber (Israel Police Force, September 25, 2019).**

► **In addition, on July 22, 2019, the police prevented a Jordanian from carrying out a stabbing attack in the central Israeli city of Hadera.** According to the indictment, while on a visit to the PA territories he decided to carry out an attack. He took a knife, infiltrated into Israel through a hole in the border security fence and took a bus to Hadera to **find a soldier he could stab.** Upon reaching Hadera he roused the suspicion of a policeman who discovered that the Jordanian was in Israel illegally. He struggled with the policeman, tried to stab him, and fled. During the attempt to detain him he approached the policemen with the knife in one hand and a rock in the other, shouting "*Allahu akbar.*" He was shot and wounded in the leg. During interrogation he confessed he had planned to stab a soldier (Ma'ariv, News 13, August 19, 2019).

## Profile of Terrorist Attackers

**The ITIC has only basic information about approximately 40 Palestinian terrorists who carried out attacks in 2019.** The identity of five attackers is unknown to the ITIC (there were terrorists about whom no information was released, or those who successfully fled the and have not yet been caught). **As in previous years, most of them (36) were men, and only four were women. Regarding women, many were caught before they managed to carry out the attacks they had planned** (especially stabbing attacks using knives, which were found in the possession at various check points).

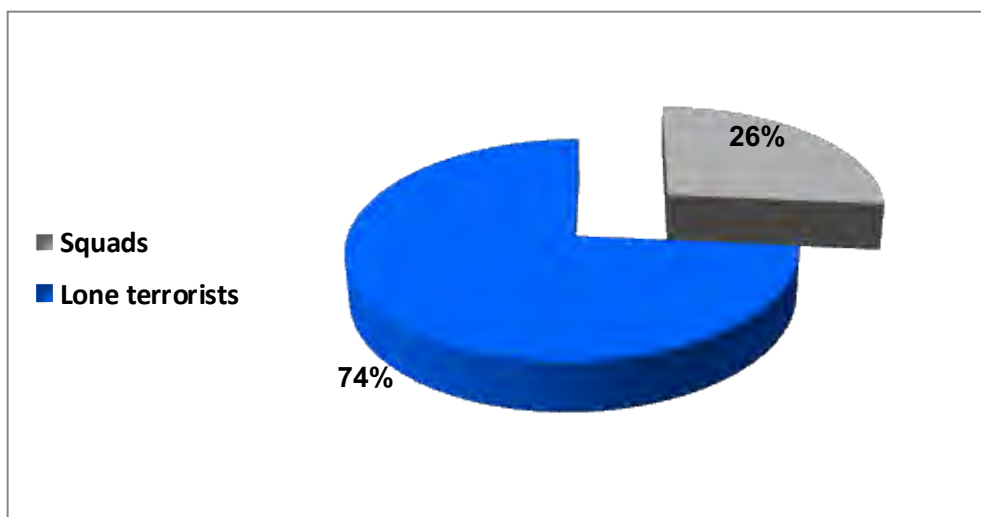
### Distribution of terrorist attackers by gender



► **Other characteristics of terrorist attackers:**

◆ **Most of the attacks (25) were carried out by lone attackers** who used cold, easily-acquired weapons (knives or other sharp instruments, or vehicles). Nine of the attacks were carried out by squads of two or more terrorists. Most of the terrorists did not belong to organizations or networks and had no previous record of involvement in terrorist attacks.

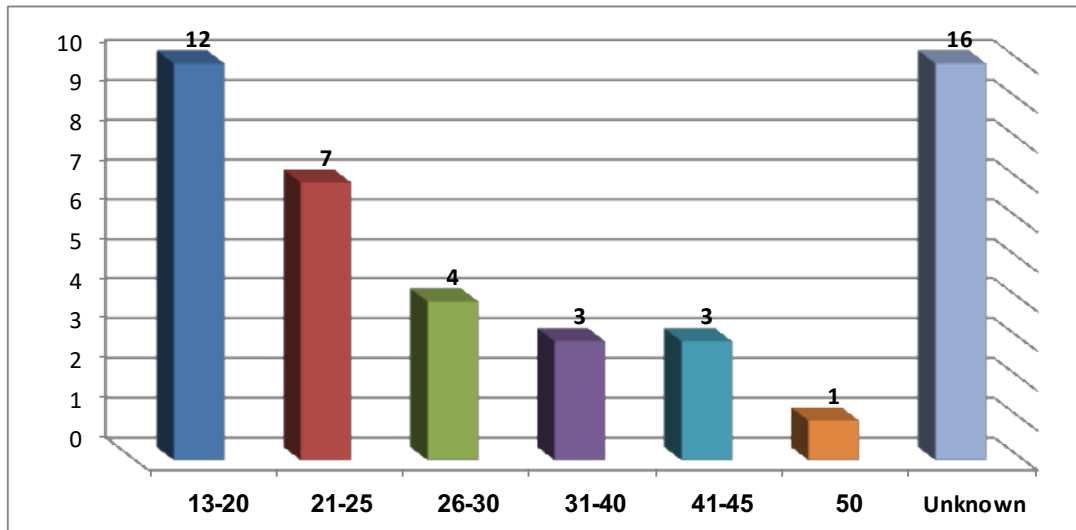
### Distribution of terrorist attackers by group, 2019



◆ **Motivation for terrorist attacks:** This past year as well most of the terrorists had nationalist and/or personal motives. Almost none had religious motives.

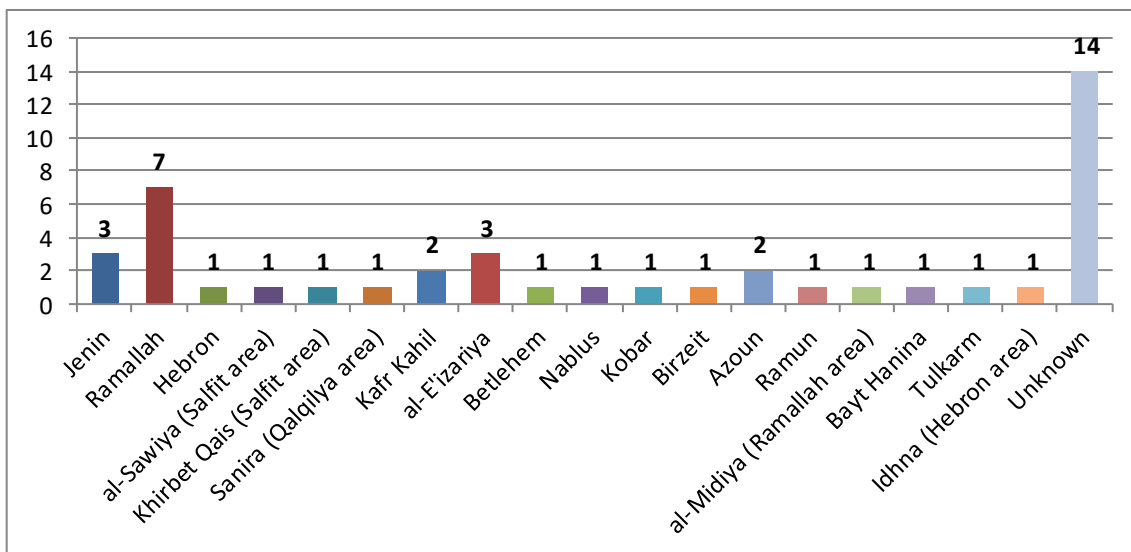
◆ **Age:** Notable this past year was their **relatively young**. **Twelve of them were under the age of 20** (six in 2018). Also notable was the age of **those between 30 and 36** (seven in 2019, three in 2018).

### Distribution of terrorist attackers by age, 2019



◆ **Origin of the terrorists:** Many of the terrorists (seven) came from the **Ramallah region**. As in previous years, the attacks were carried out **near where the terrorists lived**, so that there was a certain overlap of the location of the attack and the origin of the terrorist. Even when the terrorists escaped from the scene of the attack, they usually hid near where they lived, where they received support from local residents until they were caught.

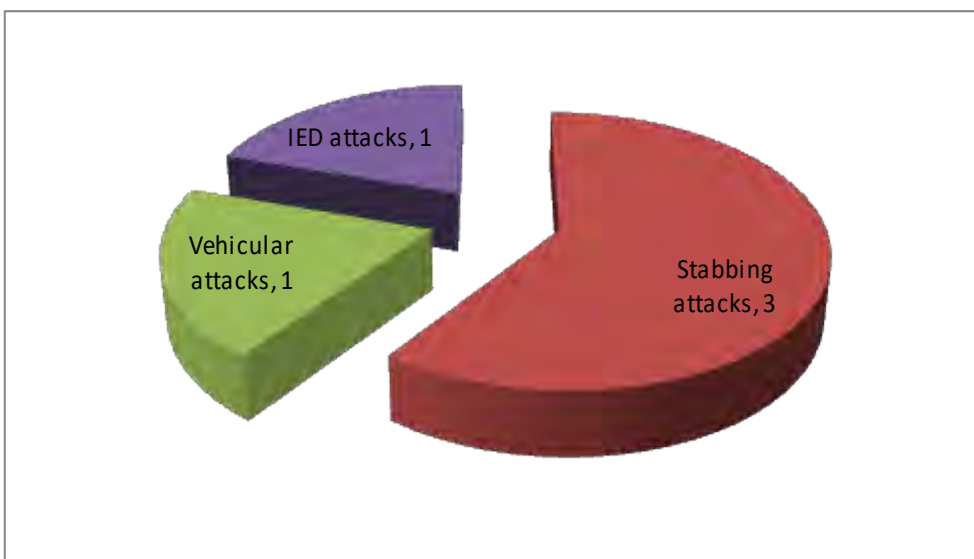
### Residence of terrorist attackers



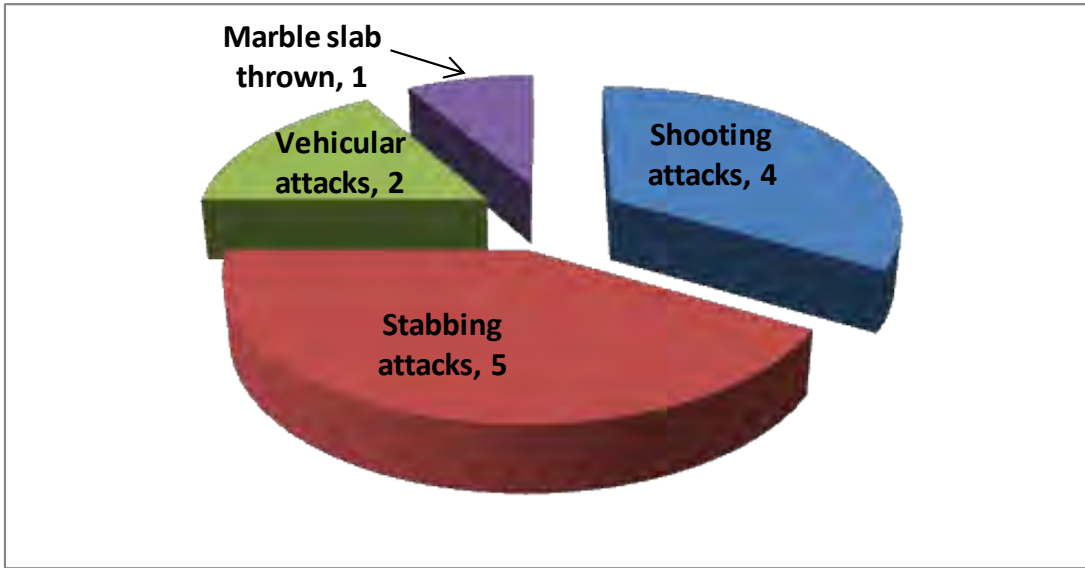
## Lethality of Popular Terrorism

**In 2019 there was a decline in the lethality of terrorist attacks.** During the year **five people were killed**, in comparison with 12 in 2018 and 18 in 2018. Among the fatalities were **two girls, an IDF soldier killed in the course of duty, an IDF soldier killed while not on duty and an elderly civilian man.** **As in previous years, most of the fatalities were the result of stabbing attacks (three of the five).** One man was killed in a vehicular attack and a girl in an IED attack.

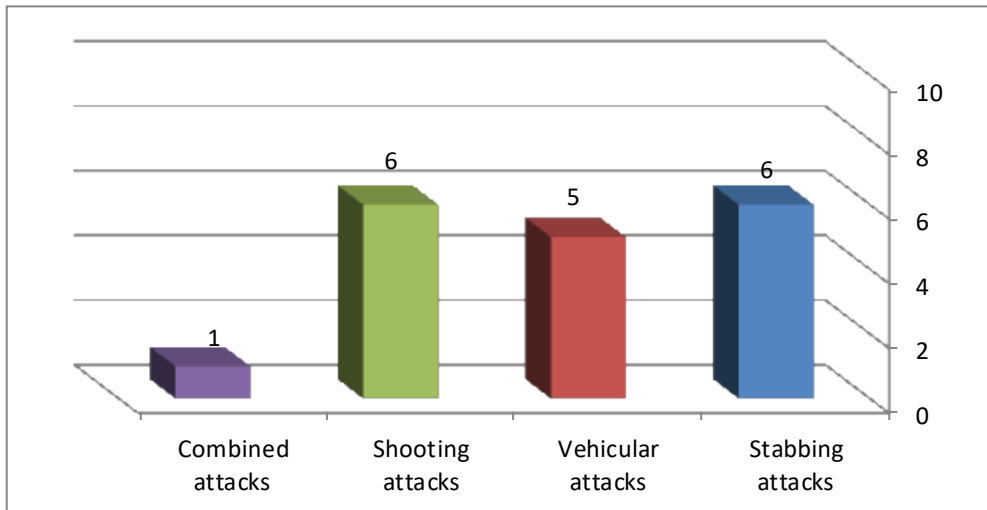
### Distribution of fatalities according to types of attacks, 2019



### Distribution of fatalities according to types of attacks, 2018



### Distribution of fatalities according to types of attacks, 2017





# Preventing Terrorist Attacks and Exposing Terrorist Networks

## Overview

**The relative quiet in Judea and Samaria in 2019 was to a certain extent misleading.** According to data from the Israel Security Agency, **in 2019 more than 450 significant terrorist attacks were prevented** (Yedioth Ahronot, November 8, 2019). The 34 attacks that were effectively carried out were only **a small part of the terrorist activity planned for Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem.** Apparently the combination of the preventive activities of the Israel Security Agency, the routine counterterrorism activities of the Israeli security forces, and the cooperation of the PA's security services have so far **prevented popular terrorism in Judea and Samaria from becoming established, military-type terrorism. That significantly lowered the level of popular terrorism and led to the exposure of established or semi-established terrorist networks.**

► In November 2019 Nadav Argaman, head of the Israel Security Agency, gave a lecture where he said that **during the previous year the Israel Security Agency had prevented more than 450 significant terrorist attacks.** He noted advanced technology used by the Israeli security which played a central role in preventing the attacks (Yedioth Ahronot, November 8, 2019). He said that among the attacks prevented were show-case attacks, which if they had succeeded could have caused many casualties. **The number of terrorist attacks prevented in 2019 was similar to the number in 2018 (480).** In addition, in 2018 about 500 Palestinians who were planning lone wolf terrorist attacks were detained (Ynet, November 6, 2018).

► **In ITIC assessment, the hundreds of terrorist attacks prevented can be divided into three main categories:**

- ◆ **Attacks that were prevented by the Israeli security forces during routine activities, mainly at the roadblocks and friction points with the Palestinian population:** Generally speaking, during their activities, the attacks of individual Palestinian terrorists were prevented during routine security checks when Palestinians were found to be in possession of knives or other weapons, generally sharp objects for carrying out stabbing attacks.



Right: Knife found in the possession of a Palestinian at an examination point near the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, February 3, 2019). Left: Knives found in the possession of two Palestinians at the Qalandia Crossing (Israel Police Force, February 10, 2019).



Right: IEDs manufactured locally and found in the possession of four Palestinians who were detained near Nablus (QudsN Facebook page, March 4, 2019). Left: Knife found in the possession of a Palestinian at the entrance to the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron (Israel Police Force, May 31, 2019).



Right: The knife found in the purse of a Palestinian woman near a military post in the Jewish community in Hebron (IDF spokesman, July 15, 2019). Left: The box cutter found in the possession of a Palestinian at the entrance to the Cave of the Patriarchs (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, September 6, 2019).

◆ **Attacks prevented by counterterrorism and preventive activities initiated by the Israeli security forces and carried out routinely on the ground:** In some instances large quantities of standard and improvised weapons were found, as were workshops and lathes used in the manufacture of weapons. Large sums of money for funding terrorist activities were also confiscated.



**Right: A lathe confiscated by the Israeli security forces in the village of Anata (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, April 1, 2019). Left: A lathe used in the manufacture of weapons seized in the village of Dhahariya, south of Hebron (IDF spokesman, December 5, 2019)**

◆ **Attacks prevented and terrorist networks exposed through intelligence activities, mainly by the Israel Security Agency:** In some instances, behind the attacks were established terrorist organizations which had provided knowhow, direction and funding. Some of the counterterrorism activities were also based on intelligence information.

## Exposing established and semi-established terrorist squads

### Overview

**In 2019 several terrorist attacks were prevented when a number of established and semi-established terrorist networks were exposed.** Behind most of their recruitment and direction were **terrorist operatives from Hamas' military wing in the Gaza Strip and/or Hamas operatives operating from abroad (mainly Turkey).** In many instances **terrorist operatives released from Israeli jails were involved in recruitment and direction, including terrorists released in Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal.** Most of the attacks prevented through the exposure of networks were planned as **showcase attacks, not as part of popular terrorism, and thus many casualties were prevented.** Notable was the exposure of **a large PFLP network,** two of whose operatives managed to carry out the IED attack that killed a 17-year-old Israeli girl (Ayn Bubin, August 2019).

### Examples of the exposure of networks, 2019

#### Hamas' recruiting of Judea and Samaria residents to carry out terrorist attacks

► In February 2019 the Israel Security Agency exposed attempts made by **a covert unit composed of Hamas terrorist operatives in the Gaza Strip to recruit residents of Judea and Samaria and a resident of east Jerusalem with an Israeli ID card for terrorist activity against Israel.** According to the Israel Security Agency, in recent years dozens of young

Palestinians from Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem were detained, including several women, who had been recruited by the covert unit and received instructions **to carry out lethal attacks in Judea and Samaria**.

► According to the Israel Security Agency, **the first contact between residents of Judea and Samaria and Hamas operatives in the Gaza Strip was made through Facebook**. Some of the Hamas operatives in the Gaza Strip who recruited the squad were journalists/media personnel. For recruitment purposes **Hamas used its al-Aqsa TV channel** to send messages from the Gaza Strip to the recruits in Judea and Samaria (Israel Security Agency, February 13, 2019).

### Exposing terrorist squads planning to carry out showcase attacks

► In March 2019 the Israeli security forces exposed **a terrorist network in Judea and Samaria which had been recruited by senior Hamas operatives in the Gaza Strip**. The network operatives, who maintained contact with their handlers in the Gaza Strip **through the Internet, planned to carry out a mass-casualty attack close to the date of Israel's general elections** (April 9). One of the recruits, **who agreed to be a suicide bomber**, was instructed to purchase a vehicle and rent a storage space where the vehicle could be prepared as a car bomb. He was also instructed to find a site for the attack in the area of Ma'aleh Adumim, where there would be a concentration of buses, Israeli civilians and soldiers. As part of his preparations he was instructed to make a video of his "living will" as an operative of Hamas' military wing (Israel Security Agency, April 28, 2019).

### Preventing Hamas from establishing terrorist networks in Judea and Samaria

► In July 2019, following a series of Israeli security force detentions, **Hamas was prevented from establishing a terrorist networks in Judea and Samaria whose objective would be to carry out terrorist attacks**. One of the operatives was recruited in the Gaza Strip by an operative of Hamas' military wing. He then underwent intensive military training in preparation **for setting up a laboratory to manufacture explosives and IEDs, and to instruct operatives in Judea and Samaria**. Musab Hashalmoun, a Hamas terrorist operative who had been expelled to the Gaza Strip in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal, was involved in training him. The operative who had been recruited in the Gaza Strip was supposed to enter Israel on **the pretense of going to Jordan for medical treatment**.



**Fadi Abu al-Sabah, recruited to Hamas' military wing, who entered Israel by exploiting permission to pass through Israel to Jordan for medical treatment (Israel Security Agency, July 3, 2019).**

### **Preventing a mass-killing attack**

► In August 2019 the Israeli security forces prevented **a mass-killing attack planned for Jerusalem**. It was prevented following the exposure of a number of terrorist squads in Judea and Samaria which had been **recruited and were directed by operatives of Hamas' military wing in the Gaza Strip**. One of the recruits was **a student at the Technical Institute in Hebron**. He was detained in his home and surrendered an IED which had been prepared for the attack. His interrogation revealed that he had been recruited by Hamas operatives in the Gaza Strip **via the Internet**, and had been given detailed instructions for purchasing the materials necessary for making explosives and IEDs (Israel Security Agency, August 6, 2019).

### **Exposing a large Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) network**

► In December 2019, following the investigation of the IED attack at Ayn Bubin, **the Israeli security forces exposed a large network of PFLP operatives, two of whom had carried out the attack**. The network was headed by experienced senior PFLP operatives, most of whom had been detained or imprisoned in Israel in the past. About 50 terrorist operatives were detained, among them senior operatives. **Large quantities of weapons were seized, as well as fertilizer used in the preparation of explosives**. The interrogation of the network operatives revealed that they had also carried out shooting attacks and were planning significant attacks in the near future (Israel Security Agency, December 18, 2019).

## Demonstrations and Riots in Judea and Samaria

### Overview

In addition to popular terrorism attacks, **this past year demonstrations, protest events, riots and clashes with the Israeli security forces continued in Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem.** In most instances clashes with the Israeli security forces were **of relatively low intensity compared with previous years.** Most of the clashes were the result of friction accompanying counterterrorism security activities. Several Palestinians were killed in riots.

- ▶ In ITIC assessment the decline in the intensity of the riots was caused by **a number of restraining factors.** The most important was the **Israeli security forces' precise policy for opening fire.** Second was the PA's interest in lowering the intensity of the demonstrations and riots **to keep the violence from being exploited by Hamas and other hostile organizations, turning it against the PA.** Third was **the Palestinian public,** which still remembered the high price it paid in the second intifada, and which knew that **escalation was liable to claim many victims, damage the Palestinian economy, lead to unemployment and disrupt daily life.**
- ▶ Thus, during the year the readiness of the Palestinian public to participate in protest events **continued to be low.** The weekly riots at the traditional locations (Bila'in and Ni'llin) were carried out with a relatively low profile. In addition ad hoc events such as "days of rage," which were encouraged by Fatah and the PA, **were sparsely attended** and only hundreds and sometimes only dozens of Palestinians participated.
- ▶ 2019 the return march events and the rounds of escalation in the Gaza Strip did not succeed in bringing the Palestinian public in Judea and Samaria out into the streets to show solidarity. **The Temple Mount,** which is a focal point of friction between Muslims and Jews, was relatively quiet, with the exception of a number of local events which were contained by the Israeli security forces, and did not spin out of control. In addition, the strikes of the Palestinian terrorists imprisoned in Israeli jails, which in the past had been widely dealt with by the terrorist leadership in the Gaza Strip and senior PA figures, did not cause the Palestinian public to demonstrate or protest.



► **There were three events on the Temple Mount which raised tension, although they were also contained:**

◆ In **February 2019** the *waqf* tried to reopen a small area called Bab al-Rahma on the eastern side of the Temple Mount (the inner side of the Golden Gate) which had been closed in recent years (because the outlawed Islamic Movement had held activities there). After the *waqf* held a prayer there, violating a court order closing the area, the Israel Police Force locked the entrance to the area, causing Palestinians to riot against Israeli security forces on the Temple Mount.



**Palestinians clash with Israeli security forces on the Temple Mount (Ma'an, February 18, 2019).**

◆ On **June 2, 2019**, the day Israel marks Jerusalem Day, Israelis are allowed to visit the Temple Mount. In response hundreds of Palestinians on the Temple Mount threw chairs and other objects at the Israeli security forces stationed at the site. The rioters were pushed back towards al-Aqsa mosque and barricaded themselves inside. Israel police forces broke into the mosque, dispersed the rioters and carried out detentions. Once control was restored the visit of the Israelis was renewed (Israel Police Force, June 2, 2019). Despite the riots in the morning, Israel allowed Muslims to enter the Temple Mount compound to hold the evening prayer (Palinfo Twitter account, June 3, 2019).



**Right: The scene of the clash on the Temple Mount (Israel Police Force, June 2, 2019). Left: The evening prayer in the Temple Mount compound after clashes during the morning (Palinfo Twitter account, June 3, 2019).**

◆ On **August 11, 2019**, Jews marked the Tisha B'Av fast and the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha began. That created a situation in which both Jews and Muslims planned to visit the Temple Mount. Reinforced police units were deployed in preparation for expected clashes. The Muslim *waqf* prepared itself to prevent Jews from entering the Temple Mount. By early morning tens of thousands of Muslims had gathered in the area of the Mughrabi Gate and threw stones, chairs and other objects at the police. In response al-Aqsa mosque was closed and Jews were not allowed to enter the Temple Mount at the time that had been set for them. Later, when the situation had calmed, the police allowed Jews to enter. Following their decision, the riots were renewed (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, August 11, 2019).



**Riots on the Temple Mount  
(QudsN Facebook page, August 11, 2019).**



## Throwing stones and Molotov cocktails

**In 2019 Palestinians continued throwing stones, rocks and Molotov cocktails at Israeli vehicles on the roads in Judea and Samaria and even in the neighborhoods of east Jerusalem.** The ITIC does not have exact statistics, but estimates that **there are dozens if not hundreds of such attacks every month.** Despite their numbers, they are not defined as "significant attacks" although **they have the potential for killing and wounding civilians and members of the Israeli security forces.** In some instances passengers were wounded (most of them, fortunately, incurred only minor injuries from flying glass) and many vehicles were damaged. **Stones, rocks and Molotov cocktails thrown at vehicles disrupt the everyday lives of the residents of Judea and Samaria and make it difficult for the Israeli security forces to carry out routine security activities.**

► **The main targets** for stones and Molotov cocktails:

- ◆ **Israeli security forces** engaged in security activities in the cities, towns and villages in Judea and Samaria and in east Jerusalem neighborhoods;
- ◆ **Israeli security force posts and roadblocks in Judea and Samaria;**
- ◆ **Israeli private and public transportation, including emergency vehicles such as ambulances and fire trucks,** driving on the roads in Judea and Samaria;
- ◆ **Israeli communities** in Judea and Samaria and the neighborhoods of east Jerusalem where Jews live

► During 2019 Israeli security forces detained Palestinians who threw stones and Molotov cocktails. An exceptional event occurred on January 25, 2019, when an IDF force shot at three Palestinians throwing Molotov cocktails at Israel vehicles near the village of Silwad, east of Ramallah. One of the Palestinians was shot and killed and another was wounded (IDF spokesman, January 25, 2019).



**Palestinians throw stones at the Israeli security forces during the weekly riot at the village of Qadoum (Wafa, July 26, 2019).**



**Right: Damage caused by a stone thrown at a bus near Tekoa. The driver was injured (QudsN Facebook page, March 10, 2019). Left: An Israeli vehicle damaged by stones thrown near Tekoa (Tekoa Security, April 2, 2019).**



**Israeli vehicle damaged by a hammer thrown near Tekoa (QudsN Facebook page, April 10, 2019).**



**Right: Israeli bus damaged by stones thrown near the village of Hizma, northeast of Jerusalem (Palinfo Twitter account, April 28, 2019). Left: Israeli vehicle damaged by stones near the village of Azoun (east of Qalqilya). Three children incurred minor injuries (IDF spokesman, June 27, 2019).**



**Right: Rock thrown at an Israeli civilian vehicle near Azoun. Left: The damage to the vehicle's front windshield (News from the Field, September 20, 2019).**

## Terrorism and Violence from the Gaza Strip

### Overview

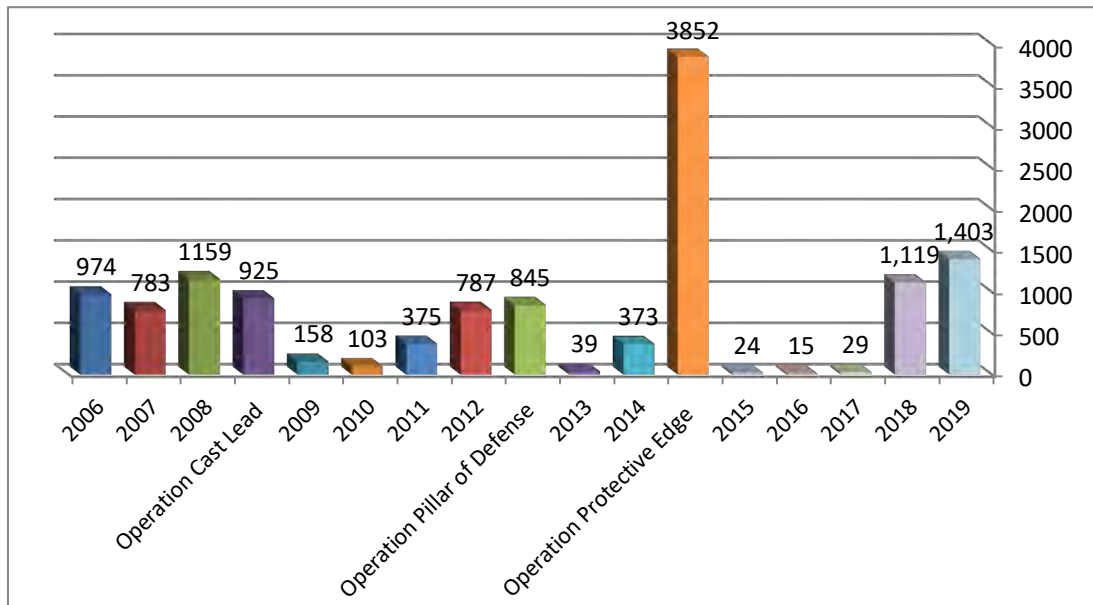
**In 2019 Hamas continued its policy of “controlled violence” towards Israel.** It started on March 30, 2018, with the beginning of the return marches, after about three and a half years of relative **calm** after Operation Protective Edge. As part of its new policy, **Hamas began exerting pressure on Israel to increase awareness to the [so-called] “right of return”** and at the same time **promote achievements for the Gaza Strip:** increasing economic aid, opening the crossings, expanding the fishing zone, alleviating the “siege,” and more. **In spite of the potential for deterioration created by its new policy, Hamas and Israel managed to contain deterioration of the security situation during 2019 and avoid a large-scale military confrontation, which neither was interested in.**

► The security deterioration in the Gaza Strip had **three main aspects:**

- ◆ **Rocket fire:** During the past year **there were three substantial rounds of escalation, two initiated by Hamas and the third by the PIJ.** Between the rounds of

escalation **sporadic rocket fire continued**. During 2019, **1,403 rockets** and mortar shells were fired into Israeli territory, compared with 1,119 rockets and mortar shells in 2018. **In 2019 the highest number rocket and mortar shells fired in the last decade was recorded**, with the exception of rocket fire during Operation Protective Edge.<sup>9</sup>

### Rocket fire at Israel, 2006-2019



◆ **The return marches:** During 2019, **weekly riots were held near the border throughout the year on Fridays**. In the first half of 2019 the return marches were accompanied by **violent demonstrations also on other days of the week, mini-flotillas, activity of the Night Harassment Units, and incendiary and IED balloon terrorism**. Although the marches and their accompanying events were represented as non-violent “popular activity,” in practice, **they were accompanied by violence such as throwing IEDs, Molotov cocktails and hand grenades at IDF force; sabotage and arson at the border crossings and the security fence; and attempts made by terrorists to infiltrate into Israeli territory**.

◆ **Infiltration of terrorist operatives into Israeli territory:** During 2019, **there were many attempts to infiltrated into Israeli territory made by individuals and/or organized squads**.<sup>10</sup> A major part of Palestinians who crossed the security fence were

<sup>9</sup> Since IDF reports do not distinguish between rocket fire and mortar shell fire, data for 2019 includes both rocket and mortar shell fire (unlike reports in the previous years, which included rocket fire only).

<sup>10</sup> See the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from August 20, 2019, “Palestinian terrorists from the Gaza Strip continue attempting to penetrate into Israeli territory. Such attempts are not part of Hamas official policy but are publicly praised and encouraged after the fact.”

trying to cross from the Gaza Strip to improve their living conditions, **and were unarmed**. However, at the same time there were also **several attempts (which were thwarted) made by armed squads to infiltrate into Israeli territory to carry out terrorist attacks**. In addition, there were **incidents of planting IEDs along the fence, sniper fire and more**. Also prominent was **Hamas's use of quadcopters** (see below).



**Documentation of a terrorist squad identified near the border fence in the northern Gaza Strip (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, August 18, 2019)**

► Towards the end of 2019, mainly after the round of escalation of November 2019 (during which Hamas did not take part), **Israel and Hamas, with Egyptian mediation, accelerated indirect contacts to promote a minimalist lull arrangement**<sup>11</sup> (which had not succeeded till then due to the mistrust between the sides and the contradicting perceptions of the nature of the settlement and its conditions). Behind the lull arrangement process was the feeling of Hamas and some of the Gazan public that the marches have already served their purpose. Thus, a decision was taken **to change the format of the marches and hold them only once a month or on "national days."**

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<sup>11</sup> See the ITIC's Information Bulletin from December 15, 2019, "Hamas's perception of the lull agreement with Israel, recently discussed in Cairo"

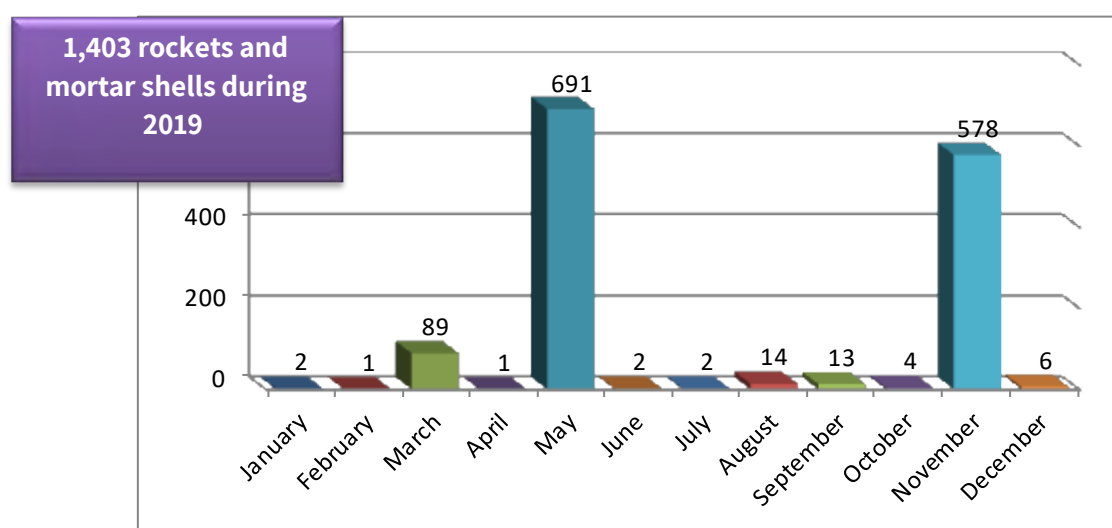
## Rocket and mortar fire into Israeli territory

### Overview

► During 2019 there was an additional increase in the scope of rocket and mortar shell fire at Israel. During the year **1,403 rockets and mortar shells were fired**, compared with 1,119 rockets and mortar shells fired into Israeli territory in 2018. With the exception of Operation Protective Edge, **2019 represents a record of rocket and mortar shell fire, with the largest number fired in the last decade<sup>12</sup>.**

► In 2019, **there were three rounds of fighting**, in which **1,320 rockets were fired**. Between the rounds of escalation, **there was sporadic rocket fire almost every week**. Most of the rockets that were fired into Israeli territory were for medium and short range and were aimed at western Negev towns and villages. A small number were aimed at cities farther away, **such as Ashqelon and Ashdod**. The IDF responded to most of the firing incidents mainly by airstrikes against Hamas's targets (as the IDF considers Hamas responsible for what is happening in the Gaza Strip<sup>13</sup>).

### Rocket and mortar shell fire in 2019 by month

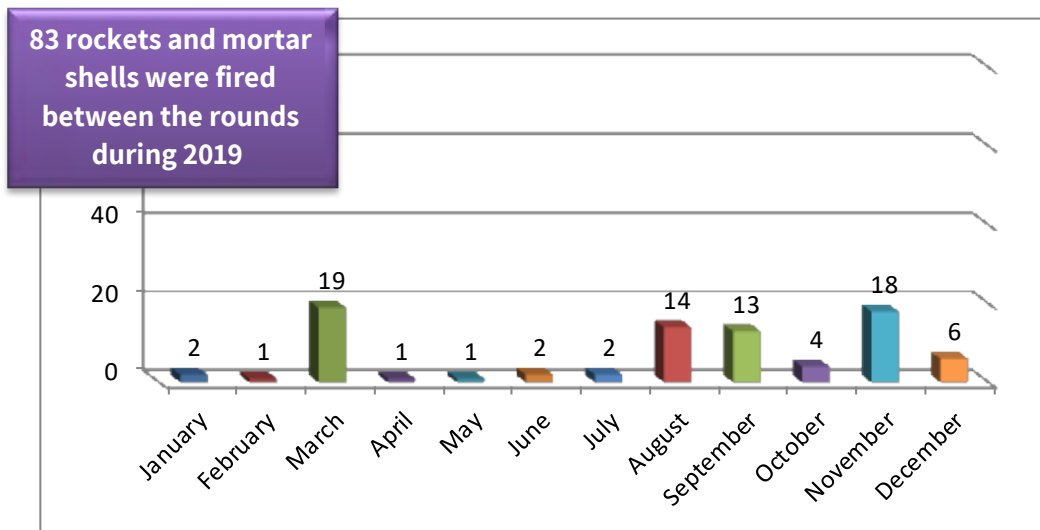


<sup>12</sup> Since the IDF reports do not distinguish between rocket fire and mortar shell fire, data for 2019 includes both rockets and mortar shells (unlike reports in previous years, which included rocket fire only).

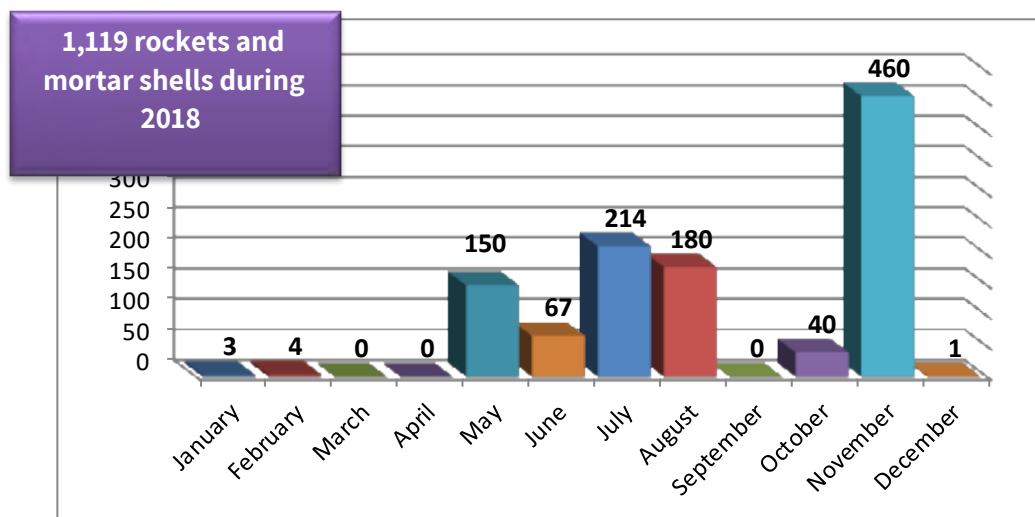
<sup>13</sup> With the exception of the round of escalation in November 2019 (“Black Belt” events), when Israel attacked targets of the PIJ, which was almost the sole organization responsible for the fire.



## Rocket and mortar shell fire between the rounds in 2019



## Rocket and mortar shell fire in 2018 by month



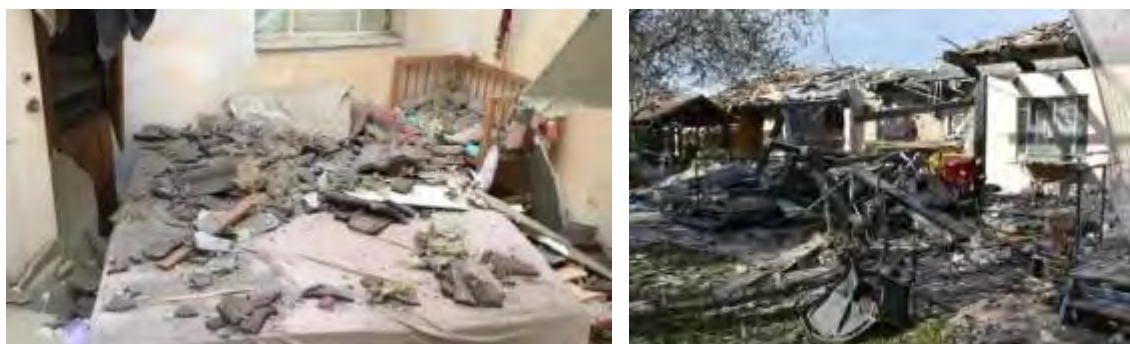
## Rounds of escalation

► In 2019, there were three significant rounds of escalation (compared with five substantial rounds in 2018). They were characterized by several days of massive fire of rockets and mortar shells into Israeli territory, and Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip in response. The rounds came to an end after several days, sometimes with a ceasefire between the sides achieved with Egyptian mediation, **and did not develop into an overall military confrontation such as Operation Protective Edge**. The first two rounds (March, May 2019) were initiated by Hamas, while the third (November 2019) was initiated by the PIJ (without Hamas participation).

► The rounds of escalation demonstrated that **as part of the policy of controlled violence, Hamas was the one that usually set the rules of engagement with Israel and dictated the timing, the nature and manner of ending of the rounds of escalation.** Indeed, Hamas was careful not to be dragged into an overall confrontation with Israel. However, the frequent incidents of escalation and the violent activity in between created a volatile situation with a high potential of deterioration, which did not materialize in 2019. Following are details on the three rounds of escalation.

#### **Round of escalation on March 25-26, 2019 (about 70 rockets and mortar shells)**

► The round began after a long-range rocket was launched from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory in the early morning of March 25, 2019. **The rocket hit a house in the village of Mishmeret in central Israel.** Seven people were wounded, including two children. The house was severely damaged. The rocket was probably launched from Rafah, at a distance of about 120 km from the place where it hit. No organization in the Gaza Strip claimed responsibility for firing the rocket. The IDF spokesman said that the rocket had been from a Hamas outpost in the Rafah area in the southern Gaza Strip (IDF spokesman, March 25, 2019).



**Devastation of a house in the village of Mishmeret, central Israel, following the firing of the rocket (Right: Israeli police. Left: Fire and Rescue Services, March 25, 2019)**

► Following the fire, Israel's Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) announced the closure of the Gaza Strip crossings. In addition, the Gaza Strip fishing zone was limited (IDF spokesman, March 25, 2019). In response to the rocket fire, the IDF began to reinforce its troops in the western Negev and transferred infantry and armored forces to the area (IDF spokesman, March 25, 2019). In the afternoon, Israeli tanks, navy and aircraft started to attack targets in the Gaza Strip. Dozens of targets were attacked in the northern and central Gaza Strip.





**Right: The IDF airstrike in Gaza (QudsN Facebook page, March 26, 2019). Left: Airstrike on Isma'il Haniyeh's office (QudsN Facebook page, March 25, 2019)**

► **In response, Hamas and other terrorist organizations started firing rockets and mortar shells at Israel**, targeting mainly towns and villages in the western Negev. However, red alert sirens were also heard in the southern Israeli cities of Netivot and Ashqelon. The Iron Dome aerial defense system intercepted a large number of the rockets. During the round **about 70 launches into Israeli territory were identified**. There were no casualties. A house in the southern city of Sderot was damaged by the direct hit of a rocket which did not explode. In addition, the wreckage of a rocket was found at a building site in Sderot.



**Rocket launches from the Gaza Strip at Israel (QudsN Facebook page, March 25, 2019)**

► Hamas and the other terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip declared a unilateral ceasefire, apparently because of pressure from Egypt. Israel, however, continued to attack targets in the Gaza Strip. Thus, the rocket and mortar shell fire continued. Around 03:00 in the morning the rocket and mortar shell fire from the Gaza Strip stopped and the round of escalation ended.

#### **Round of escalation on May 4-6, 2019 (about 690 rockets and mortar shells)**

► The round began with PIJ sniper fire under cover of the return march on May 3, 2019. An IDF soldier was moderately wounded and another was slightly wounded. In response to the

sniper fire, two Hamas outposts were attacked by the IDF and two operatives of the Hamas's military wing were killed while two others were severely wounded.



**Evacuation of the IDF wounded after the sniper fire at the Israeli force (QudsN Facebook page, May 3, 2019)**

► After the IDF attack, massive rocket and mortar shell fire at Israel began. Most of the rockets were fired at the western Negev area. Several rockets were fired at Ashqelon, Ashdod and Beersheba. **In total, about 690 rockets and mortar shells were fired during the round.** The IDF responded by firing from land, air and sea at targets in the Gaza Strip mainly belonging to Hamas and the PIJ. In the round of escalation three Israelis were killed and about 100 were wounded (most of them slightly, some treated for shock). In addition, heavy damage was caused to houses.



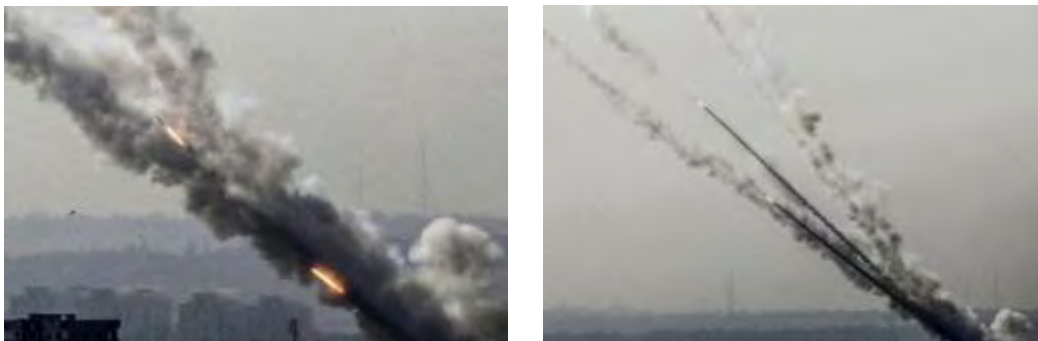
**Right: Launch of rockets from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory (PALINFO Twitter account, May 4, 2019). Left: IDF attack in Beit Lahiya (PALINFO Twitter account, May 4, 2019)**



**One of the rockets that hit Barzilai Medical Center in Ashqelon  
(Barzilai Medical Center spokesperson's office, May 5, 2019)**

**Round of escalation on November 12-14, 2019 (about 560 rockets and mortar shells)**

► **On November 12, 2019, the IDF carried out a targeted killing in the Gaza Strip, in which Bahaa al-Ata, the PIJ's Northern Brigade commander, was killed.** Following Bahaa al-Ata's killing, the PIJ fired rockets at southern and central Israel. During this round of escalation, **about 560 launches of rockets and mortar shells from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory were identified.** Most of the fire was of short-range rockets at southern Israel, Sderot and western Negev towns and villages. Some of the fire targeted the cities of Netivot, Ashqelon and Ashdod. At the beginning of the round rockets were also fired at central Israel. Unlike previous rounds, **Hamas did not participate in the round, most of which was carried out by the PIJ.** The IDF responded by attacking PIJ targets and refrained from attacking Hamas targets.



**Launching rockets at Israel  
(Facebook page of journalist Hassan Aslih, November 12, 2019)**

## Sporadic rocket fire between the rounds of escalation (83 rockets and mortar shells)

**Between the three rounds of fighting**, sporadic rocket and mortar shell fire continued in 2019. **A total of 83 rockets and mortar shells were fired into Israeli territory between the three rounds of significant escalation.** Most of the launches were aimed at southern Israel and only a few as far north as Ashqelon. In some of the cases, the launch was timed to coincide with special events taking place in Israel (concerts, a festival for the children of Sderot, and election rallies attended by Prime Minister Netanyahu). **No terrorist organization claimed responsibility.** It can be assumed that **a considerable number of launches were carried out by the PIJ or rogue operatives** (from the PIJ and other organizations). Hamas made attempts to prevent the firing and detain rogue operatives but **the continuation of these incidents** indicates that **Hamas's attempts were ineffective and could not put an end to the sporadic rocket fire** (which also continued during January 2020).

► The following were significant attacks:

- ◆ **On the evening of March 15, 2019**, two Iranian-manufactured Fajr rockets M-75 were launched at the greater Tel Aviv area. One rocket fell into the sea. Wreckage of the second rocket, which exploded in mid-air, was found the following morning in the area of the Mikveh Israel Agricultural School (Holon). The launch was carried out while talks for a lull arrangement were being held with an Egyptian delegation in the Gaza Strip. In response to Israeli airstrikes, six rockets were launched at western Negev towns and villages and the city of Sderot (IDF spokesman, May 15, 2019).
- ◆ **In the early morning of March 25, 2019**, a rocket was launched from the Gaza Strip towards the village of Mishmeret in central Israel. The rocket fell on a house. Seven people were wounded, including two children. The house was damaged. The rocket was probably launched from Rafah (southern Gaza Strip).



**Damage caused by the rocket to a house in the village of Mishmeret  
(Right: Israel Police. Left: Israel Fire and Rescue Services, March 25, 2019)**

- ◆ **On the night of March 30-31, 2019**, five rockets were launched at the Eshkol Regional Council in the western Negev and fell in open areas. No casualties or damage were reported . In response, IDF tanks fired a Hamas's observation posts near the security fence (Ynet; IDF spokesman, March 31, 2019).
- ◆ **On April 28, 2019**, a rocket was launched from the Gaza Strip at Israel. It fell into the sea several kilometers from the Israeli shore. In response, Israel reduced the fishing zone. According to the **IDF spokesman, the launch was carried out by the PIJ** in order to undermine the lull attempts (IDF spokesman, April 30, 2019).
- ◆ **On June 14, 2019**, a rocket was launched at Israel. It fell in Sderot and hit a yeshiva. The building was empty at the time as students were away due to the Sabbath. There were no casualties but the building was damaged. In response Israeli aircraft attacked targets in military compounds and a military compound of Hamas's naval force (IDF spokesman, June 14, 2019).
- ◆ **On the evening of July 12, 2019**, while a delegation of the Egyptian intelligence was in the Gaza Strip rockets were fired at Israel. Two rockets fell several hours apart from one another in Israeli territory. They fell in open areas in the western Negev. No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **On August 17, 2019**, three launches were identified from the Gaza Strip at Israeli territory. The Iron Dome aerial defense system intercepted two rockets. Several pieces of shrapnel were found inside a house in Sderot. Paramedics treated six people, most of them for shock.
- ◆ **On the evening of August 25, 2019**, three rocket launches at Sderot and western Negev towns and villages were identified. The Iron Dome aerial defense system intercepted two rockets (IDF spokesman, August 24, 2019). Five people were treated for



shock and evacuated to a hospital, along with several others. In Sderot, a house under construction was damaged (spokesperson of the Barzilai Medical Center in Ashqelon, August 25, 2019). At the time of the launch, **a festival was taking place in Sderot, attended by about 4,000 people, who were rapidly evacuated from the area.**



**Damage to an unoccupied building in Sderot  
(Palinfo Twitter account, August 25, 2019)**

◆ **On August 27, 2019**, four mortar shells were fired from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory. One of the shells, aimed at a force working near the security fence, fell in Israeli territory. There were no casualties. The other shells apparently fell in the Gaza Strip. In response, the IDF attacked a Hamas outpost in the northern Gaza Strip (IDF spokesman, August 27, 2019).

◆ **On September 6, 2019**, five rockets were launched from the Beit Hanoun area in the northern Gaza Strip. They fell in open areas. One of the rockets fell near Sderot and caused a fire. In response, IDF aircraft and a tank attacked several military targets of Hamas in the northern Gaza Strip, including an outpost and military positions (IDF spokesman, September 7, 2019).



**Damage to a house by a rocket from eastern Gaza  
(Shja3eya Facebook page, September 8, 2019)**

◆ **On September 10, 2019**, two rockets were launched from the Gaza Strip at Ashdod and Ashqelon. They were both intercepted by the Iron Dome aerial defense system. One woman was treated for shock. No damage was caused. **At the time of the rocket fire, Prime Minister Netanyahu was delivering an election campaign speech in the city of Ashdod. He was evacuated from the hall during the attack and then returned and continued his speech.** Hamas and the PIJ used the incident for propaganda purposes. In response to the rocket launch, IDF aircraft attacked about 15 Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip (IDF spokesman, September 10, 2019).

◆ **On September 11, 2019**, three launches from the Gaza Strip at the Ashqelon Regional Council were identified. One of them hit a courtyard and caused minor damage. In response, an IDF tank attacked two Hamas military targets near the security fence in the northern Gaza Strip (IDF spokesman, September 11, 2019).



**Right: Window hit by rocket shrapnel (Ashqelon Regional Council's Spokesperson's Office, September 11, 2019). Left: Rocket that fell in the area of the Ashqelon Regional Council (Palinfo Twitter account, September 11, 2019)**

◆ **On the evening of November 1, 2019**, twelve rockets were launched at Sderot and western Negev communities. Eight rockets were intercepted by the Iron Dome aerial defense system. One rocket hit a courtyard in Sderot. Five people were treated for shock (Spokesperson of Barzilai Medical Center, November 1, 2019). A house and several cars parked nearby were also damaged (Israel Police Spokesperson's Office, November 1, 2019).



**Right: The house in Sderot which was hit by a rocket from the Gaza Strip (Palinfo Twitter account, November 1, 2019). Left: Car hit by shrapnel in Sderot (Palinfo, November 1, 2019)**

◆ **On December 7, 2019**, three rockets were launched from the Gaza Strip at Israeli territory. All three were intercepted by the Iron Dome aerial defense system.

◆ **On the evening of December 25, 2019**, a rocket was launched from the northern Gaza Strip at Ashqelon. It was intercepted by the Iron Dome aerial defense system. No casualties or damage were reported. At the time of the launch, Prime Minister Netanyahu was attending a Likud party primaries gathering. He was evacuated from the hall to a protected area and then returned to continue his speech.



**Right: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu taken offstage to a protected area during the red alert siren in Ashqelon (Ashqelon City News Facebook account, December 25, 2019)**



## The return marches

**In 2019, the return march project, which started on March 30, 2018, continued.** The marches were **the main factor triggering violence and terrorism from the Gaza Strip in 2019.** They were conducted in a similar format almost every Friday, with thousands of Palestinians (with decreasing number during the year) gathering in five focal points along the Gaza Strip border. Some of the demonstrators, mainly youngsters, confronted the IDF soldiers near the security fence. **In the return marches, rioters who approached the security used intensive violence. They threw stones, IEDs, hand grenades and Molotov cocktails at the IDF forces** that were posted near the fence to prevent rioters from penetrating into Israeli territory and vandalizing the security fence.

► **Towards the end of 2019, signs of the Gazans' fatigue with the marches were seen,** reflected by a decreasing number of participants. Their fatigue permeated Hamas and the other organizers of the marches. The feeling that prevailed was that **the marches in their existing format had served their purpose** and that the damage they caused (thousands of wounded, hundreds of fatalities) outweighed their benefit. Therefore, several marches were canceled and Hamas and other coordinating the marches began to rethink their further existence and format.

### Pictures of the riots near the fence



**Young Palestinians crossing the security fence in eastern Khan Yunis (Facebook page of photographer Mazen Qadih, July 26 and 27, 2019)**



Improvised hand grenades thrown by operatives of the Ahfad al-Nasser network, which belongs to the Popular Resistance Committees in the northern Gaza Strip (Facebook page of Al-Shabab al-Tha'er Ahfad al-Nasser, September 20, 2019)



Right: Palestinian demonstrators in the eastern al-Bureij refugee camp (Filastin Post Facebook page, June 28, 2019). Left: Rioters throwing Molotov cocktails at an IDF force near the security fence in eastern Khan Yunis (QudsN Twitter account, June 28, 2019)



Right: Rioters sabotaging the barbed wire fence near the security fence (Facebook page of the Supreme National Authority, February 15, 2019). Left: Children climbing the border fence (Facebook page of the Supreme National Authority, February 23, 2019)



**Women trying to sabotage the barbed wire fence near the border fence in the al-Bureij area (central Gaza Strip) (Facebook page of the Supreme National Authority March 8, 2019)**



**Right: Rioters near the security fence in eastern Gaza. One of the Rioters raises an axe (Shehab Facebook page, March 30, 2019). Left: Rioters climbing on the security fence in eastern Rafah (video posted to the Facebook page of Sawa'ed al-Intifada in the Rafah Governorate, April 5, 2019)**



**Right: Rioters pulling the barbed wire near the border fence in eastern Rafah (Facebook page of Filastin Post, May 24, 2019). Left: Palestinian Rioters pulling the barbed wire fence which is near the security fence in the eastern Al-Bureij refugee camp (Facebook page of the Supreme National Authority, June 21, 2019)**





Photos from a video documenting Palestinian demonstrators crossing the security fence in the eastern al-Bureij refugee camp (Facebook page of photographer Hazem Mazid, June 21, 2019)

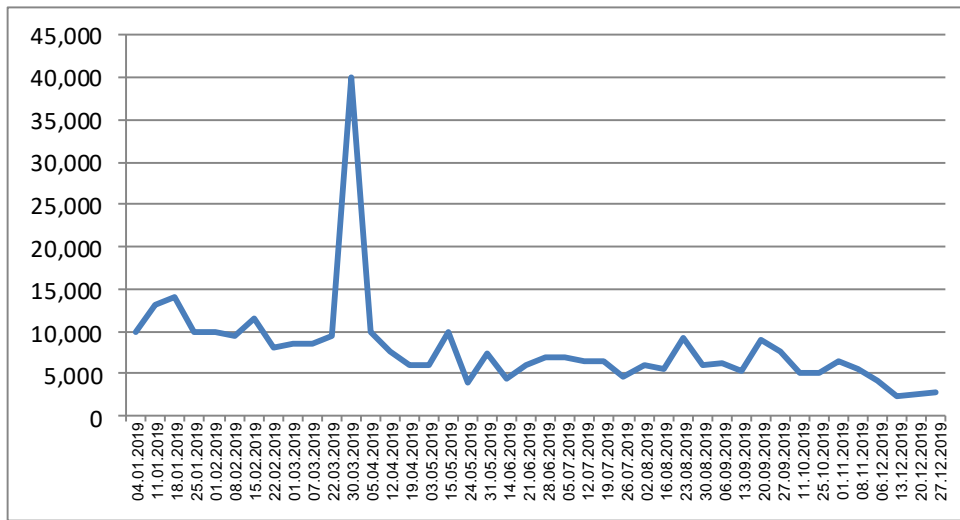


Right: Detonation of firecrackers near the border fence in eastern Khan Yunis (Facebook page of photographer Mazen Qadih, July 27, 2019). Left: Throwing hand grenades at an IDF jeep in the eastern al-Bureij refugee camp (Quds News Facebook page, July 27, 2019)

## Decrease in the number of participants in the return marches

2019 was characterized by a sharp decrease in the number of participants in the return marches. The peak was at the march of March 30, 2019, which marked Land Day and the anniversary of the beginning of the return marches, and was attended by about 40,000 demonstrators. Since March 2019, there has been a gradual decrease in the number of participants. The marches in December 2019 were attended by about 2,500 participants. In addition, senior Hamas officials, who used to participate in the marches every week – were seen less frequently on the ground. At first, the marches were attended by Ismail Haniyeh and Yahya Sinwar. However, in the last months of 2019, they were replaced by lower-ranking figures, mainly activists of the Supreme National Authority, which organizes the marches.

## Number of participants in the marches by month (2019)



Right: Palestinian demonstrators near the security fence during march events on March 30, 2019 (Palinfo Twitter account, March 31, 2019). Left: Relatively sparse participation and empty chairs in the return camp in eastern Gaza City (Facebook page of the Malka return camp, December 13, 2019)

## Casualties in the return marches

► In 2019 there was a substantial decrease in the number of casualties (dead and wounded Palestinians). During 2019, 31 Palestinians, 30 men and one woman, were killed in the marches, compared with 184 fatalities in 2018. About half of the fatalities were young Palestinians aged 13-20.<sup>14</sup> An ITIC examination revealed that 28 of the fatalities were operatives of or affiliated with one of the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip,

<sup>14</sup> Videos and photos documenting the return marches clearly show that most of the rioters confronting the IDF soldiers are young adolescents and even children. The use of children and adolescents at the confrontation line is intended to make it difficult for the IDF soldiers to respond while Hamas and the other terrorist organizations use it for propaganda purposes against Israel in world public opinion. Furthermore, sometimes, the use of children and adolescents near the border fence is intended to camouflage terrorist activities carried out by Palestinian military operatives while risking the lives of the children and adolescents.

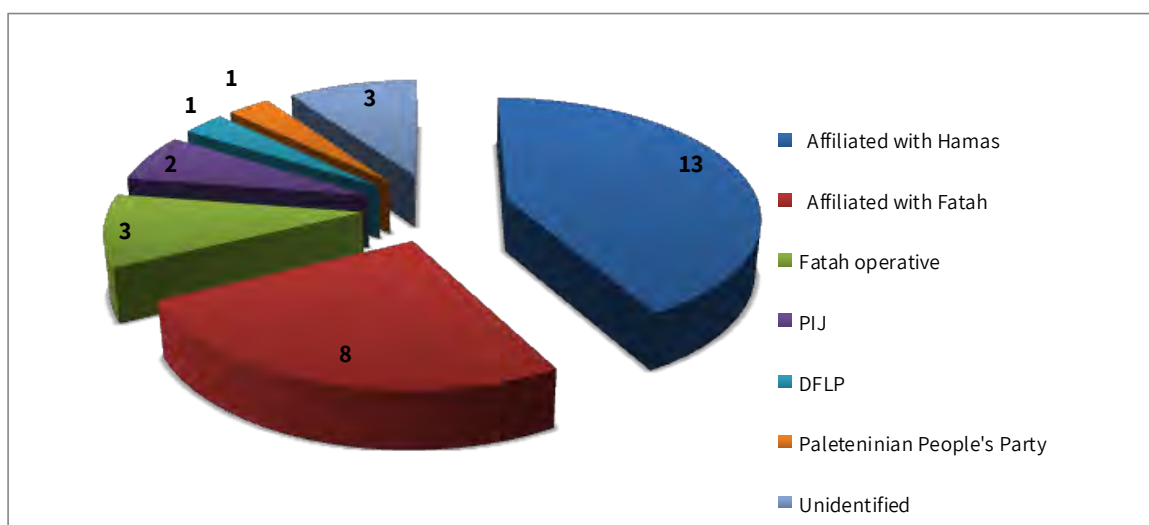
**of whom 13 were affiliated with Hamas.** According to the weekly reports by the Palestinian ministry of health in the Gaza Strip, **2,572 demonstrators were wounded in the marches in 2019, compared with over 20,000 Palestinians wounded in 2018** (according to information published by the spokesman of the ministry of health in the Gaza Strip).



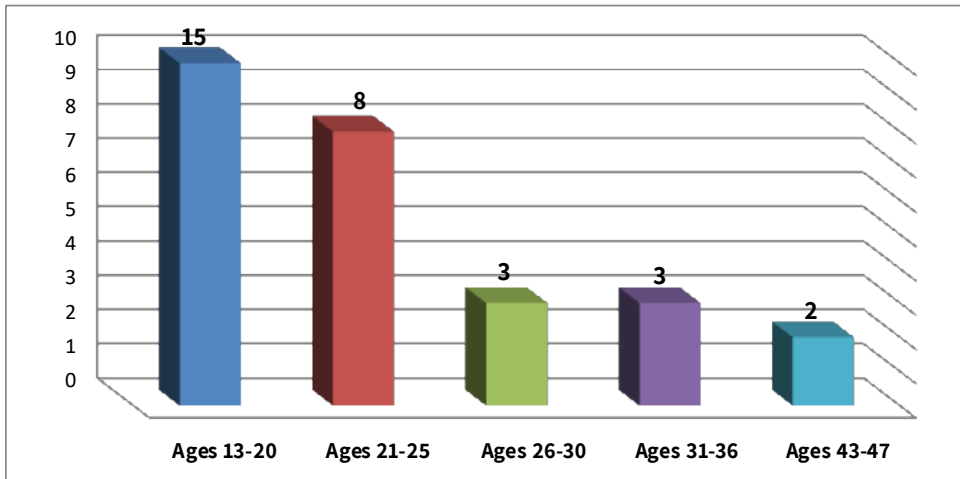
**Palestinian youth rioting near the fence  
(Facebook page of photographer Mazen Qadih, July 26, 2019)**

► In ITIC assessment, the decrease in the number of casualties may be attributed to the decrease in the number of participants and the level of violence (there is a clear correlation between the number of participants in the march and the number of fatalities and wounded). In ITIC assessment, that is in addition to Hamas' attempts to regulate the level of violence during the marches with its restraint forces and internal security forces, and IDF's restrained shooting policy.

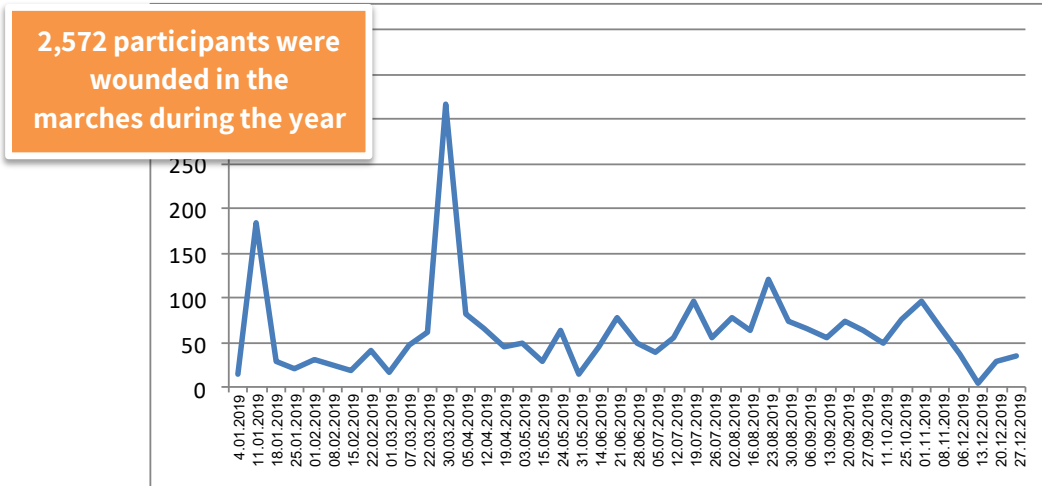
### **Organizational affiliation of the fatalities (updated to December 31, 2019)**



### Fatalities in the 2019 return marches by age



### Wounded during the return marches



## The violence and terrorism accompanying the return marches

The more the marches became “routine” and less attractive for the public to take part in, Hamas and the other organizers of the marches realized that the “popular” activity should be complemented with other activities. Thus, several additional activities were held: **weekly mini-flotillas**; an attempt to organize demonstrations **in the middle of the week as well**; and especially **arson terrorism and the activity of the Night Harassment Units near the border fence**. These activities **stopped almost completely in the middle of 2019, when Hamas began talks for a lull arrangement through Egyptian mediation**. Their cessation was probably part of the preconditions for the settlement attempts.<sup>15</sup> The resumption of the activity of the balloon flying units and the Night Harassment Units became a “routine” threat against Israel on the part of Gaza Strip elements asserting that Israel violates the settlement conditions<sup>16</sup>.

### Arson Terrorism

► Arson terrorism began with kites on a small scale as early as the third week of the return marches (April 2018). However, as the marches continued, **the system was gradually refined, and incendiary balloons were added**. Subsequently, **IEDs were attached to the balloons**.

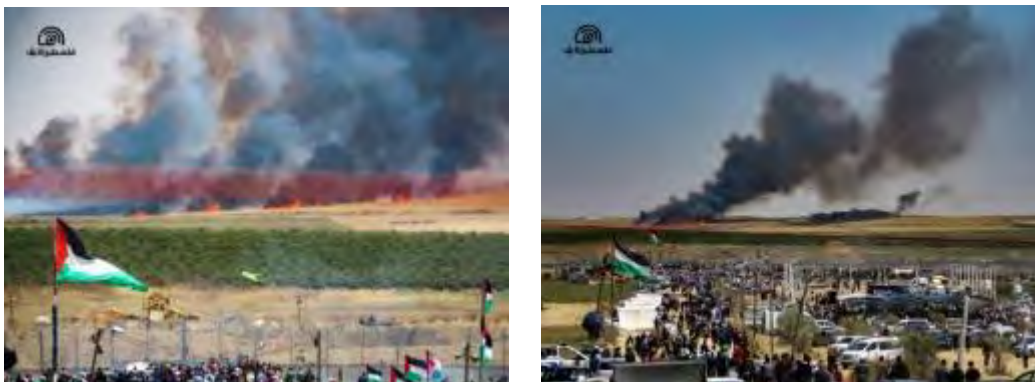
► The incendiary balloons mainly caused fires on agricultural land and in natural forests in the western Negev. However, beyond the physical damage, **arson terrorism has disrupted the daily routine of the residents of those communities and has had a negative effect on the morale of local residents, who also suffered psychological damage**. The launching of incendiary balloons was usually accompanied by psychological warfare, with threats to develop additional means such as balloons containing toxic substances, model airplanes, explosive quadcopters and more.

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<sup>15</sup> In April 2019, Talal Abu Zarifa, member of the DFLP’s political bureau and the Supreme National Authority of the Great Return March, noted that there was an unofficial understanding that use of violent means on the borders of the Gaza Strip would be stopped. As part of this understanding, the activity of the Night Harassment Units and the launching of incendiary balloons would be stopped (Dunia al-Watan, April 4, 2019). According to a report in the al-Quds newspaper, progress was made in the talks for a lull arrangement, Hamas and the PIJ instructed their operatives to completely stop launching balloons and night activities along the border (al-Quds, April 4, 2019).

<sup>16</sup> In the first half of January 2020, launching of incendiary and IEDs balloons resumed. In ITIC assessment, Hamas was behind the decision to resume the launches.





**Fires in western Negev towns and villages caused by incendiary balloons, as seen from east Gaza City (Palestine Live Facebook page, May 15, 2019)**

► Hamas and the other organizations in the Gaza Strip were well aware of the negative effect of incendiary balloons and kites on morale, and the psychological damage caused by their use. **Therefore, launching the balloons became one of the key modus operandis of its policy of controlled violence** against Israel and as a means of threatening and exerting pressure on Israel. Hamas and other organizations continued to refine and establish the method by **setting up dedicated balloon launch units**.

► **During 2019, the process of establishing the balloon launching units continued**, with the most prominent unit being the **Sons of al-Zawari Unit**.<sup>17</sup> Almost every terrorist organization in the Gaza Strip established its own unit. As they did, they also established a joint war room to coordinate their activities. At least in the first half of 2019, balloon terrorism continued, whereas kite launches ceased almost completely. In addition to incendiary balloons, launches of balloons with IEDs attached to them (explosive balloons) were also identified.

► **However, the explosive balloons did not cause casualties and the damage they caused was primarily to morale**. A major incident occurred on March 9, 2019, when Israeli security forces were alerted to a report of a balloon that had fallen in a wooded area in the Sdot Negev Regional Council. Demolitions experts called to the scene found the warhead of an RPG anti-tank missile attached to the balloon. The missile was neutralized. There were no casualties.

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<sup>17</sup> The unit is named after Tunisian aeronautical engineer **Mohammed al-Zawari, who worked for Hamas**. He was killed in the city of Sfax in eastern Tunisia (December 15, 2016). Al-Zawari was born to a religious family in Tunis. On completion of his studies and military service, he passed a civilian pilot course and was hired by Tunisair. As a result of his activity in the Ennahda Islamic political party, he was dismissed and fled to Sudan. In 1991, he moved to Syria and joined Hamas's military wing. As a member of Hamas, he worked on the development of UAVs and model airplanes.



**Right: RPG warhead attached to a balloon launched from eastern Rafah into Israeli territory. Left: The launch of the balloon with an RPG warhead attached to it (Facebook page of the Sons of al-Zawari in Rafah, March 9, 2019)**

► During 2019, Israel dealt with the explosive balloons in various ways. In response to the incendiary balloons, it reduced the fishing zone, prohibited the introduction of fuel into the Gaza Strip, and even attacked groups of balloon launchers from the air. In the second half of 2019, there was a significant decrease in the activity of the balloon launching units until the use of incendiary and explosive balloons disappeared almost entirely. That can be attributed to Israeli preventive activities and Egyptian mediation. In the first half of January 2020, launching of the IED balloons was resumed.

### Arson terrorism



**Right: Fire in a forest near the community of Nahal Oz in the western Negev (photo taken by Jewish National Fund forester Itzik Lugasi, May 29, 2019). Left: Putting out a fire in the western Negev caused by explosive balloons launched from the Gaza Strip (Palinfo Twitter account, May 23, 2019)**



**Right: Preparation of explosives to be attached to balloons (Facebook page of the Sons of al-Zawari in eastern Khan Yunis, May 25, 2019). Right: Explosive devices for attaching to balloons launched by Sons of al-Zawari operatives (Facebook page of the Sons of al-Zawari in east Khan Yunis, May 24, 2019).**



**Right: Incendiary balloons being launched by the Sons of al-Zawari unit in east Khan Yunis. Left: Fire in the community of Be'eri in the western Negev caused by an incendiary balloon (Facebook page of the Sons of al-Zawari unit in east Khan Yunis, August 13, 2019)**

## Night Harassment Units

- **The Night Harassment Units were set up around August 2018** as an additional part of the violent activities of the return marches. The units, composed mainly of young people, **carried out their activity at night near the security fence. This activity was intended to exhaust the IDF soldiers stationed at the fence, prevent them from resting and keep them on constant alert.** The units, which operated in several locations near the security fence, employed various measures, including **burning tires to create smokescreens and blowing horns in the areas near the security fence**, as well as **throwing Molotov cocktails and IEDs at IDF positions** (Safa, September 16, 2018; Palestine Online, September 16, 2018). Their noise and the smoke from the burning tires also disturbed the residents of Gaza.
- The Night Harassment Units **operated for only a few months.** On March 9, 2019, it was reported that the Supreme National Authority had temporarily halted the activity of the Night Harassment Units at the request of Egypt, in order to give it an opportunity to put pressure on Israel to implement the understandings (al-Arabi al-Jadeed, March 10, 2019). Since then, the

return of Harassment Units has served as a threat to Israel. In practice, these units did not resume their activity after March 2019.

► Following are a number of incidents carried out by the Night Harassment Units:

◆ **March 3, 2018:** IEDs were thrown at the security fence in the northern Gaza Strip. The Palestinian media reported that they had been thrown by the Night Harassment Unit in the Beit Hanoun area (Shabakat Quds Twitter account, March 3, 2019). In response, an Israel Air Force aircraft attacked a Hamas position (IDF spokesman, February 3, 2019).

◆ **February 18, 2019:** Members of the Night Harassment Units operated east of Gaza City (Dunia Al-Watan, February 18, 2019). Ashraf al-Qidra, spokesman for the ministry of health in the Gaza Strip, said that five Palestinians were wounded by IDF forces in eastern Gaza City (Dr. Ashraf al-Qidra's Twitter account, February 18, 2019).



**Right: Operatives of the Night Harassment Units collecting tires for burning (Facebook page of the Night Harassment Units, February 13, 2019). Left: Night Harassment Units in action (Facebook page of the Supreme National Authority, February 19, 2019)**

◆ **The night of February 10, 2019:** Dozens of Night Harassment Unit operatives engaged in violent clashes near the security fence in the northern Gaza Strip. The riots centered on the area east of Jabaliya. A Night Harassment Unit was active on the night of **February 11, 2019**. Hundreds of operatives in eastern Gaza burned tires and threw IEDs (Palinfo Twitter account, February 11, 2019; Facebook page of the Supreme National Authority, February 11, 2019; Facebook page of the Night Harassment Unit, February 11, 2019).

## Means in the Possession of the Night Harassment Units





**Means prepared by the Night Harassment Unit for nighttime activity  
(Facebook page of the Night Harassment Units, February 11, 2019)**



**IEDs thrown by the Night Harassment Units in the Gaza Strip towards Israel. The words "Death to Israel" in Arabic and Hebrew appear on the IEDs.**



**IEDs thrown at Israel by the Night Harassment Units. The attached sheet of paper reads in Arabic, "Night Harassment" (The Border Dynamo Groups, March 19, 2019, al-Zawari Unit).**



**Means for nighttime activity prepared by the Sons of al-Zawari Unit in Rafah (Facebook page of the Sons of Al-Zawari in Rafah, February 21, 2019)**

### Mini-flotillas and Riots in the Northern Gaza Strip

Another element of the popular protests in the Gaza Strip was **mini-flotillas accompanied by riots on the beach near the Israeli border in the northern Gaza Strip**. The events were organized by the Supreme National Authority and took place in mid-week between the Friday marches. They generally included **several small vessels from the Gaza Strip**. There were also relatively few participants in the demonstrations on the beach accompanying the flotillas, **but they involved a relatively high level of violence and the rioters clashed with IDF forces**.

► Unlike the Friday marches, the mini-flotillas and riots generally depended on weather conditions and on the level of friction that Hamas wanted to maintain with the IDF forces. Since March 2019, **when the Egyptian-mediated settlement negotiations began, the mini-flotillas and riots ceased**, as did the launching of balloons and the activity of the Night Harassment Units. On more than one occasion, Hamas officials and the heads of the Supreme National Authority threatened to reinstate the mini-flotillas as a means of exerting pressure on Israel.

► Following are a number of examples of mini-flotillas and the violence that accompanied them:

- ◆ **February 19, 2019:** A mini-flotilla was held with the participation of about 12 vessels. At the same time, there was a violent demonstration in the northern Gaza Strip, in which 1,500 Palestinians participated. Twenty rioters were reportedly wounded (Ashraf al-Qidra's Twitter account, February 19, 2019).



**Right: The flotilla events. Left: Children climbing a fence during the flotilla events in the area of Zikim, north of the Gaza Strip (Facebook page of the Supreme National Authority, February 20, 2019)**

◆ **February 12, 2019:** A mini-flotilla was held with the participation of about 20 small vessels. At the same time, about 2,000 demonstrators gathered in the northern Gaza Strip along the Israeli border. A total of 35 rioters were reportedly wounded (al-Quds, February 12, 2019).



**Right: The vessels that participated in the mini-flotilla. Left: Demonstrators during the 23rd flotilla (Facebook page of the Supreme National Authority, February 12, 2019)**

◆ **January 29, 2019:** The mini-flotilla demonstrations took place after a lull of about four weeks. Along with the mini-flotilla, violent demonstrations took place near the beach in the northern Gaza Strip, **with the participation of about 1,000 demonstrators**. According to sources in the Gaza Strip, 78 Palestinians were wounded in the riots (Shehab Twitter account, January 29, 2019).





**Tires burning in the northern Gaza Strip during a flotilla**  
(Facebook page of the Supreme National Authority, January 29, 2019)

### Other violent activities accompanying the return marches

At the same time as the “popular” events organized by Hamas and other organizations, **violent activity was carried out near the security fence on the Israeli border in the Gaza Strip, along with attempts to carry out terrorist attacks.** Particularly significant were **attempts by individuals or squads to infiltrate into Israeli territory.** A few armed individual Palestinians and squads infiltrated into Israeli territory with the objective of carrying out terrorist attacks (three of them took place during August 2019). Most of the infiltrators were caught by IDF forces and taken for questioning<sup>18</sup>. There were **also several incidents of shooting at IDF soldiers near the border fence.**

► Hamas’s attitude towards these attacks and their perpetrators is complex, since in most cases **the attacks near the fence were not part of Hamas’s policy.** In some cases, Hamas’s spokesmen have attributed the attacks to “angry young people” (thus implicitly accusing Israel) **or so-called rogue operatives.** However, **Hamas continued to provide them with public support and to threaten Israel with escalation.** Hamas officials also **publicly praised the operatives who were killed in infiltration attempts** and even paid condolence calls to their homes. **Hamas does not seem to have been over-motivated to find an effective response to infiltrations** because of public support for the infiltrators and because

<sup>18</sup> In light of the infiltration of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory, the internal security apparatus in the Gaza Strip (controlled by Hamas) issued a statement that infiltration from the Gaza Strip into Israel threatens Palestinian security. According to the statement, infiltration into Israel is dangerous for the individual and for society. That is because Israeli intelligence [allegedly] makes it easy for Palestinians to cross the border illegally in order to recruit them for intelligence and to obtain information that is harmful to Palestinian society and to the “resistance.” The internal security apparatus called on families in the Gaza Strip to monitor their sons and report any plan for infiltration into Israel (Facebook page of Hamas’s internal security apparatus, April 10, 2019).

it views infiltration as a means of exerting pressure on Israel to extract further concessions as part of the lull arrangement..

► **Following are several noteworthy incidents:**

◆ **December 17, 2019:** IDF soldiers identified an armed suspect near the security fence in the southern Gaza Strip. He was shot at and killed by IDF aircraft in the Gaza Strip (IDF spokesman, November 17, 2019). According to Palestinian media reports, he was an **operative in the PIJ's military wing** and had previously carried out an attack in the same area (Ma'an, December 18, 2019; al-Mashhad, December 17, 2019).



**Right: Photo from a video documenting the terrorist armed with a rifle approaching the security fence (Twitter account of the IDF, December 17, 2019). Left: The operative, Abdullah Ahmed Abu Nasr (Twitter account of journalist Hassan Aslih, December 17, 2019)**

◆ **August 17, 2019:** IDF observers identified **five suspects approaching the security fence** in the northern Gaza Strip. At least one was identified as being armed. An IDF force was called to the scene. An IDF helicopter and a tank fired at the suspects before they managed to cross the security fence (IDF spokesman, August 17, 2019). According to an announcement by the Palestinian ministry of health, IDF forces killed three Palestinians and critically wounded another. According to reports on the social media, the members of the squad were operatives of Hamas, the PIJ, and Fatah. Some of the dead were active in the return marches and the Night Harassment Unit in the northern Gaza Strip.



Posters on Hamas's Twitter account in memory of the operatives killed in an attempt to infiltrate into Israeli territory (PALINFO Twitter account, August 18, 2019)

◆ **August 10, 2019:** IDF observers identified four armed suspects approaching **the security fence in the central Gaza Strip** (opposite the Deir al-Balah refugee camp). After one of the terrorists managed to cross the fence, IDF soldiers who were called to the area shot and killed the four suspects. During the incident a grenade was thrown at IDF forces. There were no casualties. **The four operatives who were killed wore uniforms and were armed with Kalashnikov assault rifles, an RPG launcher and hand grenades.** Bags containing food and equipment for crossing the fence were also found in their possession. A first aid kit was also found (IDF spokesman, August 10, 2019). The findings on the ground indicated that the squad was planning **to carry out a major attack on Israeli territory against soldiers or civilians.** It appears that the attack was planned in advance and the squad members were preparing for a long stay in the area.



The equipment seized in the possession of the four terrorists (IDF spokesman, August 10, 2019)

◆ **August 1, 2019:** IDF soldiers identified a **suspect approaching the security fence in the southern Gaza Strip**. A state of alert was declared and an IDF force was sent to the area. The force identified a Palestinian who had crossed the security fence east of Khan Yunis. The Palestinian shot at the IDF soldiers, slightly and moderately wounding three of them. The terrorist was shot and killed. During the incident, an IDF tank fired at a Hamas position (IDF spokesman, August 1, 2019). According to Palestinian media reports, the fatality was an operative in Hamas’s military wing (Sawa, August 1, 2019).



**Right: Dead terrorist Hani Abu Salah (Twitter account of Amin al-Wafi of Gaza, August 1, 2019).  
Right: Terrorist Hani Abu Salah at a mosque (Twitter account of Mu’ataz Abu Raida of Gaza, August 1, 2019)**

## Sniper fire

► On January 22, 2019, dozens of Palestinian children (not part of the return march) gathered to throw stones at IDF forces, **while IDF soldiers were targeted by sniper fire**. An IDF officer was slightly wounded (a bullet hit his helmet). In response, an IDF tank fired at a Hamas observation post in the central Gaza Strip. A Hamas military wing operative was killed and four operatives were wounded (IDF spokesman, January 22, 2019).

► An analysis of the attack indicates that **it was probably a diversionary attack**. Palestinian children gathered and threw stones, causing the IDF to send a force to disperse them. **When the soldiers exited their vehicle they were targeted by sniper fire**. According to the Israeli media, **the PIJ was behind the attack** (Israeli daily newspaper Haaretz, January 23, 2019).

## The use of quadcopters

► During the year, there was an increase in **the use of quadcopters by Hamas and other terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip**. Senior PIJ official Khadr Habib has stated that the use of quadcopters constitutes a “step up” in the measures used against Israel (Dunia al-Watan, September 9, 2019). During the year, several **attempts to smuggle quadcopters** into the Gaza Strip were also thwarted (see the section on thwarting smuggling).

► Quadcopters (equipped with cameras) can be used to monitor IDF activity on the border with the Gaza Strip, **but quadcopters equipped with explosives can also be used to carry out attacks.** During the year, there were several incidents of quadcopters' being launched from the Gaza Strip towards Israel. **Until now, the quadcopters have not caused any damage and most of them suffered from technical problems** and were retrieved by IDF forces. However, the leading terrorist organizations will apparently continue to develop quadcopters and improve their reliability. **Quadcopters have the potential to carry out attacks against the civilian population or military targets.**



**Poster published by the Sons of a-Zawari threatening to launch quadcopters  
(Facebook page of the Sons of Al-Zawari unit in Rafah, July 8, 2019)**

- The quadcopter launches in 2019 were the following (based on partial information):
- ◆ **October 17, 2019:** An IDF force identified a quadcopter near the security fence in the southern Gaza Strip. The quadcopter was shot down by IDF forces (IDF spokesman, October 17, 2019).
  - ◆ **September 7, 2019:** A quadcopter launched from the Gaza Strip dropped an IED on a military vehicle. There were no casualties. The military vehicle was damaged (IDF spokesman, September 7, 2019).





**IDF vehicle damaged by an IED dropped from a quadcopter in the southern Gaza Strip  
(Mu'ataz Abu Raida's Twitter account, September 7, 2019)**

◆ **July 8, 2019:** An IDF force identified a quadcopter **that had infiltrated Israeli airspace from the Gaza Strip**. The quadcopter was intercepted, seized by IDF forces in the Zikim area (north of the Gaza Strip) and sent for examination (IDF spokesman, July 8, 2019).



**Quadcopter launched from the Gaza Strip towards Israel  
(Mu'ataz Abu Raida's Twitter account, July 8, 2019)**

► At the same time, the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip took steps **to shoot down quadcopters used by the IDF**. On the night of September 9, 2019, an IDF quadcopter fell in the southern Gaza Strip, east of Rafah (IDF spokesman, September 10, 2019). Hamas's military wing issued a claim of responsibility for shooting down the quadcopter. According to the claim, the quadcopter, which was equipped with several cameras, was on a "special mission" in the Gaza Strip (Ma'an, September 10, 2019).

### **Thwarting attempted smuggling into the Gaza Strip**

► As part of the military buildup process, Hamas continues its attempts to smuggle weapons and military equipment into the Gaza Strip, some of them of dual-use (and can be used for civilian or military purposes). Some examples of smuggling that were thwarted in 2019 are the following:

◆ **November 28, 2019:** An attempt to smuggle 325 packages to the Gaza Strip via the Erez Crossing was thwarted. The packages contained items purchased from abroad over the Internet. **Weapons, knives, cameras, quadcopters, diving gear, communications equipment and other items** that could be used for terrorist purposes were found in the packages (COGAT, November 28, 2019).



**Some of the dual-use items seized at the Erez Crossing (COGAT, November 28, 2019)**

◆ **June 12, 2019:** Attempted smuggling of packages sent by mail that had been ordered from websites at the Erez Crossing. The packages contained **model airplanes, spare parts, cameras, weapons equipment, military face masks, laser devices, a frequency jammer, and telescopic sights for weapons** (COGAT, June 13, 2019).



**Some of the dual-use items seized at the Erez Crossing. Right: Laser devices. Left: Military face masks (COGAT Facebook page, June 16, 2019)**

◆ **May 11, 2019:** Two Palestinian vessels entered the forbidden area off the shore of the southern Gaza Strip. The Israel Navy detained them. Four suspects who were on the vessel were detained and taken for interrogation. Their interrogation revealed that they were Hamas operatives and were en route from the Gaza Strip to the Sinai coast of Egypt to smuggle **fiberglass barrels into the Gaza Strip** (IDF spokesman, June 7, 2019). Fiberglass is used in the manufacture of rockets and bringing it into the Gaza Strip is illegal.



◆ **February 20, 2019:** During the transfer of 10 mailbags from Israel to the Gaza Strip, 11 packages suspected of containing dual-use products ordered on the Internet were identified. The equipment included **rifle sights, biometric equipment, field telephones, diving flashlights, packages of electronic components, fiber-optic wires and adapters, and electronic soldering irons** (Spokesperson's office of the COGAT, February 20, 2019).



**Some of the dual-use items seized at the Erez Crossing  
(Hebrew-language COGAT Twitter account, February 20, 2019)**