

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	366
Land:	Gaza-Vestbredden
Kilde:	United States Department of State
Titel:	Country Reports on Terrorism 2017 - Israel, Golan Heights, West Bank, and Gaza
Udgivet:	19. september 2018
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	15. januar 2019

Country Reports on Terrorism 2017 - Israel, Golan Heights, West Bank, and Gaza

Publisher [United States Department of State](#)

Publication Date 19 September 2018

Cite as United States Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2017 - Israel, Golan Heights, West Bank, and Gaza*, 19 September 2018, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5bcf1fa0a.html> [accessed 6 December 2018]

Disclaimer This is not a UNHCR publication. UNHCR is not responsible for, nor does it necessarily endorse, its content. Any views expressed are solely those of the author or publisher and do not necessarily reflect those of UNHCR, the United Nations or its Member States.

Israel and the Golan Heights

Overview: Israel was a committed counterterrorism partner in 2017, closely coordinating with the United States on a range of counterterrorism initiatives. For instance, Israel and the United States held numerous interagency counterterrorism dialogues to discuss the broad array of threats in the region and determine areas of collaboration to address these challenges.

Israel faced threats on its northern border from Lebanese Hizballah (LH) and along the north-eastern frontier from LH and other groups in Syria. Israeli security officials and politicians expressed concerns that Iran was supplying LH with advanced weapons systems and technologies as well as assisting the group in creating infrastructure that would permit it to indigenously produce rockets and missiles to threaten Israel from inside of Lebanon and Syria.

Along its southern border with Egypt and Gaza, Israel faced threats from terror organizations including Hamas, Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and ISIS-Sinai Province. Israel continued to be concerned about Hamas and PIJ tunneling activities, and in October and December destroyed tunnels it found under the Israel-Gaza boundary. Israel suffered numerous rocket attacks originating from Gaza and the Sinai during 2017, none of which resulted in Israeli fatalities.

In addition, while the number of terrorist attacks declined since 2015, Israel still experienced numerous terrorist attacks, including those committed by lone actors with no clear affiliation to terrorist organizations.

The United States worked closely throughout the year with Israel to identify and develop new capabilities that meet a wide variety of requirements for countering terrorist threats, including those posed by unmanned aerial systems and underground tunnels. Through a cost-sharing bilateral relationship, both countries advanced their technical ability to defeat or mitigate the evolving capabilities of terrorists and criminal organizations.

2017 Terrorist Incidents: Israelis experienced numerous terrorist attacks in 2017 involving weapons ranging from rockets and mortars to small arms and knives. The wave of violence that

began in late 2015, termed the "knife intifada," continued to decrease in 2017. Stabbing attacks by Palestinians resulted in numerous Israeli injuries and fatalities. These attacks comprised the majority of terrorist attacks inside Israel. Many perpetrators of these attacks were neutralized during their acts of terrorism. The following is a partial list of the terrorist incidents that occurred during the year:

- On February 10, a Palestinian from the West Bank opened fire on a group of Israeli soldiers at a bus stop in Petah Tikva. Sadeq Nasser Abu Mazen, an 18-year-old man from a village near Nablus, fled the scene after local residences attempted to apprehend him. He entered a shop and opened fire until his weapon malfunctioned. He then used a screwdriver to stab an Israeli man in the shop. Local residents subdued the gunman and Israeli authorities took him into custody. The gunman wounded at least five people in the attack.
- On July 14, two Israeli Druze border police officers were killed and two more wounded after three male Arab-Israeli citizens opened fire near the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif. Israeli police shot and killed the three attackers, whom authorities identified as Mohammed Ahmed Mafdal Jabrin, Mohammed Hamed Abed Eltif Jabrin, and Mohammed Ahmed Mohammed Jabrin. All were Arab citizens of Israel from the town of Umm al-Fahm, with apparent ties to the northern branch of the Islamic Movement in Israel.
- In December, several rockets launched from Gaza struck inside Israel. Israeli authorities confirmed that at least two rockets hit the city of Sderot, which resulted in damage to a kindergarten and several vehicles. Another rocket fell in an open area near the city of Ashkelon, with no reported casualties or significant damage. The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) responded with strikes against Hamas and PIJ positions in Gaza.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: In 2017, the Israeli government made no notable changes to the 2016 Combatting Terrorism Law, although the Knesset began action on an amendment during the year.

Israeli security forces took numerous significant law enforcement actions against suspected terrorists and terrorist groups in 2017. The examples below represent only a fraction of the law enforcement actions taken throughout the year.

- On February 7, the Israel Security Agency (ISA) arrested Valentin Vladimir Mazalevsky, an Israeli citizen residing in Shibli, for supporting ISIS and attempting to travel to Syria to join the terrorist organization. Israeli courts convicted Mazalevsky and sentenced him to 32 months' imprisonment.
- On February 12, the ISA, with the assistance of the Israel National Police (INP), arrested Gaza resident Muhammad Murtaja, Gaza coordinator of a Turkish humanitarian aid organization, for attempting to provide Hamas with satellite photos to improve the precision of its rocket attacks against Israel. A subsequent investigation also uncovered Murtaja's alleged diversion of the aid organization's funds to the Hamas military wing.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Israel is an observer to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and is subject to evaluation by the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism, a FATF-style regional body. Israel's financial intelligence unit, the Israeli Money Laundering and Terror Finance Prohibition Authority, is a member of the Egmont Group.

The Knesset approved a first reading of an amendment to the 2016 Combatting Terrorism Law on October 30, 2017. If passed, this amendment would transfer terrorism designation authority from the Ministers' Committee for Security to the Minister of Defense and would ensure that Israel

enforces United Nations (UN) sanctions on foreign terrorist organizations and individuals until it can complete a domestic review process of the designation.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the [*2018 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report \(INCSR\), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*](#).

Countering Violent Extremism (CVE): Israel's national program, "City without Violence," supported municipalities and local authorities in conducting programs to counter violence, crime, and violent extremism. Civil society supported this initiative.

The Arab-Israeli media portal, "Bokra," sought to reduce tension through a social initiative using Facebook and videos featuring prominent figures who discouraged racism and violence such as sheikhs, rabbis, and priests.

International and Regional Cooperation: Israel continued its counterterrorism cooperation with a range of regional and international institutions, including the UN, the Organization of American States (OAS), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In December, Israel co-sponsored UN Security Council resolution 2396 on returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters. Israel cooperated with numerous countries bilaterally on counterterrorism initiatives and programs of mutual benefit, in addition to those aimed at thwarting terrorist attacks and plots specifically against Israelis or Israeli interests abroad.

The West Bank and Gaza

Overview: The Palestinian Authority (PA) continued its counterterrorism and law enforcement efforts in the West Bank, where Hamas, PIJ, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine remained present. The PA Security Forces (PASF) constrained the ability of those organizations to conduct attacks, including through arrests of Hamas members planning attacks against Israelis. Per Oslo-era agreements, the PA exercised varying degrees of authority over the West Bank. Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and Shin Bet arrested members of terrorist organizations operating in the West Bank.

The United States assisted the PA's counterterrorism efforts by providing training, equipment, and infrastructure support to the PASF. U.S. training and support assisted in the PA's continued development of professional, self-sufficient, and capable security forces. The United States also assisted the PA with criminal justice investigations and prosecutions of terrorist financing and terrorist-related activity.

Palestinians committed acts of violence and terrorism in the West Bank in 2017. The heightened period of violence from October 2015 to April 2016 decreased in 2017. However, Palestinians continued to commit stabbings, shootings, and vehicular attacks against Israelis.

Israelis, including settlers, committed acts of violence, including "price tag" attacks (property crimes and violent acts by extremist Jewish individuals and groups against Palestinians) in the West Bank in 2017.

Hamas maintained security control of Gaza. Several militant groups launched rocket attacks against Israel from Gaza. The primary limitation on PA counterterrorism efforts in Gaza remained Hamas' control of the area and the resulting inability of the PASF to operate there.

The PA and PLO continued to provide "martyr payments" to the families of Palestinian individuals killed carrying out a terrorist act. The PA and PLO also provided payments to Palestinians in Israeli prisons, including those convicted of acts of terrorism against Israelis. Israeli government officials criticized this practice as incentivizing acts of terror. These payments and separate canteen stipends that the Israeli government allows for prisoners were first initiated by the PLO in 1965 and have continued under the PA since the Oslo Accords with Israel.

2017 Terrorist Incidents:

- In January, four Israeli soldiers were killed and approximately 13 others wounded when a Palestinian man used a heavy truck for a vehicular attack in Jerusalem. Soldiers and a civilian who were at the scene shot and killed the attacker.
- In July, a Palestinian resident of a nearby village stabbed and killed three Israeli civilians in their family home in the West Bank Israeli settlement of Halamish. Another member of the family sustained injuries. Police and IDF arrested the attacker after an off-duty soldier shot and wounded him.
- In September, a Palestinian man from the West Bank village of Beit Surik shot and killed an Israeli Border Police officer and two Israeli security guards outside the West Bank settlement of Har Adar, northwest of Jerusalem. Israeli security officials shot and killed the attacker at the scene.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The PA lacked comprehensive legislation specifically tailored to counterterrorism, although existing Palestinian laws criminalize actions that constitute terrorist acts. Presidential decrees prohibit incitement to violence, illegal associations, providing financial support to terrorist groups, and acts against PLO agreements with other states (an indirect reference to the Oslo Accords with Israel). Other decrees also criminalize armed militias and assistance to such militias as well as carrying unlicensed weapons and explosives. The Palestinian parliament, the Palestinian Legislative Council, has not met since 2007 and is thus unable to pass new legislation.

The Preventive Security Organization (PSO) is the key PA institution that works to prevent internal terrorist attacks and investigates security-related criminal conduct. In practice, the General Intelligence Organization also plays a critical role in this effort as does, to a lesser extent, the Military Intelligence Organization. The United States assisted the PSO and the Security Forces Justice Commission to help the PA move the prosecution of all civilian cases – including those involving terrorism and security-related offenses – to the exclusive jurisdiction of the civilian courts. The United States also helped enhance cooperation between security service investigators and public prosecutors.

The PA advanced its forensic capabilities with the opening of the Palestinian Civil Police (PCP) forensic laboratory in November 2016 and continued its operation throughout 2017. The laboratory conducted basic manual analyses and examinations of firearm evidence, document examination, and drug and chemical analysis. The PA also augmented its ability to examine and compare unknown fingerprints with the delivery by the U.S. government of 40 fingerprint scanners, which are now used by law enforcement across the West Bank.

Per the Oslo-era Accords, Israel controlled border security in the West Bank.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: The PA is a member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force, a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body.

The Palestinian Financial Follow-Up (FFU) Unit is the PA's financial intelligence unit. Banks file suspicious transaction reports and currency transaction reports electronically through the FFU computer system. In 2017, banks filed 118 STRs compared to 117 in 2016.

The Palestinian Monetary Authority (PMA) increased regulations and restrictions on the more than 300 money changers in the West Bank. For example, the PMA increased the capital requirement from US \$250,000 to US \$500,000 for money changers to register with the PMA before they are allowed to operate. Additionally, the PMA imposed reporting requirements in 2017 on money changers for amounts over US \$7,000. The PMA also required that money changers have US \$1 million in capital before the PMA will authorize international transactions. Money changers in Gaza were licensed and regulated by Hamas. According to business contacts in Gaza, Hamas does not impose reporting requirements on Gaza-based money changers.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the [*2018 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report \(INCSR\), Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*](#).

Countering Violent Extremism (CVE): The PA's Palestinian Broadcasting Company's code of conduct states it does not allow programming that encourages "violence against any person or institution on the basis of race, religion, political beliefs, or sex." Some official PA media channels, as well as social media accounts affiliated with the ruling political movement Fatah, have featured content praising or condoning acts of violence. Palestinian leaders did not always publicly condemn individual terrorist attacks nor speak out publicly against members of their institutions who advocated for violence. PA President Abbas maintained a public commitment to non-violence, however.

The PA maintains control over the content of Friday sermons delivered in approximately 1,800 West Bank mosques to ensure that they do not endorse incitement to violence. Weekly, the PA Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs distributed approved themes and prohibits incitement to violence.

International and Regional Cooperation: The Palestinian Authority is an active member of the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. In September 2017, the "State of Palestine" acceded to INTERPOL despite Israeli objections. PA justice and security leaders continued to participate in regional conferences and meetings to combat terrorism. PASF personnel attended a variety of international training courses related to counterterrorism at training facilities in Jordan, Europe, and the United States.