

**D2. U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, BUREAU OF COUNTERTERRORISM, *COUNTRY REPORTS ON TERRORISM 2011*, WASHINGTON, D.C., JULY 2012 (EXCERPTS).**

*Published annually, the Country Reports on Terrorism began in 2004, replacing the Patterns of Global Terrorism. Notable in this year's report on Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, excerpted below, is the reference to Israeli settler violence against Palestinian civilians as a form of terrorism. The complete report is available from the Department of State at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).*

***Israel, West Bank, and Gaza***  
*Overview*

Israel was a resolute counterterrorism partner in 2011. Israel faced terrorist threats from Hamas, the Popular Resistance Committees, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), particularly from Gaza but also from the West Bank, and from Hizballah in Lebanon. Gaza-based Palestinian terrorist organizations continued rocket and mortar attacks into Israeli territory, and skirmished along the security fence surrounding Gaza. The Government of Israel responded to these terrorist threats with operations directed at terrorist leaders, infrastructure, and activities such as rocket launching. Arms smuggling increased from Iran through Egypt into Gaza to Palestinian terrorist organizations. Israeli officials were concerned about the smuggling of weapons from Libya into Gaza. Israeli law enforcement agencies and courts arrested and sentenced a number of terrorist suspects. An August 18 series

of shooting and suicide attacks on cars and buses in southern Israel by terrorists who entered Israel from the Sinai killed eight, injured approximately 40, and were the most significant acts of terrorism since 2008.

Israeli government officials continued to assert that Operation Cast Lead in Gaza in December 2008–January 2009 helped achieve a level of deterrence, as the number of rocket and mortar launches decreased in comparison with years prior. However, the number of rocket and mortar launches in 2011 increased significantly from the number of launches in both 2009 and 2010. The rocket attacks demonstrated technological advancements, allowing groups to indigenously manufacture and stockpile rockets at a low cost. In addition, Iran increased the provision of medium-range rockets and unsuccessfully tried to smuggle an anti-ship cruise missile into Gaza. Israeli experts maintained that Hamas successfully smuggled long-range rockets from the Sinai Peninsula through tunnels into Gaza and subsequently began producing rockets in Gaza capable of striking Tel Aviv suburbs. The Government of Israel deployed the Iron Dome missile defense system in Israel's south, and it successfully intercepted some projectiles launched from Gaza.

Northern Border: Israeli security officials remained concerned about the terrorist threat posed to Israel from Hizballah and its Iranian patron, arguing that Iran, primarily through the efforts of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force (IRGC-QF), continued to transfer arms to Hizballah in Lebanon. Also, in light of the unrest in Syria, Israeli officials were concerned about proliferation of conventional and non-conventional weapons from Syria to terrorist organizations. Israeli politicians and security officials pointed to Hizballah's efforts to rebuild and re-arm following the 2006 Lebanon War as evidence that Hizballah remained a threat to Israel. Israeli government officials indicated Hizballah possessed as many as 45,000 rockets and missiles, some of which were capable of striking Israeli population centers, including Tel Aviv. On November 29, three rockets were

fired from Lebanon into northern Israel, causing moderate damage but no injuries.

West Bank: The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and Israel Securities Authority (ISA) continued to conduct operations in the West Bank, in part to maintain pressure on Palestinian terrorist organizations and their supporters. Overall, Israeli security services continued the trend of relaxing movement and access measures in the West Bank.

#### *2011 Terrorist Incidents*

Israel faced a variety of terrorist attacks and threats in 2011, including shootings, stabbings, a suicide bombing, rocket and mortar fire from Gaza, and skirmishes along the security fence surrounding Gaza. Rocket and mortar fire emanating from Gaza was the most prevalent form of attack by Palestinian terrorist organizations and continued throughout 2011. The two most intense periods of fire were from April 8–11, when Palestinian groups launched approximately 140 rockets and mortars at Israel, and from August 18–25, when groups fired approximately 400 rockets and mortars, killing one and injuring 27. The Government of Israel held Hamas, as the dominant organization in effective control of Gaza, responsible for all rocket and mortar attacks emanating from Gaza, although the majority of such attacks were conducted by PIJ, the Popular Resistance Committees, and other groups inside Gaza. Following such attacks, the Israeli government forces targeted sites where terrorists were launching indirect-fire attacks against Israeli civilians and security forces. Terrorist organizations continued to target Israel with rocket and mortar fire from various locales throughout Gaza. From January 1, 2011, to November 15, 2011, 716 projectiles fired from Gaza landed in Israel, according to the Israeli government. . . .

#### *Regional and International Security Cooperation*

In February, Israel signed a two-year agreement with the Organization of American States' Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism (CICTE) to cooperate on counter-radicalization, counterterrorist financing, and aviation

security. In implementation of the agreement, Israel held an aviation security seminar in September for CICTE in the Bahamas. In March, Israel participated in the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force conference in Ethiopia. Through the UN Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, Israel worked with Kenya and Uganda promoting such issues as border security, countering radicalization, and the “safe cities” concept (a network of cameras sending live footage to a 24-hour monitoring center). Israel also explored areas of counterterrorism cooperation with the Central Asian republics and the Economic Community of West African States.

Israel joined North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s (NATO) Partnership Action Plan against Terrorism, and was active in the NATO crisis response, consequence management, and civil emergency planning working groups. Israel participated in the European Union (EU) Security Research Initiative to promote technological developments for counterterrorism purposes. Israel also engaged with the EU on transportation and aviation security efforts, including container security. Israelis participated in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Action against Terrorism Unit, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, the Megaports Initiative, and was an observer in the Gaza Counter Arms Smuggling Initiative.

Israel conducted strategic dialogues, including counterterrorism discussions, with Germany, Canada, Australia, France, Italy, India, Russia, and the United States. Bilaterally, Israel participated in the annual U.S.-Israel Joint Counterterrorism Group. Israel conducted counterterrorism workshops in Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia tailored to those countries’ needs and capabilities. . . .

### ***The Palestinian Territories: West Bank and Gaza***

#### *Overview*

The Palestinian Authority (PA) continued its counterterrorism efforts. Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and the al-Aqsa

Martyrs Brigade remained present in the West Bank, although the improved capacity of PA Security Forces (PASF) constrained those organizations’ ability to carry out attacks inside or from the West Bank.

Palestinian militants killed Israelis in several attacks inside the West Bank. Militants also launched indiscriminate rocket and mortar attacks against Israel from the Hamas-controlled Gaza. Attacks by extremist Israeli settlers against Palestinian residents, property, and places of worship in the West Bank continued.

The primary PASF operating in the West Bank were the Palestinian Civil Police, the National Security Force, the Preventive Security Organization, the General Intelligence Service, the Presidential Guard, and the Civil Defense. Based on the payroll numbers available, PASF forces numbered approximately 28,000 in total. Much of the PASF were under the interior minister’s operational control and followed the prime minister’s guidance, while others reported directly to the PA president. Israeli authorities, among others, noted continuing improvements in the capacity and performance of PASF as a leading contributor to the improved security environment in the West Bank. According to IDF statistics, there was a 96 percent reduction in the number of terrorist incidents in the West Bank over the past five years.

PA President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad consistently reiterated their commitment to nonviolence, recognition of the State of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations between the parties. They continued to support a security program involving disarmament of fugitive militants, arresting members of terrorist organizations, and gradually dismantling armed groups in the West Bank.

In September, during rallies throughout the West Bank in support of the Palestinian bid for membership in the United Nations (UN), PASF were on high alert for terrorists or other spoilers who could have upset the peaceful nature of the protests. Despite a turnout numbering in the tens of thousands, events remained largely peaceful, although some

clashes occurred between Palestinians and Israeli settlers in the West Bank.

In December, well-publicized Israeli settler attacks on IDF personnel and an IDF military base in the West Bank sparked a public debate in Israel on the phenomena of settler violence; political and security officials pledged to implement several steps to curb and punish these violent attacks. Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak labeled settler acts as having “the characteristic of home-grown terror;” several months earlier, IDF Head of Central Command Avi Mizrahi labeled attacks against Palestinians and their property in the West Bank as “terror” and ordered the administrative deportation of a dozen Israeli settlers from the West Bank settlement of Yitzhar. In 2011, a total of ten Palestinian mosques in the West Bank and Jerusalem were vandalized or set on fire in attacks that Israeli authorities believed were perpetrated by settlers, up from six such incidents in 2010 and one in 2009.

Hamas continued to consolidate its control over Gaza, eliminating or marginalizing potential rivals. Hamas and other armed groups in Gaza continued to smuggle weapons, cash, and other contraband into Gaza through an extensive network of tunnels from Egypt. Gaza remained a base of operations for several terrorist organizations besides Hamas, such as PIJ; Salafist splinter groups, such as Jund Ansar Allah and the Army of Islam; and clan-based criminal groups that engaged in or facilitated terrorist attacks. In October, Israel and Hamas announced the conclusion of a deal which saw the release of 1,027 Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails in exchange for the release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. Some Palestinians perceived the terms of the release as a victory for Hamas and a defeat for the strategy of negotiations and non-violence.

#### *2011 Terrorist Incidents*

There were multiple acts of violence conducted by different sub-state actors in the West Bank, both Israeli and Palestinian. Palestinian militants launched indiscriminate rocket and mortar attacks at Israel from the Hamas-controlled Gaza. Attacks included:

- On March 11, two Palestinian men affiliated with the PFLP stabbed to death five members of the Fogel family, including three young children, in the West Bank settlement of Itamar, near Nablus.
- On March 23, a British national was killed and 50 others were wounded when a bomb exploded at a telephone booth near the Jerusalem Central Bus Station. In September, Israeli officials announced the arrest of several Hamas militants suspected to be involved in the bombing.
- On April 24, a member of the PASF opened fire on Israeli worshippers visiting Joseph’s Tomb in Nablus, killing one and injuring six others. This attack was characterized by the Israeli government as a terrorist incident, while the PA characterized it as a violation of the PASF rules of engagement.
- On October 29, a rocket fired from Gaza struck the city of Ashqelon, killing one.
- On November 10, at the Mamilla Cemetery in Jerusalem, vandals sprayed “price tag” graffiti in Hebrew on four Muslim graves.
- On December 14, unknown vandals burned a mosque in Jerusalem and sprayed anti-Arab graffiti (e.g., “A Good Arab is a Dead Arab,” “Mohammed is Dead”).
- On December 15, Israeli settlers attacked a mosque in the village of Burqa in the Ramallah governorate, setting it afire and defacing it with “price tag” graffiti.

#### *Legislation and Law Enforcement*

PASF detained terrorists in the West Bank, and PA authorities tried some detainees in military courts. Despite factional reconciliation talks between Hamas and Fatah, PASF personnel continued to detain Hamas elements in operations often protested by Hamas officials.

- In January, PASF arrested 15 Hamas operatives in overnight raids in the West Bank districts of Nablus and Jenin; two senior Hamas officials were separately detained by the PA in Haloul and in Nablus. Also

in January, PA security forces conducted sweeps throughout the West Bank, detaining dozens of members of the Hizb al-Tahrir Salafist Islamist group.

- In February, the PA arrested 11 Hamas operatives in overnight operations in Palestinian villages near the West Bank city of Hebron.
- In March, PA security forces arrested seven Hamas operatives in an overnight sweep in the West Bank cities of Jenin, Nablus, and Hebron.
- In May and June, the PA arrested more than 80 Hamas operatives across the West Bank and tried seven on security-related offenses.
- In July, the PASF arrested 22 Hamas members near Nablus.
- In August, PA security personnel detained the son of a prominent Hamas activist on suspicion of being involved in armed activities; several dozen other Hamas operatives were detained by the PA in the Nablus-area villages of Aqraba and

Awarta, and in the West Bank cities of Tulkarem, Ramallah, and Hebron.

- In September, PASF detained 20 Hamas operatives in the West Bank cities of Salfit, Hebron, and Nablus over a 48-hour period, and issued court summons to several hundred others.
- In December, PASF arrested 26 members of Hamas and five members of PIJ. Hamas accused the PASF of an “escalating arrest campaign of its supporters” and organized a youth rally in Hebron to protest the continued arrests. . . .

Limitations on PA counterterrorism efforts in the West Bank included restrictions on the movement and activities of PASF in and through areas of the West Bank for which the Israeli government retained responsibility for security under the terms of Oslo-era agreements. The limited capacity of the PA’s civilian criminal justice system also hampered PA counterterrorism efforts. . . .



Israeli settlers on a protest during a march from the Ulpana outpost (near the West Bank settlement of Beit El) to the High Court of Justice in Jerusalem which ordered that they relocate to a military zone several hundred yards away, 4 June 2012. (Lior Mizrahi/Getty Images)