



The Palestinian Authority employs a policy of rebuilding the houses of terrorists demolished by Israel: the case of Islam Abu Hamid

October 31, 2019

Overview

On the night of October 24, 2019, the Israeli security forces demolished a building under construction in the al-Am'ari refugee camp near Ramallah. The house belonged to the family of Palestinian terrorist Islam Abu Hamid, who killed an IDF soldier in May 2018. Following the destruction Palestinians rioted and clashed with the Israeli security forces. **Senior Palestinian Authority (PA) and Fatah figures rushed to announce that the PA would rebuild the house demolished by Israel.** The rebuilding of terrorists' houses demolished by Israel is a pattern that repeats itself, part of the PA's consistent policy of providing benefits to terrorists and their families. **The PA policy is also a way to challenge the deterrent message Israel tries to convey by demolishing the houses.**



The destruction of the house of terrorist Islam Abu Hamid in the al-Am'ari refugee camp near Ramallah (IDF Twitter account and Wafa, October 24, 2019).



Palestinian rioters clash with Israeli security forces during the destruction of terrorist Islam Abu Hamid's house in the al-Am'ari refugee camp (QudsN Facebook page, October 24, 2019).

Palestinian Authority (PA) and Fatah responses to the destruction of the Abu Hamid house

► The destruction of the Abu Hamid family's house was condemned by the PA and Fatah, **whose spokesmen publicly declared that the PA was committed to rebuilding the house.** Senior figures also visited the family to express their support. Some of the responses to the destruction of the house were the following:

- ◆ **PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh** visited the house the same day. He told Islam Abu Hamid's mother that the Palestinians had learned from her what it meant to "stand firm." **He promised Mahmoud Abbas would visit,** and said the PA firmly adhered to its loyalty to the prisoners and **would rebuild what Israel destroyed** (Wafa, October 24, 2019).



Muhammad Shtayyeh visits the Abu Hamid family
(Wafa, October 24, 2019).



Islam Abu Hamid's mother, Um Nasser Abu Hamid, near the ruins of the house (Palestine Post Twitter account, October 24, 2018).

- ◆ **Hussein al-Sheikh, chairman of the PA civil authority, said Mahmoud Abbas had ordered the house to be rebuilt** (Hussein al-Sheikh's Twitter account, October 24, 2019).



Post supporting the Abu Hamid family from Hussein al-Sheikh on his Facebook page. It says that Mahmoud Abbas ordered the rebuilding of the family's house (Hussein al-Sheikh's Facebook page, October 24, 2019).

- ◆ On October 28, 2019, **Jamal al-Muheisen, in charge of Fatah's bureau of organization and mobilization in Judea and Samaria**, along with other senior Fatah figures in the Ramallah sector, visited Islam Abu Hamid's mother, Um Nasser Abu Hamid. He praised her, saying she was an "example of the struggle against Israel" (Jamal al-Muheisen's Facebook page, October 28, 2019).



**Jamal al-Muheisen visits Um Nasser Abu Hamid
(Jamal al-Muheisen's Facebook page, October 28, 2019)**

- ◆ **Jihad Tamliya, a member of the Legislative Council** affiliated with the camp of deposed Fatah figure Muhammad Dahlan, paid a media-covered visit to the ruins of the Abu Hamid family's house (Hihad Tamliya's Twitter account, October 26, 2019).



Jihad Tamliya visits the ruins of the Abu Hamid family's house
(Jihad Tamliya's Twitter account, October 26, 2019).

- ◆ **Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem** condemned the destruction of the house and **praised the family, saying that five of its sons were in Israeli prisons and a sixth had died as a shaheed** (Sawa, October 24, 2019)
- ◆ **Iyad Abu Fanoun, a Hamas terrorist operative from Bethlehem** released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal,¹ related to the destruction of the Abu Hamid house in a sermon he gave in the al-Am'ari mosque in Gaza. He praised the family's "heroic" record, saying that six of its sons were currently imprisoned in Israeli. He said that **five are al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades operations serving terms of life imprisonment and the sixth is being held in administration detention**, adding that one had been killed in the 1990s. **He said this was the fifth time the IDF had destroyed the family's house** (YouTube, October 27, 2019).

¹ **Iyad Abu Fanoun** is a Hamas terrorist operative from Bethlehem. He was imprisoned in Israel for being an operative in Hamas' military wing. He was released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal in 2011. He was detained again in 2012. He went on a hunger strike and after he agreed to end it he was expelled to the Gaza Strip (2013). In the Gaza Strip **he hosts a program on Hamas' al-Aqsa TV**, where he customarily incites terrorism. He also gives extremist sermons in the mosques in Gaza.

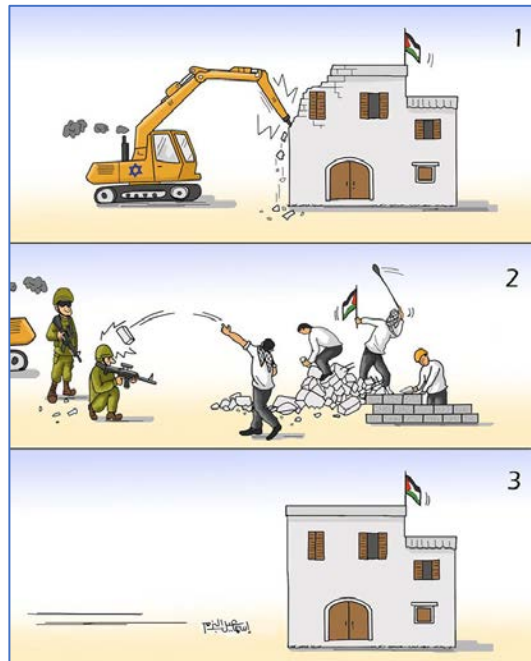


Iyad Abu Fanoun gives a sermon in the al-Am'ari mosque in the Gaza Strip in which he praises the Abu Hamid family (YouTube, October 27, 2019).

Rebuilding Islam Abu Hamid's House: a Reflection of PA and Fatah Policy

Destroying the houses of terrorists who carry out deadly attacks that kill Israelis is an Israeli policy designed to deter terrorist operatives. In response, **the PA and Fatah adopted a policy of rebuilding the houses and taking care of the terrorists' families, while glorifying the terrorist attacks that led to the destruction of the houses. In most instances senior PA and Fatah figures, led by Mahmoud Abbas, have "adopted" the families, rebuilt their houses and provided them with interim housing while their houses were being rebuilt.** On a number of occasions they have held fund-raising drives among the Palestinian public to support the families and rebuild the houses that were demolished.

► Rebuilding the houses of terrorists is an important expression of political and popular support for terrorists who are killed and for their families. **It is part of the package of benefits and payments the PA gives the families of prisoners imprisoned in Israel, prisoners formerly imprisoned in Israel, and the families of shaheeds.** Moreover, rebuilding the houses is **an act of defiance against Israel, intended to challenge the message of deterrence Israel is trying to send by demolishing the houses of terrorists.**



The IDF destroys the houses of terrorists and the Palestinians rebuild them (Iyad al-Bazam's Facebook page, December 17, 2018).

- On May 26, 2018, Islam Abu Hamid threw a slab of marble from the roof of his house at an IDF force engaged in a security operation in the al-Am'ari refugee camp in Ramallah. The slab killed an IDF soldier. On December 15, 2018, the Israeli security forces demolished the Abu Hamid family's four-story house. **Mahmoud Abbas immediately declared that the house would be rebuilt**, and a committee was appointed to implement his decision.
- On December 15, 2018, **Jamal al-Muheisen, a member of Fatah's Central Committee and head of Fatah's bureau of organization and mobilization in Judea and Samaria**, visited the solidarity tent erected in the refugee camp by the Abu Hamid family. He told the family that **he was speaking for Mahmoud Abbas**, having met with him the same morning. He said Mahmoud Abbas had appointed him to oversee the building of a new house for the family. He said that [Fatah and the PA] would accompany the family in the coming months (Jamal al-Muheisen's Facebook page, December 15, 2018).
- A few days later Jamal al-Muheisen met in his office in Ramallah with members of the committee. He stressed the need to rush the construction of the new house. He also promised that not only would the family's house be restored to its former condition, neighboring houses damaged by the destruction of the Abu Hamid house would also be repaired. He said that during the renovations houses would be rented for the families to live in the meantime (website of Fatah's bureau of organization and mobilization, December 25, 2019).



The destruction of the house of terrorist Islam Abu Hamid after the attack which killed a IDF soldier (Wafa, December 15, 2018).



Senior Fatah figure Jamal al-Muheisen (white hair) visits the solidarity tent erected for Islam Yusuf Abu Hamid in the al-Am'ari refugee camp in Ramallah (Jamal al-Muheisen's Facebook page, December 15, 2018).

- At the beginning of September 2019 the Palestinian media reported that construction had begun on the new house for the Abu Hamid family. The article included pictures and a link to a video documenting the construction. According to a media report, the construction was being funded by Mahmoud Abbas, chairman of the PA, and that one story of the projected four had already been built. Interviewed by the media, Islam Abu Hamid's mother thanked Mahmoud Abbas for his support (Raya News website, September 2, 2019).



**Rebuilding the Abu Hamid house in the al-Am'ari refugee camp in Ramallah
(Raya News website, September 2, 2019).**

► On the night of October 24, 2019, Israeli security forces demolished the house that was under construction. As in previous cases, support from the PA for rebuilding the house was promised to the family in Mahmoud Abbas' name. The PA and the Abu Hamid family seem to be playing cat and mouse with the Israeli security forces. The Palestinian media reported that **it was the fifth time since 1994 that the IDF had destroyed the Abu Hamid house** (Wafa, October 24, 2019).

Further Examples of the Rebuilding of Terrorists' Houses

Overview

The rebuilding of a terrorist's house destroyed by Israeli security forces is **a repeating pattern**. Israel destroys the houses of terrorists who carry out deadly terrorist attacks, and the PA, Fatah and sometimes local authorities find alternative housing for the families and help them rebuild their houses. Sometimes the authorities also announce fund-raising drives asking local residents to contribute money to finance the rebuilding. Examples follow:

Omar Amin Abu Layla: the terrorist who carried out a combined shooting-stabbing attack, killing two Israelis

On April 24, 2019, the Israeli security forces destroyed the house where Omar Amin Abu Layla lived in the village of al-Zawya (west of Ariel). On March 17, 2019, Abu Layla carried out a combined shooting and stabbing attack at the Ariel Junction and at the Gitai Avisar Junction, killing an Israel civilian and an IDF soldier.



The demolished house of terrorist Omar Abu Layla in the village of al-Zawiya, (official Fatah Facebook page, April 24, 2019).

► As soon as the house had been demolished **the Fatah movement in Salfit (south of Ariel) announced it had begun a project to rebuild it.** To that end land was purchased and construction begun. Reportedly, the house would be finished within four months and in the meantime, the family would live in temporary housing (Wafa, April 24, 2019). The rebuilding ceremony was attended by Abbas Zaki, a member of Fatah's Central Committee. On July 1, 2019, a delegation of members of the Fatah's Revolutionary Council headed by Abbas Zaki visited the construction site of the family's new house (Abbas Zaki's Facebook page, July 1, 2019).

► In July 2019 Abbas Zaki presented the Abu Layla family with an award. He also visited the construction site of the new house, along with the secretary of the Salfit branch of Fatah and other movement activists (official Fatah Facebook page, July 1, 2019). It is unclear whether the construction of the Abu Layla family's new house was completed.



Right: Abbas Zaki visits the demolished family house of terrorist Omar Abu Layla in the village of al-Zawiya (west of Ariel), where Omar Abu Layla was born. Left: Abbas Zaki visits the construction site of the new Abu Layla house (Abbas Zaki's Facebook page, July 1, 2019).

Ashraf Na'alwa: a terrorist who carried out a shooting attack, killing two Israelis

On December 16, 2018, the Israeli security forces destroyed the basement and first floor of the house in which terrorist Ashraf Na'alwa and his family lived in the Shuweika neighborhood in northern Tulkarm. Ashraf Na'alwa carried out a shooting attack in the Barkan industrial zone on October 7, 2018, killing two Israelis. During the destruction of the house dozens of Palestinians gathered, set fire to tires, threw stones and Molotov cocktails and shot fireworks.



The destruction of the house of Ashraf Na'alwa's house in the Shuweika neighborhood (Palinfo Twitter account, December 17, 2018).

► In December 2018 a committee, which included local Shuweika residents, was appointed in Tulkarm to rebuild Ashraf Na'alwa's house. The committee was supported by Fatah and the Tulkarm municipality. On December 21, 2018, the committee erected a mourning tent in Shuweika for condolence calls, which also served as the location for a fund-raising drive. During the event members of the committee and the Na'alwa family announced their intention to build a new house which would be separate from the old one. They said that if engineering examinations proved the old house could be salvaged, it would be renovated and the new house would be turned over to the *waqf* (Muslim endowments) and

dedicated to the shaheeds, to serve as a social center (Palinfo, December 21, 2018; Facebook page of Shuweika al-Ijtima'iya, December 21, 2018). It is unclear whether or not the construction of the new house has been completed.



Event held to commemorate Ashraf Na'alwa, raise funds and report on preparations for rebuilding the family's house (QudsN Twitter account, December 21, 2018); Palinfo Twitter account, December 21, 2018).

Murad Bader Abdallah Idi's: the terrorist who carried out a stabbing attack, killing an Israeli civilian

On June 11, 2016, the Israeli security forces destroyed the house of terrorist Murad Bader Abdallah Idi's in the village of Yatta (about five miles south of Hebron). On January 17, 2016, Murad Idi's carried out a stabbing attack, killing an Israeli woman on her front doorstep in the community of Otniel (south of Hebron).



The ruins of the house of terrorist Murad Bader Idi's in the village of Yatta, destroyed by the Israeli security forces (PNN, July 11, 2016).

► Immediately after the house had been destroyed, **the Yatta municipality and the Fatah movement** began collecting donations to rebuild the house (Ma'an, June 11, 2016). Musa

Mukhamra, head of the Yatta municipality, said **alternative housing would be provided for the family by the municipality until its new house had been built** (it is unclear whether or not the house was completed). He also said the municipality had appointed a committee to deal with rebuilding houses that had been demolished by IDF forces (Yatta municipality Facebook page, June 12, 2016).

The Jarar clan in Jenin, two of whose members participated in a shooting attack, killing an Israeli civilian

► The Jarar clan lives in Jenin. Two of its members were operatives in the squad that carried out a shooting attack near the Havat Gilad Junction in Samaria (about five miles southwest of Nablus), in which an Israeli civilian was killed (January 9, 2018). One of the two terrorists, Ahmed Isma'il Muhammad Jarar, was killed in an exchange of fire with Israeli security forces (on the night of January 17, 2018). The other, Muhammad Nasr Jarar, was apprehended while hiding in a house in the village of Yamoun (northern Samaria). The Palestinian media reported that the Israeli security forces had demolished Jarar clan houses in Jenin.

► **The Fatah branch in Jenin rushed to embrace the Jarar clan.** The branch rented a furnished house for them, including equipment and electrical appliances. The clan members are supposed to live in the temporary housing until their new houses have been built. According to Nur al-Din Abu Rab, the secretary of the Fatah branch in Jenin, providing the Jarar family with alternative housing emphasized "Fatah's national commitment" to the families whose houses were demolished by the IDF (Wafa, February 24, 2018). Senior Fatah figures paid condolence calls after the visit of Ibrahim Ramadan, the governor of the Jenin district, who declared the appointing of a "popular committee" which would be responsible for rebuilding the houses of the clan that had been destroyed (Wafa, January 21, 2018). It is unclear where the clan's houses have been rebuilt.



Right: Senior Fatah figures Mahmoud al-'Alul and Jamal al-Muheisen visit the mourning tent in Jenin (Mahmoud al-'Alul's Facebook page, January 22, 2018). Left: The mourning tent, picture from Fatah's official Facebook page (January 24, 2018).



Right: Ahmed Nasr Jarar's mother (right) thanks the Fatah branch in Jenin for the house provided by the PA (YouTube, February 24, 2018). Left: From Fatah's official Facebook page, Sohaib Jarrar [sic], Ahmed Jarar's brother, thanks the secretary and deputy secretary of Fatah's Jenin branch for the support they gave the family (February 24, 2018).

Muhannad Shafiq Muhammad Halabi: terrorist who carried out a stabbing attack, killing two Israelis

► On the night of January 9, 2016, the Israeli security forces destroyed the house of the family of terrorist Muhannad Shafiq Muhammad Halabi in the village of Surda (north of Ramallah). On October 3, 2015, he carried out a stabbing attack near the Lions Gate in Jerusalem, killing two Israeli civilians. Immediately after the destruction of his house **the PA began a fund-raising drive to rebuild the house**. Two days later it was reported that the sum of 200,000 Israeli shekels (about \$50,000) had been raised (Quds Facebook page, January 10, 2019). It is unclear whether the house was rebuilt.



Right: The ruins of the house of Muhannad Halabi (Wafa, January 9, 2016) Left: Campaign to raise funds to rebuild the Halabi family's house (Quds Facebook page, January 10, 2016).