

**Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale**

|                                 |                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Bilagsnr.:</b>               | <b>539</b>                                                                      |
| Land:                           | Gaza-Vestbredden                                                                |
| Kilde:                          | US Department of State – USDoS                                                  |
| Titel:                          | Country Report on Terrorism 2021 - Chapter 1 - Israel, Gaza Strip and Westbank. |
| Udgivet:                        | 27. februar 2023                                                                |
| Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet: | 27. april 2023                                                                  |
|                                 |                                                                                 |



Document #2087903

## USDOS – US Department of State

### Country Report on Terrorism 2021 - Chapter 1 - Israel

**Overview:** Israel remained a committed counterterrorism partner, closely coordinating with the United States on a range of counterterrorism initiatives. Owing to COVID-19, Israel and the United States held virtual interagency counterterrorism dialogues to collaborate on regional threats. Counterterrorism issues were also at the center of the agenda during numerous high-level U.S. visits to Israel.

Israel faced threats along its northern and northeastern frontier from Hizballah and other Iran-backed groups, including as many as 150,000 rockets and missiles aimed at Israel, according to some Israeli estimates. Israeli officials expressed concern that Iran was supplying Hizballah with advanced weapons systems and technologies, including precision-guided

**ecoi.net summary:**  
Annual report on terrorism (covering 2021)

**Country:**  
Israel

**Source:**  
[USDOS – US Department of State](#)

**Original link:**  
<https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2021/israel>

missiles. This concern included Iran's work to assist Hizballah and other proxies in indigenously producing rockets, missiles, and drones.

To the South, Israel faced threats from terrorist organizations including Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and ISIS-Sinai Province. During the May escalation between Israel and Hamas, Hamas fired thousands of rockets into Israel from Gaza over 11 days, causing casualties. Other sporadic rocket attacks resulted in several injuries and property damage. The May escalation also saw a spike in intercommunal violence. There were attempts to infiltrate Israel from Gaza by armed militants (mostly during the May escalation), none of which resulted in Israeli casualties. Other sources of terrorist threats included the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and lone-actor attacks.

**2021 Terrorist Incidents:** The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) reported that the number of deaths from terrorist incidents had been the lowest in a decade. Nonetheless, Israel still experienced terrorist attacks involving weapons ranging from rockets and mortars to vehicular attacks, small arms, and knives. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, combined property damage as a result of incendiary balloons and rockets from Gaza during the year totaled \$61.7 million.

The following is a representative list of IDF-identified incidents:

- In May, Hamas and other terrorist groups, including PIJ, launched more than 4,400 rockets and numerous incendiary balloons from Gaza toward Israel, many of which targeted civilian areas. Rockets from Hamas killed 13 civilians in Israel; Iron Dome, Israel's air defense system, intercepted the vast majority of the rockets destined for populated areas. Israeli retaliatory airstrikes and errant Hamas rockets killed 256 Palestinians, of whom 128 were civilians, per UN figures. Estimates of Palestinians killed by Hamas rockets that fell

**Document type:**  
Periodical Report

**Language:**  
English

**Published:**  
27 February 2023

**Available on ecoi.net  
since:**  
22 March 2023

**Document ID:**  
2087903

short in Gaza are disputed, with some NGOs stating that as few as 20 were killed in this manner, and others putting the number at 91.

- The May escalation with Hamas sparked social and intercommunal violence that resulted in property damage and casualties. Three Arab Israeli residents of Jaffa allegedly threw firebombs in Jaffa's Ajami neighborhood, and 12-year-old Mohammed Jintzai sustained serious injuries in one of those attacks. Three suspects were arrested and charged with planning and perpetrating terror attacks, and for the illegal possession of weapons. The State Attorney's Office also indicted seven Arab Israelis and Palestinians (five Israeli citizens and two residents of the West Bank) for terror offenses, including the murder of Yigal Yehoshua in Lod on May 11, for throwing stones, harming a vehicle, and obstructing justice. Four Jewish Israelis were arrested for assaulting, stabbing, and seriously wounding a Palestinian man in Jerusalem, and a similar assault carried out by a different group of young Jewish men also took place in Jerusalem later in the year. Police arrested 2,142 suspects, seized 970 illegal weapons and ammunition, and filed 184 indictments (some against more than one suspect) because of the May violence.
- On September 30, a 30-year-old Palestinian woman attempted to stab police officers at the Chain Gate entrance to the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount (HAS/TM), according to press reports. Police shot and killed her, then briefly closed one HAS/TM gate and the Damascus Gate in the aftermath of the attack.
- On November 21, a Hamas militant opened fire in Jerusalem's Old City, killing one person and wounding four others (one seriously) before Israeli police fatally shot him. Israeli officials said Eliyahu Kay, a 26-year-old immigrant from South Africa, was killed in the shooting. Police identified the attacker as a 42-year-old Palestinian, Fadi Abu Shkhaidem, a teacher at a nearby high school in East Jerusalem.

- On December 3, a 25-year-old Palestinian resident of the West Bank repeatedly stabbed a Jewish civilian outside Damascus Gate in East Jerusalem, then attacked two Border Police officers who shot and ultimately killed the attacker.
- On December 8, a Palestinian minor stabbed 26-year-old Moriah Cohen in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem, as Cohen was taking her children to daycare. Although stabbed in the back, Cohen was only lightly injured. The suspect was arrested later in the day at her school.

**Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security:** Israel has a robust legal framework to combat terrorism and promote international legal assistance in the investigation and prosecution of terrorists. Israeli security forces took law enforcement actions against suspected terrorists and terrorist groups. On November 24, the Shin Bet said it had uncovered a major Hamas cell of more than 50 operatives in the West Bank seeking to commit terror attacks, including within Israel. The Shin Bet added that it found a variety of weapons, including materials for assembling four explosive belts. This was the first case in more than five years in which Israel had disrupted a major Hamas plot to resume suicide bombings. On October 22, the Israeli Defense Ministry issued a military order designating six Palestinian NGOs under Israel's 2016 Counterterrorism Law as affiliates of the PFLP, which is a U.S.-designated FTO.

**Countering the Financing of Terrorism:** The 2019 Israeli Deduction Law requires the Ministry of Finance to withhold from its monthly tax revenue transfers to the Palestinian Authority (PA) the amounts Israel estimates the PA pays to Palestinians connected to terrorism, including to the families of terrorists who died in attacks. The PA calls these prisoner and "martyr" payments, and argues they are social payments for families who have lost their primary breadwinner. The United States and Israel argue the payments incentivize and reward terrorism, particularly given the

higher monthly payments the longer an individual remains imprisoned, which corresponds to more severe crimes. The *Jerusalem Post* estimates that “martyr” payments total \$152.3 million annually.

According to the PA, during 2021 Israeli deductions from clearance revenues for prisoner and “martyr” payments amounted to \$259.74 million, although this amount was expected to be reduced to \$192 million in 2022. In January, senior Palestinian officials told the *Times of Israel* that the PA was willing to base the stipends on prisoners’ financial needs rather than the length of their sentence. However, at year’s end this suggested policy change had not occurred. In September, the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories estimated that resolving the prisoner and “martyr” payments issue “would unlock over a billion shekels [\$314 million].”

**Countering Violent Extremism:** There were no updates in 2021.

**International and Regional Cooperation:** Collaborative counterterrorism efforts continued among Israeli intelligence services, their partners in Europe and Australia, and the United States. According to Israeli officials, these efforts have successfully thwarted terrorist attacks by ISIS, Hizballah, and other violent extremist groups over the past several years.

## The West Bank and Gaza Strip

**Overview:** The IDF, under the Israeli Ministry of Defense, is responsible for the West Bank, but PA security forces were granted security control of 17.5 percent (called Area A) under the 1993 Oslo Accords. The PA has administrative control over Area B (about 22 percent of the West Bank), but security control is shared with Israeli authorities. Israel maintains all administrative and security control of Area C, which comprises 61 percent of the West Bank. PA security forces and the IDF continued counterterrorism and law enforcement efforts in parts of the West Bank, where U.S.-designated FTOs such as Hamas, PIJ, and the PFLP operated.

PA security forces constrained the ability of those organizations to conduct attacks, including arresting Hamas members. PA security forces continue to proactively arrest individuals planning attacks against Israeli targets or those suspected of supporting terrorist organizations, and continue to arrest Palestinians wanted for weapons smuggling or illegal weapons possession.

The United States, through the multinational office of the U.S. Security Coordinator for Israel and the Palestinian Authority, worked with the PA Ministry of Interior and PA security forces on reform efforts and training, including counterterrorism.

According to the Israeli Ministry of Public Security, “the West Bank saw 39 terror attacks in 2021, down from the IDF’s reported figure of 60 in 2020.” Numbers accounting for terrorist attacks in the West Bank vary slightly depending on the source — the IDF, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), or human rights groups such as B’Tselem. While this decrease was partially attributable to greater movement restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic, it also reflected a general downward trend in certain violence indicators since 2016, such as deaths of Israelis, deaths of Palestinians, and terrorist attacks in the West Bank. However, these figures do not account for settler violence against Palestinians and their property, which increased over the last year.

Hamas, a U.S.-designated FTO and Specially Designated Global Terrorist, maintained de facto control over Gaza in 2021. Hamas and several militant groups, including Sunni violent extremist groups such as PIJ, launched an estimated 4,400 rocket attacks against Israel from Gaza. Hamas and its affiliates launched incendiary balloons and devices toward Israel, damaging farms and nature preserves. Hamas and PIJ tunneling

activities continued. Live ammunition from Hamas's anti-aircraft weapons struck buildings in Israel.

**2021 Terrorist Incidents:** Terrorist incidents during the year included the following:

- On May 2, assailants in a passing vehicle shot and injured three Israelis near Tapuach Junction/Za'tara Checkpoint south of Nablus, then fled the scene. One of the victims, Yehuda Guetta, died as a result of his injuries. Israeli authorities set up checkpoints, resulting in clashes with youths during which five were shot. Medics said the three persons injured in the attack were men in their late teens or early 20s. They were taken to Petah Tikva's Beilinson Hospital for treatment. The perpetrator of the drive-by shooting attack was a U.S. citizen, Muntassir Shalabi, according to media reports. The Shin Bet did not believe he had any affiliation with Palestinian terror groups. He was arrested four days after the attack, and later sentenced to two life sentences.
- On August 21, a Palestinian militant from Gaza approached a border post and shot an IDF soldier at point-blank range during Hamas-organized border clashes in which several Palestinians were also killed. The soldier later succumbed to his wounds.
- On September 30, a 30-year-old Palestinian woman attempted to stab police officers at the Chain Gate entrance to HAS/TM, according to press reports. Police shot and killed her, then briefly closed one HAS/TM gate and the Damascus Gate in the aftermath of the attack.
- On November 21, a Hamas militant opened fire in Jerusalem's Old City, killing one and wounding four others (one seriously) before Israeli police fatally shot him. Israeli officials said Eliyahu Kay, a 26-year-old immigrant from South Africa, was killed in the shooting. Police identified the attacker as a 42-year-old Palestinian, Fadi Abu Shkhaidem, a teacher at a nearby high school in East Jerusalem.

- On December 3, a 25-year-old Palestinian resident of the West Bank repeatedly stabbed a Jewish civilian outside Damascus Gate in East Jerusalem, then attacked two Border Police officers who shot and ultimately killed the attacker.
- On December 8, a Palestinian minor stabbed 26-year-old Moriah Cohen in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem, as Cohen was taking her children to daycare. Although stabbed in the back, Cohen was only lightly injured. The suspect was arrested later in the day at her school.
- On December 16, near the Homesh settlement, three Palestinians in a car shot and killed Yehuda Dimentman. They were later arrested.

Israeli settlers living in the West Bank committed a variety of physical attacks, property damage, and “nationalistic” crimes against Palestinians, some of which caused serious injury, according to Israeli human rights organizations and media reports. Multiple sources reported a substantial rise in such attacks during 2021. UN monitors documented 496 Israeli settler attacks against Palestinians, including 370 attacks that resulted in property damage, and 126 attacks that resulted in casualties, three of which were fatal. This is an increase from the 358 settler attacks UN OCHA documented in 2020, 84 of which resulted in casualties. According to the UN, Israeli settlers cut down more than 12,300 trees and vandalized over 330 Palestinian-owned vehicles. The Shin Bet registered 397 settler attacks, an increase from the 272 violent incidents in 2020, according to Israeli press reports.

Human rights groups and West Bank residents reported settler attacks over the last year were also expanded in severity and scale. Whereas in prior years groups of four to five settlers typically carried out sporadic attacks, the UN documented attacks by groups of 20 or more settlers during the year, indicating that attacks were likely preplanned. Attacks were also more destructive and expanded into parts of the West Bank,

such as Area A, that were previously not sullied by settler violence. In one high-profile attack in September, dozens of settlers attacked the village of Um Faggarah in the middle of the day, targeting women and children, and resulted in a four-year old Palestinian boy's skull being fractured by a large rock, which settlers reportedly threw onto him while he was sleeping.

Such incidents generated significant concern among parts of the Israeli security establishment and a series of public condemnations from government officials, including the Israeli Defense Minister Gantz and the Minister for Public Safety Bar Lev, who labeled settler violence as terrorism. In response, Israeli National Police and the Ministry of Defense announced a series of measures, including reform of the police unit responsible for handling far-right violent extremism in the West Bank to enable a faster response to violence by targeting hotspots. Despite these efforts, Israeli security personnel often did not prevent settler attacks and rarely detained or charged perpetrators of settler violence. Only one settler was convicted (and sentenced to 20 months in prison) in 2021, for throwing a stun grenade at a Palestinian home, injuring two and causing significant damage. Some Israeli NGOs allege IDF presence during some attacks and accuse the IDF of enabling a permissive environment by its lack of enforcement.

**Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security:** There were no changes in 2021.

**Countering the Financing of Terrorism:** The Palestinian Authority is a member of MENAFATF. Its financial intelligence unit, the Palestinian Financial Follow-Up Unit, is a member of the Egmont Group. The PA's MENAFATF mutual evaluation was postponed from 2020 to 2022-23 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Countering Violent Extremism:** Despite a PA policy of prohibiting content that incites violence, the PA has been inconsistent in enforcement. Official PA traditional and social media accounts, affiliated with the ruling political faction Fatah, featured content praising or condoning acts of terrorism. For example, the Fatah Youth movement at An-Najah National University praised the December killing of Yehuda Dimentman as a “heroic operation.” In another instance during the year, Fatah’s Facebook page referred to a Palestinian man who had stabbed and injured an Orthodox Jewish man in Jerusalem as a “martyr” after the attacker was shot by police. Problems continued with misleading textbooks, some with maps not depicting Israel, and public ceremonies celebrating Palestinian “martyrs.”

Palestinian authorities pledged to reform Palestinian textbooks, but an EU report issued in February showed that instances of antisemitism and incitement to violence continued to appear in textbooks. Palestinian President Abbas continued to state a commitment to nonviolence, a two-state solution, and previous Palestine Liberation Organization commitments, but others in the Palestinian leadership have avoided making such commitments. The Palestinian leadership continued to offer prisoner and “martyr” payments to families of Palestinians who were wounded or died while committing terrorist acts or in connection with terrorism.

**International and Regional Cooperation:** Palestinian Authority justice, security leaders, and PA security force personnel continued to participate in regional conferences and meetings to combat terrorism, though in 2021 COVID-19 pandemic restrictions limited these opportunities.

---

---

Austrian Red Cross  
Austrian Centre for Country of  
Origin and Asylum Research and  
Documentation (ACCORD)

Wiedner Hauptstraße 32, 1041  
Wien  
T +43 1 589 00 583  
F +43 1 589 00 589  
info@ecoi.net

Contact  
Imprint & Disclaimer  
F.A.Q.  
Data Protection Notice

---

ecoi.net is run by the Austrian Red Cross (department ACCORD) in cooperation with Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration. ecoi.net is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and Caritas Austria. ecoi.net is supported by ECRE & UNHCR.

