



## Palestinian reactions to the double terrorist attack in Jerusalem (November 23, 2022)

November 28, 2022

### Overview

- ▶ On the morning of November 23, 2022, Palestinians carried out a double terrorist attack in Jerusalem. Two IEDs exploded within half an hour of one another, one at the entrance to Jerusalem and the other at the Ramot Junction. Two Israelis were killed: a 15 year-old boy, killed at the scene of the first attack, and a man in his 50s, who was mortally wounded and later died. About 20 people were wounded, some of them critically. **So far there has been no claim of responsibility for the attack.** The Israeli security forces are searching for the terrorists responsible and are concerned they will carry out another attack.
- ▶ The attack was unique and more sophisticated than the recent lone wolf and shooting attacks. It was carried out almost simultaneously at two locations approximately 2.5 kilometers (1.6 miles) apart, and necessitated early planning and organization, collecting information, assembling the devices, placing them and detonating them remotely. **Therefore, according to Israel security sources, an organized terrorist squad was behind the attacks, rather than lone wolf terrorists acting spontaneously.**
- ▶ Considering the nature of the attack and concerned about an Israeli reprisal, **the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip raised their level of alert.** The Lebanese daily newspaper *al-Akhbar* reported Israel sent Hamas a message through the Egyptian mediators threatening that if the organization had in fact been responsible for the attack, Israel's response would be forceful. Hamas in turn warned Israel not to respond in a way that would ignite a confrontation.
- ▶ **The official Palestinian media reported the attack as an event, not a terrorist attack. Senior PA figures did not relate to it at all.** The terrorist organizations, especially Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), reported it as singular and praise-worthy. They welcomed it, reporting its complexity and as a reminder to Israel of attacks in the past. In the Gaza Strip and various locations in Judea and Samaria pastries and candy were distributed in celebration.

## The Attack

- ▶ On the morning of November 23, 2022, there was a double terrorist attack in Jerusalem. At approximately 7 a.m. an IED exploded at a bus stop at the Tel Aviv exit from Jerusalem. About half an hour later another IED exploded at the Ramot Junction, about 2.5 kilometers (1.6 miles) to the north. A 15 year-old Israeli yeshiva student was killed in the first explosion. A man in his 50s was mortally wounded and died a few days later. A total of about 20 people were injured, some of them critically.
- ▶ According to Israeli security sources, the IEDs were inside backpacks placed near the bus stations and detonated remotely. They were relatively small but packed with metal balls and nails, which caused most of the injuries. According to the sources, the evidence indicated that both attacks were carried out by the same organized terrorist squad, not by lone wolf terrorists acting spontaneously (Israeli media, November 23, 2022).
- ▶ Abdallah Amin, a Palestinian political commentator and expert in security and strategy, said that according to the evidence and documentation on the Palestinian social networks, the IEDs contained screws and nails and weighed between one and two kilos (2.2 and 4.4 pounds). He said the attack showed a change in the "armed groups' " perception of their ability to attack Israel where it would be least expected. He also praised the professionalism [sic] and ability of those who carried out the attack, claiming the fact that they had not been captured proved the thoroughness of their acquaintance with the area (al-Risalah, November 24, 2022).



**The scene of the terrorist attack at the bus stop at the Tel Aviv exit from Jerusalem. (Right: Israel Police Force Facebook page; ZAKA spokesman, November 23, 2022). Left: Shehab Twitter account, November 23, 2022).**



**The IED explosion at the Ramot Junction. Left: Bus damaged by the explosion at the Ramot Junction (Twitter account of photojournalist Hassan Aslih, November 23, 2022).**

- ▶ So far, no organization has claimed responsibility. According to Hamas-affiliated political commentator Mustafa al-Sowaf, a Palestinian carried out the attack but not publicly claiming responsibility was the right move for his safety, because it would prevent Israel from finding out who was responsible. He said the "resistance" [terrorist operatives] in Judea and Samaria should repeat the modus operandi [of not claiming responsibility] to keep the organizations from becoming targets for Israeli reprisal (al-Araby al-Jadeed TV, November 24, 2022).
- ▶ The Israeli security forces are searching for the terrorists responsible for the attack and are focusing on CCTV footage and intelligence information, monitoring their escape route. There is concern that more attacks will be carried out. According to the sources, the terrorist squad responsible acted without external direction after having made lengthy preparations. It is assumed the terrorists were familiar with the area and might live in east Jerusalem, and planned to attack when they knew the bus stops would be crowded. The security forces also noted that during the past year 34 IED attacks have been prevented (Israeli media, November 26, 2022).

## Palestinian Reactions

- ▶ The Palestinian organizations praised and celebrated the attack. Pastry and candy were distributed in the Gaza Strip and various locations in Judea and Samaria.



**Right: Students from the al-Aroub branch of the Palestine Polytechnic University in Hebron hand out pastry and candy. Left: Students from the information technology department the Palestine Technical University – Khadourie/al-Aroub. The inscription reads, "World Cup of occupied Jerusalem – #Jenin Nablus Jerusalem???" (Paldf Twitter account, November 22, 2022).**



**Handing out pastry and candy in Rafah  
(Twitter account of Wa'el Abu Omar, November 23, 2022).**

## Alert raised in the Gaza Strip

- Sources in the Gaza Strip told the Hezbollah-affiliated al-Mayadeen TV that the Palestinian organizations had begun taking unprecedented steps to raise security after the two explosions in Jerusalem. They said that in light of the developments in Judea and Samaria, they were preparing for an escalation that could turn into a war, and that the "resistance" [terrorist organizations] had put their rocket-fire squads on full alert (al-Mayadeen TV, November 23, 2022).
- The Lebanese daily *al-Akhbar* reported that a few hours after the attack, and with the increase in Israel's threats against the Gaza Strip, the "resistance" and Israel had exchanged warnings via the Egyptian mediators "not to take ill-considered steps." According to sources in Hamas, on November 24, 2022, the Egyptians contacted them to discuss the situation following the

attack, given Israel's accusations that Hamas was behind it and hints that targeted killings of the Hamas leadership in the Gaza Strip would be renewed. **The Egyptians passed Hamas the Israeli message that if it became evident the movement was behind the attack, "the Gaza Strip could expect a powerful Israeli response."** According to the sources, Hamas described the accusations as "an attempt to ease Israel's internal pressure by transferring the battle to the Gaza Strip."

► **Hamas threatened that a return to targeted killings would be a reason to initiate a massive wave of suicide bombing attacks and extensive confrontations with the "resistance" in the Gaza Strip.** Hamas also warned Israel of the consequences of military or security actions against the Gaza Strip, because it would not respond the way it did in 2002, since today all Israel's cities were within range of the "resistance" rockets. In the Gaza Strip the terrorist organizations increased their preparations for the possibility the situation would deteriorate, raising the alert level of their security forces and military-terrorist wings in preparation for the confrontation they claimed "could be forced on them" (*al-Akhbar*, Lebanon, November 25, 2022).

## The Palestinian Authority (PA) and Fatah

► **Senior PA figures, who usually react to every Israeli action, did not formally react to the terrorist attack in Jerusalem.** The Palestinian news agency Wafa (which is subordinate to Mahmoud Abbas' office), reported the attack with the headline, "Following explosions in Jerusalem: the occupation closes the main entrances and increases its [security] measures" (Wafa, November 23, 2022). **Ahmed Ghanim, a senior Fatah oppositionist in Jerusalem,**<sup>1</sup> told al-Mayadeen TV that Israel ("the occupation") had to understand that the "struggle" would continue until the occupation ended (al-Mayadeen TV, November 23, 2022).

## Hamas

► **Hamas** issued a statement noting the Palestinians' right to "resist" [attack] Israel ("the occupation"), blaming it for the consequences of "the IDF's crimes and the settlers' terrorism" against the Palestinians. Hamas also responded to Israeli sources which immediately accused Hamas operatives outside the Gaza Strip of responsibility for the

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<sup>1</sup> Ahmed Ghanim used to be a member of Fatah's Revolutionary Council and currently opposes Mahmoud Abbas. He planned to run for a seat in the Palestinian Legislative Council on Marwan Barghouti's ticket, not as a part of Fatah.

attack.<sup>2</sup> It claimed that Israel's attempts to incite public opinion against Hamas and its ties with regional countries by assigning blame to Hamas frameworks outside "Palestine" were only a way to cover its inability to deal with the "Palestinian revolution." Hamas claimed its policy was consistent: the arena of the "resistance" [Palestinian terrorism] and its direction were inside the territory of "occupied Palestine" (Hamas website, November 23, 2022).

► **The Hamas-affiliated political commentator Hassan Asfour** described the Hamas announcement as exceptional and unprecedented. He said that what had caught his attention was that only a few minutes after the attack, the Israeli media, quoting no security source, accused Hamas of being behind it. Apparently, he continued, the quick accusation against Hamas, and especially against movement operatives in Turkey, held a special message which very quickly led **the Turkish foreign ministry to condemn the attack and call it a "terrorist attack."** That, he claimed, was a drastic change from previous practice, a "perceptual and political about-face" of Turkey's descriptions of military activities [sic] against Israel. **It put political pressure on Hamas**, which therefore it issued the announcement denying its connection to the attack and absolving Turkey of all the Israeli media's accusations against it (Amad, November 24, 2022).



**Turkish foreign ministry denunciation of the terrorist attack (Arabic Twitter account of the Turkish foreign ministry, November 23, 2022).**

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Moshe Elad, who was head of security coordination with the PA, said in an interview given immediately after the terrorist attack that it was apparently carried out by Hamas operatives who had used technology learned from Hezbollah in south Lebanon, and who had ties to senior Hamas figure Saleh al-'Arouri, who, he said, was currently in Turkey (Israel Channel 7, November 23, 2022).

► **Hamas spokesman Abd al-Latif al-Qanua** said they praised the Palestinians and the residents of "occupied" Jerusalem for the "heroic, praiseworthy action" at the bus stops, carried out as part of the "continuing response" to the "invasion" of al-Aqsa mosque, its "Judaization" and the attempts to divide it. He added that the attack was the result of "the crimes of Israel and the settlers" against the Palestinians and al-Aqsa mosque, and it again proved that the only answer to "Zionist terrorism" would be "more heroic actions" using various methods in various locations (Shehab, November 23, 2022).

► **Muhammad Hamada, Hamas spokesman for Jerusalem affairs**, said **Hamas welcomed the attack and "praised the hands that created and placed [the IEDs]"**, adding that by using IEDs they had proved to Israel that the Palestinians stood firm on their lands and adhered to the option of "resistance." He also warned that the coming days would be more and more difficult for Israel ("the enemy"), announcing that the time had come for the birth of [terrorist] cells throughout "Palestine" and they were prepared to deal with [Israel] (Palestine Online, QudsN, al-Aqsa TV Twitter account, November 23, 2022).

► **Nasser al-Hindi, chairman of the Jerusalem Community against Judaization, considered a senior Hamas figure in east Jerusalem**, said that as soon as he heard about the attack he thought about the expulsion of the families from Sheikh Jarrah and Itamar Ben-Gvir's boasting with his weapon in the neighborhood, in Nebi Samuel, in Bab al-Amoud and al-Aqsa mosque, and he was put in mind of the Flag March and the daily "violations" in the city. He claimed the objective of the attack was to restore balance, and to signal to Israel and the Israeli public that their personal security in Jerusalem was vanishing (aljazeera.net, November 23, 2022).

► On another occasion al-Hindi claimed the attack was praise-worthy and organized, and perhaps reminded Israel of the bombings of 2000. He claimed 2022 had been one of the most difficult for the Palestinians in general and the residents of east Jerusalem in particular because of the "escalation of Israel's aggression against the holy places." In his opinion, the attack was a "natural reaction" to the violations and escalation [sic] against al-Aqsa, and was equal in seriousness to Israel's aggression against the Palestinians. He claimed the Palestinians had other ways to "resist" [attack], and this had been one of those meant to teach Israel not to attack the Palestinians' holy places (Safa, November 23, 2022).



**Cartoon by Alaa' al-Laqta: Joyous reaction to the terrorist attack in Jerusalem, linked to the World Cup [sic]. The Arabic reads, "Explosion in Jerusalem" (Alaa' al-Laqta's Facebook page, November 23, 2022).**

## The Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)

- ▶ **Tareq Izz al-Din, PIJ spokesman in Judea and Samaria**, welcomed the attack, claiming it was the "natural reaction" against Israel ("the occupation"), its terrorism and its activities against the Palestinians. He said its objective was to send the message to Israel's political leadership and the leadership of the settlers that the policies of the Israeli government would not protect them from the Palestinian "resistance" [terrorism] (PIJ website, November 23, 2022).
- ▶ **Senior PIJ figure Da'ud Shehab** claimed the Palestinians had a strong will and were prepared to do everything to protect their lands and holy places. He said they would not sit idly by while a new coalition government was being formed that put the settlements, Judaization and aggression at the top of its priority list and aspired to swallow what was left of Palestinian land. He said Israel and its leaders had to abandon the illusion of deciding the conflict over the future of Jerusalem and forcing a division of the time and space of al-Aqsa mosque (Paltoday, November 23, 2022).
- ▶ **Senior PIJ figure Muhammad Shalah** claimed the attack has caused an enormous panic in Israel. He added that it had been carried out as "a natural part of the resistance" and thanks to the PIJ and its leader Ziyad al-Nakhalah, who ordered the establishment of the "resistance Jenin, Nablus and Tulkarm and other Battalions" [terrorist networks in Judea and Samaria]. He also said the Palestinians would continue "the option of resistance," and would not stray from the path because it was the only way to save the Palestinians from Israel and its "oppression" (Paltoday, November 24, 2022).

## Other Reactions



► **Hezbollah** praised the Palestinian people for "escalating and developing the resistance to include all the means at its disposal." Hezbollah claimed it was certain that "brave actions" such as the attack in Jerusalem were the "true realization of the Palestinian resistance to the occupation." The announcement added that the attack showed the "resistance's" ability to break through Israel's security and strike it at the time and place of its choice (al-Mayadeen, November 23, 2022).

► **The Turkish foreign ministry** issued a formal announcement condemning the attack and stating it was deeply worried by the increasing tension. It condemned terrorist attacks against civilians and sent its condolences [for those killed] and wishes for a speedy recovery of the wounded (*Daily Sabah* in Arabic and Turkish, November 23, 2022).