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to Frequently Asked Questions- Palestinian

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions- Palestinian Violence and Terrorism- The International War against Terrorism  
5 Aug 2002

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See :

**Answers to Frequently Asked Questions:**

- **Palestinian Violence and Terrorism**
- **The International War against Terrorism**

(August 2002)

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*Note: Although a new version of the Frequently Asked Questions has been published (November 2003), this text is being maintained on-line because it contains certain issues relevant to the time that are not dealt with in the updated text.*

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- What caused the wave of Palestinian violence and terrorism that began in September 2000?
- Are Palestinian claims that the "occupation" caused the violence true?
- Why doesn't the violence end?
- What was Operation Defensive Shield?
- What happened in Jenin?
- Is Israel using excessive force in its response to the violence and terrorism?
- Why do the Palestinians claim that they have suffered more casualties than Israel?
- Why are so many children being harmed in this conflict?
- What about claims that holy sites are being desecrated?
- What is the connection between Palestinian violence and the rise in anti-Israel and antisemitic incidents in the region and throughout the world?
- Are the September 11 terrorist attacks against the United States related to US support of Israel?
- How does Palestinian terrorism threaten states not directly involved in the conflict?
- What is the legal status of the Jewish settlements in the territories?
- What is Israel's position on the Palestinian claim to a

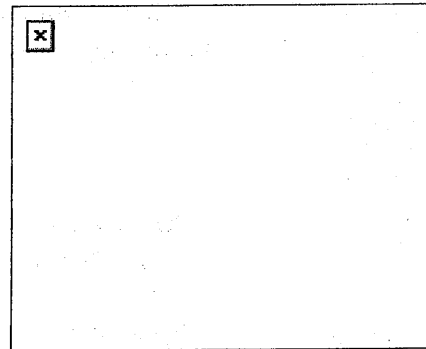
**"right of return"?**

- **How does the Palestinian terrorism affect the economic situation of the Palestinian population as a whole?**
- **How can a peaceful resolution be achieved?**

**◆ What caused the wave of Palestinian violence and terrorism that began in September 2000?**

Contrary to Palestinian claims, the visit of then Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon to Jerusalem's Temple Mount in late September 2000 did not cause the outbreak of Palestinian violence. Rather, the wave of terrorism is the result of a strategic Palestinian decision to use violence - rather than negotiation - as the primary instrument of advancing their political cause.

The Israeli-Palestinian peace talks began in September 1993 on the basis of PLO leader Yasser Arafat's clear pledge to abandon terrorism and commit to a negotiated solution.



Burning of police station, Lion's Gate, Jerusalem (Oct 6, 2000)

Regrettably, in the fall of 2000, the Palestinian leadership broke that pledge, and made a strategic decision to pursue violence rather than negotiation - months before the Temple Mount visit. Palestinian officials themselves divulged this fact in statements that they made in the Arabic-language media. On December 6, 2000, the semi-official Palestinian daily *Al-Ayyam* reported as follows:

*"Speaking at a symposium in Gaza, Palestinian Minister of Communications, Imad Al-Falouji, confirmed that the Palestinian Authority had begun preparations for the outbreak of the current Intifada from the moment the Camp David talks concluded, this in accordance with instructions given by Chairman Arafat himself. Mr. Falouji went on to state that Arafat launched this Intifada as a*

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*culminating stage to the immutable Palestinian stance in the negotiations, and was not meant merely as a protest of Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount."*

More significantly, the "Temple Mount visit" myth was debunked in April 2001 by the Mitchell Committee (officially known as the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee). This committee, composed of American and European leaders and headed by former US Senator George Mitchell, extensively investigated the cause of the violence which began in September 2000 and rejected the Palestinian claim regarding the Temple Mount visit. It had become clear that the true roots of the current situation could be found in the Palestinian rejection of the concept of a peacefully negotiated resolution of disputes.

[return to top](#)

#### ◆ Are Palestinian claims that the "occupation" caused the violence true?

Despite their claims to the contrary, ending what the Palestinians view as "occupation" is not the primary issue of contention, as that matter could have been equitably addressed through the talks already in progress when the violence began in September 2000.

After the Mitchell Committee report signaled that Palestinian spokespersons could no longer blame the violence on the Temple Mount visit, Palestinians began instead to assert that the violence is a response to Israel's "occupation" of the West Bank and Gaza.

This claim ignores events both before and after 1967 - when Israel came into control of the territories in a war of self-defense - that prove that it is not the "occupation" that has been the true cause of Palestinian terrorism. Not only did Palestinian terrorism precede Israel's presence in the territories; it has often been at its most brutal, as in 1996, at those moments at which the peace process was most active and the end to the "occupation" closest at hand. Such acts of terrorism make it abundantly clear that the

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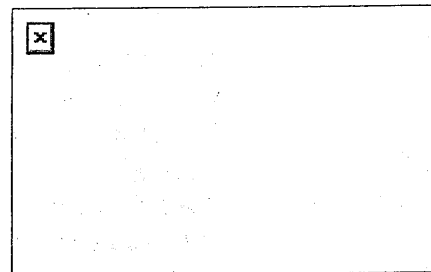
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
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Palestinian terrorists are not opposing "occupation" - they are opposing peace through compromise.

The current wave of violence began shortly after intense high-level negotiations were conducted to find a permanent resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In July 2000, a Middle East peace summit was held at Camp David, hosted by US President Bill Clinton and attended by Palestinian Authority [PA] Chairman Yasser Arafat and Prime Minister of Israel Ehud Barak. Given the nature of the conflict, a negotiated settlement could only be achieved if both sides demonstrated flexibility during the summit. Israel expressed its willingness to make far-reaching, unprecedented compromises in order to arrive at a workable, enduring agreement. However, despite this willingness, when it became clear to the Palestinian leadership that reciprocal compromises was necessary and that Israel could not fulfill every Palestinian demand, the Palestinian Authority chose to break off the negotiations without offering any proposals of its own. Consequently, the summit adjourned with President Clinton placing the blame for failure of the talks squarely at Arafat's feet.

It is obvious that the current wave of Palestinian terrorism, which began in the wake of the Camp David summit failure, has nothing to do with a spontaneous Palestinian action to "resist the occupation". In fact, quite the opposite is true - this resort to violence began as a desperate attempt by the Palestinian leadership to regain world sympathy in the face of widespread criticism for rejecting Israel's peace proposals at Camp David. Thus, the violence was not caused by the "occupation", but by the Palestinian leadership's rejection of the very negotiations that would have resolved the



©2000 Reuters   
Armed Palestinians line up with their weapons in a rally in Nablus (Oct 10, 2000)

issue through compromise in a peaceful manner.

Indeed, in the negotiations that had been conducted between Israel and the Palestinians since September 1993, Israel has gone far in addressing Palestinian aspirations in the West Bank and Gaza. Israel negotiated the establishment of an elected PA, which gradually expanded its jurisdiction and authorities. After extensive Israeli withdrawals, the Palestinian Authority administered a significant portion of territory and 98% of the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza.

But Israel did not stop there. The Israeli government made known to the Palestinians, at the Camp David summit of July 2000 and again at the Taba talks in January 2001, its willingness to make far-reaching political, historic and strategic compromises in order to achieve peace. Later Palestinian claims belittling these unprecedented proposals have been refuted by the most senior officials involved in the negotiations. In his April 22, 2002 television interview, former US Special Envoy Dennis Ross characterized the charge that the West Bank would be divided into cantons as "completely untrue", noting that the offered territory "was contiguous".

Israel had sought to resolve its differences with the Palestinians at the negotiating table, yet the Palestinian Authority was unwilling to abandon its strategy of armed struggle. The decision by the Palestinians to resort to violence has undermined the bedrock foundation of the peace process - the understanding that the solution must be predicated upon compromise rather than intractability, and upon negotiation rather than violence.

The resort to terrorist attacks on civilians can never be justified, especially when there is an agreed-upon process of negotiation to resolve the issues under dispute. The Palestinian Authority had been given a real opportunity to resolve the conflict through negotiations and compromise, and to bring tangible, considerable benefits to its people. However, Israel's olive branch was met with a hail of gunfire and a barrage of suicide

bombers. Despite fervent Palestinian claims to the contrary, the PA's deliberate decision to use violence as a political tool is the true and only source of the wave of violence and terrorism that began in September 2000.

[return to top](#)

#### ◆ Why doesn't the violence end?

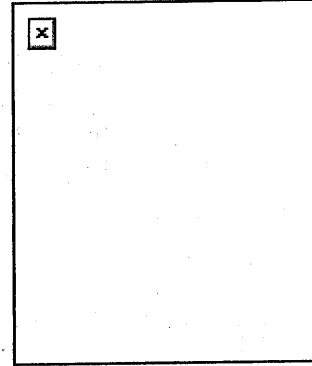
**There is no "cycle of violence", rather there is Palestinian violent action followed by Israeli defensive reaction. The violence cannot end until the Palestinians abandon terrorism, allowing peaceful negotiations to resume.**

There are those who claim that the Israelis and Palestinians are engaged in a "cycle of violence". According to this logic, unilateral measures by Israel could end this cycle. However, this theory disregards the dominant characteristic of the conflict -Palestinian violent action followed by Israeli defensive response. If Palestinian violence and terrorism were to end, Israel would have no reason to take defensive countermeasures.

The current confrontation was deliberately initiated, and continues to be nurtured by the Palestinian leadership as a strategic choice on their part. This was true from the earliest days of the crisis, and it remains true today. Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Authority have:

- authorized the Tanzim militia (an organ of Yasser Arafat's Fatah PLO faction) to fire upon Israeli civilians and soldiers with weapons supplied by the Palestinian Authority, and carry out bomb attacks against Israelis with explosives supplied by PA weapons depots;
- financed terrorist activities and infrastructures. Documents seized during Operation Defensive Shield gave details of the funding

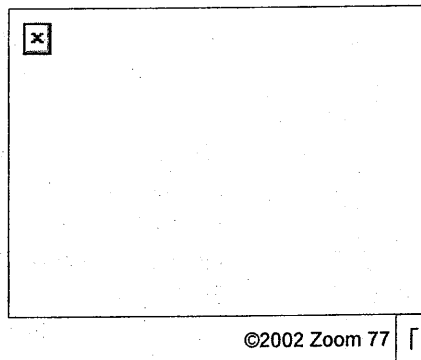
provided to the Tanzim and the Fatah's al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades. Funds were paid directly to terrorists, as well as for the production and procurement of bombs and weapons;



- done nothing to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure which flourishes in the areas under Palestinian Authority control, all the while providing sanctuary to terrorist organizations such as Hamas and the Islamic Jihad;
- made no effort to arrest those directly responsible for terrorist attacks;
- released dozens of Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorists who were already in Palestinian prisons, signaling to these organizations that they have a green light to launch attacks against Israeli citizens;
- refused to collect illegal weapons in accordance with their obligations under the existing Israeli-Palestinian agreements. Instead, the Palestinian Authority has attempted to smuggle in and to produce locally vast amounts of illegal arms and ammunition, including heavy weapons such as mortars and Katyushas artillery rockets;
- used their official media to incite Palestinians, especially Palestinian children, to continued violence against Israel;
- fostered the hero-worship of suicide bombers, encouraging others to follow in their footsteps;
- taken advantage of every Israeli attempt to ease restrictions on Palestinian daily life in order to launch renewed attacks on Israeli civilians.

These policies of the Palestinian leadership have led to a long series of bloody

terrorist attacks, including suicide bombings and car bombs in Israeli cities, as well as drive-by shootings and road-side ambushes targeting family cars, commercial vehicles and even school buses.



Suicide bombing in Jerusalem bus (June 18, 2002)

Since September 2000, the Tanzim-Fatah and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade alone have carried out more than 1,500 terror attacks and attempted attacks.

In its signed agreements with Israel, the Palestinian Authority undertook to stop the violence, arrest terrorists, dismantle the terrorist infrastructure, collect illegal weapons and end incitement to violence. Yet in the many years that have passed since the 1993 Oslo Accords, the PA has done nothing to fulfill its obligation to end the terrorism. On the contrary, the Palestinian leadership has actively encouraged and supported terrorist activities. Clearly, the continued violence is not a function of the Palestinian Authority's ability to prevent terrorism, but rather its desire to do so.

[return to top](#)

#### ◆ What was Operation Defensive Shield?

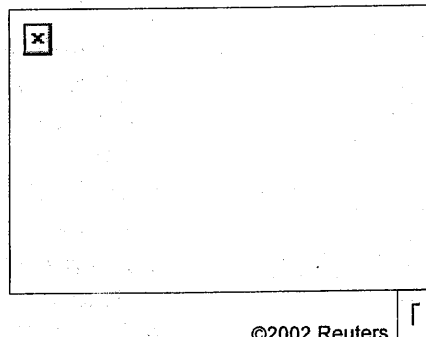
**In the final days of March 2002, Israel was forced to defend itself against an unprecedented series of terrorist attacks. Operation Defensive Shield was aimed at ending the almost daily attacks on civilians, terrorism so deadly that no sovereign state could refrain from reacting.**

By the end of March 2002, the Israeli population had already suffered through 18 months of continuous Palestinian violence and terrorism. However, nothing could prepare them for the wave of shootings, roadside attacks and



incessant suicide bombings that triggered Operation Defensive Shield.

Undoubtedly, this period's most egregious act of terrorism was the March 27th suicide bombing of the Park Hotel in Netanya in which 29 Jews were killed as they sat down to celebrate the Passover



©2002 Reuters  
Passover seder suicide bombing in Netanya (Mar 27, 2002)

Seder. Yet this attack, which took place on one of the holiest nights in the Jewish calendar, was not an isolated event. During "Bloody March", Palestinian terrorists killed more than 130 people in Israel. Among the dead were 12 children and 26 elderly persons.

These horrific statistics tell only part of the story. The terrorist attacks had become so overwhelming that almost every aspect of daily life in Israel was fraught with very real danger. More significantly, due to the close knit nature of Israel's society, almost every Israeli was personally affected by the growing list of casualties. Taken proportionally, 130 Israeli deaths would equal well over a thousand dead in France or over six thousand Americans killed - and all in the space of one month. No nation could remain silent in the face of these mounting civilian casualties.

While Israel yearns for a diplomatic solution to the conflict with the Palestinians, it was left with no choice but to react through military means. Every state, including Israel, has the right to self-defense, and every state, including Israel, has the duty to protect the lives of its citizens.

Operation Defensive Shield, which was decided upon at a special Cabinet session on March 28th, was launched in order to counter the extreme escalation in Palestinian terrorism. The Operation's aim was to attack the infrastructure of Palestinian terrorism in all its parts and

components. Israel hoped to apprehend as many terrorists as possible, to uncover and destroy arms caches and bomb-making laboratories, and to gather the intelligence necessary to prevent future attacks.

In order to effectively attack the infrastructure of terrorism, the Israel Defense Forces [IDF] were forced to operate in densely populated areas, since the terrorists chose to conceal their activities by hiding them in the heart of the civilian population. During the previous 18 months, Israel had made every effort to avoid extensive operations in these areas. When urban operations finally became unavoidable, the IDF took maximum care to prevent harm to Palestinian civilians, often risking the lives of its soldiers to do so. Israel preferred to employ infantry in house-to-house searches, rather than rely upon heavier weapons which, while protecting the lives of the soldiers, would place Palestinian civilians at greater risk. The high moral standards demonstrated by Israeli soldiers during battle stands in sharp contrast to that of the terrorists, who deliberately chose to hide behind their fellow Palestinians. Israel paid a heavy price for its principles. During Operation Defensive Shield, 29 IDF soldiers were killed (23 of these in Jenin alone) and 127 were wounded.

In the course of the three week operation, the IDF succeeded in capturing many wanted terrorists, while others were killed in the fighting. Thousands of guns and rifles were seized, as were large amounts of explosives and other tools of terrorism. Many explosive belts - ready for use by suicide bombers - were found and two dozen bomb-making laboratories were uncovered.

During and immediately following Operation Defensive Shield, Israelis enjoyed a period of relative calm. The cycle of almost daily terror attacks had been - at least temporarily - broken. While it is not possible to determine exactly how many acts of terrorism were prevented by the operation, one can only imagine the consequences had Israel refrained from acting, allowing the terrorists a free hand to carry out further atrocities. Given the frequency of terrorist

acts that immediately preceded March 28th, it is apparent that many civilian lives were saved by the IDF operation.

Still, the terrorist infrastructure was so entrenched in Palestinian Authority areas that no single operation could destroy it, and bloody acts of Palestinian terrorism resumed.

[return to top](#)

### ◆ What happened in Jenin?

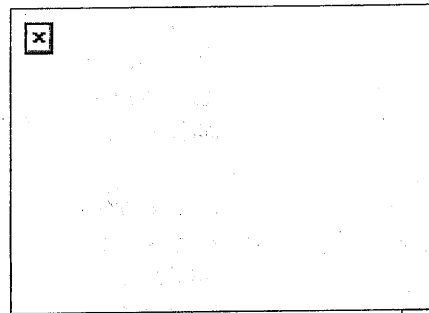
When the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) entered the refugee camp in the West Bank city of Jenin during Operation Defensive Shield, they encountered dozens of heavily armed terrorists shielding themselves behind Palestinian civilians. 23 Israeli soldiers, who risked their lives to avoid harming non-combatants, died in the fierce battle which ensued, while Palestinian casualties amounted to 56 (the vast majority of them armed terrorists). There were not hundreds or even thousands of civilian casualties, as the PA had originally claimed, and the Palestinian allegations of a 'massacre' were found to be completely baseless.

Jenin's terror industry - with its command centers, explosives laboratories and arms caches - has produced over two dozen suicide bombers and countless other armed terrorists.

Prior to Operation

Defensive Shield, the IDF had avoided entering Jenin's refugee camp, a small yet densely population section of the city. However, the appalling increase in attacks in March 2002 left Israel with no option but to strike at the terrorist infrastructure sheltered within the camp.

Jenin's refugee camp was not only a staging area of Palestinian suicide terrorism, it was also the site chosen by the armed terrorists to serve as a battleground against Israeli forces. These terrorists had prepared the field well, extensively



©IDF Spokesman

Aerial photographs of combat zone in Jenin (April 2002)

booby-trapping houses and streets, and setting up sniper positions within civilian homes and structures. They acted with no regard for the safety of the camp's inhabitants or their property, and encouraged residents, including children, to take an active role in the fighting.

Shortly after the battle began, PA spokespersons proclaimed worldwide that Israeli forces had committed a "massacre" in Jenin. The Palestinians originally said that 3,000 civilians had been killed, but gradually reduced their claim to about 500. A few weeks later, after questions began to be raised in the international media, a high-ranking Fatah official was forced to admit that the death toll numbered only in the dozens. Kadoura Mousa Kadoura, the Director of the northern West Bank for Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement, told reporters that his own investigation showed that 56 Palestinians had died in Jenin during the operation. These were largely armed fighters, killed during combat. The subsequent report by the UN Secretary General, which found no evidence of a massacre, could only verify 52 Palestinian casualties.

The "Jenin massacre" myth is particularly galling since the IDF took great care to avoid harming innocent non-combatants, even though this increased the exposure of its own soldiers to risk. The IDF chose to employ infantry in house-to-house sweeps rather than using heavier weapons which, while providing Israeli troops with greater security, would also increase the risk to the civilian Palestinian population. Israel paid a heavy price for this decision - 23 Israeli soldiers were killed and dozens more were injured in the fierce close combat that ensued.

The Palestinian Authority's unfounded allegations of a massacre combined with misrepresentative television pictures of heavy damage - which in actuality was confined to a limited section of the refugee camp - persuaded the international community to embark upon a UN investigation of events in Jenin. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan then initiated the formation of a fact-finding team to develop accurate information regarding the events in Jenin. Due to its high regard for the UN

Secretary General, Israel immediately announced its support for UN Security Council Resolution 1405, which welcomed the Secretary General's initiative.

However, Israel believed that a number of points had to be clarified prior to the arrival of the team in order to safeguard the impartiality of the team's work. Israel believed that the team's mandate had to include an examination of Palestinian terrorism in the camp that created the necessity for Israel's military actions there. The right to self-defense, and the obligation to combat terrorism, could not be ignored. Israel expected that the Security Council definition of the mission as a "fact-finding" team would be preserved and that the practices of previous UN fact-finding efforts be maintained, including with regard to respect for the identity and rights of individuals providing information. While Israel had every intention of sharing information with the team, in the fight against terrorism, some information must remain classified and it would have been unreasonable to expect Israel to expose all of its security and operational secrets upon demand.

As satisfactory terms of reference could not be agreed upon, Secretary General Kofi Annan decided to disband the fact-finding team. By this time, respectable news outlets the world over and human rights organization finally confirmed what Israel had stated from the beginning - that there had been no massacre in Jenin.

Unfortunately, the Palestinians continue their attempts to perpetuate the Jenin massacre myth, often adding unfounded allegations regarding the denial of vital humanitarian aid. In clear contradiction to their own claims, the Palestinians often spread these lies in the same breath that they refer to the refugee camp as "Jeningrad", a modern Stalingrad-like last stand, and the site of a great and heroic battle.

[return to top](#)

◆ **Is Israel using excessive force in its response to the violence and terrorism?**

**Every nation must protect its citizens from threats to their lives. No nation can acquiesce to a situation in which its citizens are victimized daily by indiscriminate terrorism. Israel is no exception.**

The oft-repeated charge that Israel has used excessive force against innocent Palestinian civilians is a distortion of the truth. Israeli soldiers and civilians alike have had to face thousands of organized, violent and life-threatening attacks by Palestinians, only a small percentage of which have been reported in the media. These attacks have included suicide bombings, shootings, violent riots, lynchings, fire-bombings, roadside ambushes, mortar barrages, and car bombs directed at civilian targets. To date, over 600 Israelis have been killed and thousands wounded as a result of this violence.

Furthermore, the Palestinians have attempted, but fortunately failed, to carry out acts of "mega-terrorism". Attempted attacks on premium targets, including the Pi Gllot gas and fuel storage facility and the truck bombing of Tel Aviv's largest skyscrapers, barely receive attention in the international media despite the tens of thousands of potential victims.

Under these difficult conditions, the Israel Defense Forces have acted with the greatest possible restraint, taking action only when inaction by Israel would result in loss of innocent lives in imminent terrorist actions. Israel always strives to use the minimum force necessary to prevent terrorism. For example, the Israeli government waited through 18 months of widespread terrorism before launching Operation Defensive Shield. It also takes care to target only those responsible for the violence, and continues to do its utmost to prevent collateral civilian injury or loss of life. The Israeli government regrets the loss of any life, whether Jewish or Arab, in the present wave of violence. In the final analysis, however, responsibility for these casualties lies with the Palestinian Authority, which has initiated the violence and stubbornly refuses to bring it to an end.

The inaction of the Palestinian Authority in the face of widespread terrorist activity in the areas

under its control, coupled with the PA's active support of this violence, have left Israel no alternative but to take the necessary action itself to avert continued terrorism. Therefore, Israel has had to undertake preventive, precisely targeted operations that are designed to bring about a cessation of these lethal threats.

Whenever possible, Israeli operations are directed toward apprehending terrorists and their accomplices, and bringing them to justice. In a small minority of cases, when arrests are impossible (mostly due to the fact that the terrorists are given refuge in the heart of PA controlled areas), and when a clear, specific and imminent terrorist threat must be countered, Israel is forced to carry out other types of preventative operations against these legitimate military targets. All civilized nations would act in a similar fashion given these circumstances.

Israel neither condones nor takes part in "assassinations" or "extra-judicial killings", as Palestinian spokesperson often claim. These terms are derived from spheres unrelated to armed conflict and are blatantly misleading descriptions of Israel's justified counter-terrorist operations in a clear situation of armed confrontation. The widespread use of these terms by Palestinian spokespersons is intended to portray Israel and its actions in a pejorative light, while disregarding the legal reality.

Currently, Israel is engaged in a situation best defined as an armed conflict. International law in general and the law of armed conflict in particular recognize that individuals who directly take part in hostilities cannot then claim immunity from attack or protection as innocent civilians. By initiating and participating in armed attacks against Israeli civilians or security personnel, such individuals have designated themselves as combatants in the conflict, and have forfeited such legal protection. By the same token, an individual who becomes a combatant is considered to remain a combatant until hostilities come to an end and not merely during that exact instant when the individual is carrying out or organizing an attack. Israel only acts in a manner that is in compliance with the

principles and practice of armed conflict, and makes every effort to avoid the involvement of innocent civilians.

Israel has no interest in escalating the violence. On the contrary, Israel believes it is imperative that the violence ends so that both parties can return to constructive negotiations. Israel maintains that a just and sustainable solution can be found only through dialogue, not armed conflict. However, while the violence exists, Israel has an indisputable responsibility to protect its citizens. As long as the lives of innocent civilians are being threatened on a daily basis, Israel has no choice but to react in self-defense.

[return to top](#)

#### **◆ Why do the Palestinians claim that they have suffered more casualties than Israel?**

**During the first few months of the violence, the Palestinian Authority, which regards every Palestinian casualty as a victory in its struggle for international sympathy, fomented massive confrontations between Palestinians and Israeli soldiers. Later, as Palestinian terrorist attacks increased in both ferocity and sophistication, the number of Israeli civilian casualties rose sharply.**

Many of the Palestinian casualties occurred during the first three months of the violence, which were characterized by large-scale confrontations. Far from being peaceful demonstrations, most Palestinian protests can best be described as violent riots with hundreds of Palestinians, some of them armed with lethal weapons, attacking isolated groups of Israeli soldiers. After much of the lethal rioting ended in January 2001, Palestinian casualty figures dropped dramatically.

During that period, there were fewer Israeli casualties due to the fact that Israeli civilians - in contrast to the Palestinians who deliberately chose to initiate confrontations with the IDF - do not willingly involve themselves in violence.

A simple statistical analysis of the casualties on



both sides demonstrates this point. While approximately 80% of all the Israelis killed in the violence and terrorism since September 2000 are non-combatants, the compatible figure for Palestinian non-combatant casualties is no more than 45%.

Even this figure tells only part of the story, as many of the Palestinian "non-combatants" were killed while they were engaged in stone-throwing, rioting and other acts of violence. In contrast, casualties occur most often among Israelis while they are going about their daily lives - traveling to work, shopping, eating out, or participating in a family or religious celebration.

In addition, Palestinian casualty figures have been manipulated to distort the true picture. Their statistics include a substantial number of Palestinians who died by their own hand (suicide bombers and bomb-makers blown up while preparing explosives) as well as those killed by their fellow Palestinians (suspected "collaborators", victims of internecine violence and neighbors of bomb-makers killed in accidental detonations).

Israel carefully plans its military operations to avoid harming non-combatants. The IDF has done everything in its power to act with restraint in the face of countless shootings, bombing, violent riots, ambushes and other life-threatening situations. Given the widespread violence engulfing the territories and the horrific acts of terrorism, it has been relatively successful in keeping down the number of collateral non-combatant casualties.

In contrast, Palestinian terrorists continue to deliberately target innocent civilians. As terrorist attacks against Israeli civilian targets intensified, increasing in both savagery and capability, the number of Israeli deaths has risen. More than 600 Israelis were killed since September 2000, while Palestinian terrorism killed over 130 during March 2002 alone.

As a matter of principle, Israel rejects the notion that justice can be determined by comparing the

relative number of casualties on both sides of a conflict. By way of illustration, casualty totals among the allied forces in the Desert Storm campaign in Iraq and of the NATO forces in the former-Yugoslavia were much lower than Iraqi and Serbian casualty totals. Yet it in no way follows that the liberation of Kuwait and the restoration of peace in the Balkans were not justified uses of force.

Similarly, there is no moral justification to the idea that justice can be determined by the relative strength of arms carried by the two sides to a conflict. The inferior quality of the weapons used by the Palestinians does nothing to distract from the fact that it is the PA which has decided to use violence to achieve its goals. Nor can the Palestinian's lack of warplanes and armored vehicles ever justify their use of guns and explosives to target innocent civilians.

Moreover, the lower casualty figures among Palestinian non-combatants, despite Israel's superiority in arms, clearly demonstrates Israel's respect for the safety of civilians. For while the terrorists use whatever weapons they have available against any Israeli they can hit, Israel uses only as much force as necessary in order to address specific terrorist targets.

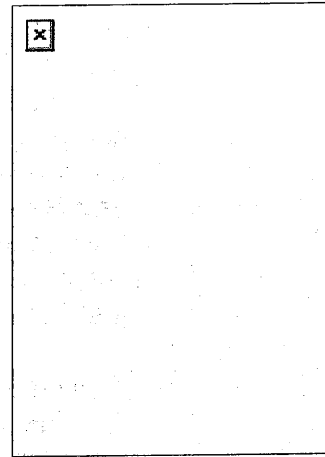
[return to top](#)

#### **◆ Why are so many children being harmed in this conflict?**

**Not only has the Palestinian leadership encouraged their youth to take an active role in the violence, the Palestinian terrorists have purposely targeted Israeli children in their brutal attacks.**

From the earliest days of the crisis, the Palestinian Authority, aware of the propaganda value to be gained, has actively promoted the participation of children in the anti-Israeli violence.

Its schools, summer camps, mosques and official media have engaged in incitement specifically directed at young audiences. Furthermore, the PA has trained children in the use of weapons and has created an atmosphere that extols death in battle and encourages them to become suicide bombers.



The cynical use of children as pawns in the conflict begins in the Palestinian education system. Instead of educating children for peace, as Israel does, Palestinian textbooks (many of which have been recently published by the PA itself) openly teach hatred of Israel and Israelis.

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Young Palestinians assemble automatic assault rifles at a Palestinian Fatah military-style summer camp graduation in Nablus (July 22, 2001)

Materials published and broadcast in the official Palestinian media reinforce these lessons, aiming much of its incitement at children, encouraging them to hate Israelis and take part in the violence. Children are urged by television advertisements to "drop your toys and take up arms" while Palestinian education television programming glorifies martyrdom in the struggle against Israel.

Youth groups and official Palestinian Authority summer camps teach children to be "holy warriors" in the Jihad (holy war) against Israel and the Jews, actually training young people in the use of firearms. Educational facilities are used to inspire hero-worship of suicide bombers, psychologically preparing Palestinian children to follow in their footsteps.

This incessant incitement has encouraged Palestinian children to take an increasingly active role. In the initial stages of the violence, Palestinian

children were sent into the streets to throw rocks, firebombs, and grenades at Israeli soldiers. The PA even provided transportation, busing children to violent flashpoints far from their own neighborhoods. Armed Palestinian policemen and members of the Fatah militia, the Tanzim, often stood just behind this human shield of juvenile "martyrs" and directed gunfire at Israeli soldiers, knowing they can exploit the children's wounds for their propaganda purposes, should Israeli soldiers have to defend themselves. It is no surprise then that in the wake of violent clashes between Palestinian rioters and Israeli soldiers, children were among the casualties.

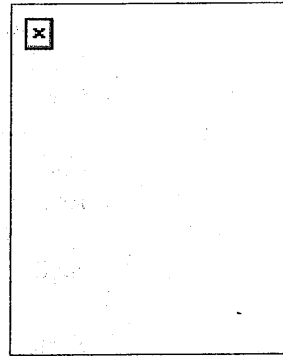


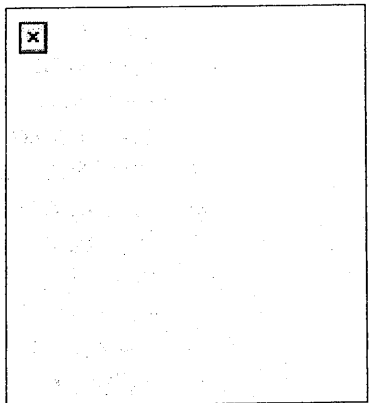
Photo of a Palestinian baby dressed as a suicide bomber found in Hebron (June 2002)

With the passage of time, as the Palestinian Authority intensified its incitement and expanded its use of children in the violence, young Palestinian boys and girls were increasingly exploited as suicide bombers. The age of suicide bombers is dropping by the day, and attacks carried out by teenagers have become the norm. Younger children, some no more than toddlers, have been used to provide cover for the transportation of weapons and explosives.

The Palestinian Authority's manipulation of children, which has been extensively documented by the media, constitutes a reprehensible violation of every international treaty and convention meant to protect children in situations of armed conflict. The PA's heinous exploitation of children is both profoundly immoral and fundamentally illegal.

It should also be remembered that hundreds of Israeli children have been killed and wounded in terrorist attacks. They were not just "incidental" victims of the violence, but the

intended targets of terrorists. They have been deliberately targeted and killed by Palestinian sniper fire and in drive-by machine-gun ambushes.



Palestinian roadside bombs have maimed children in school buses and Israeli youngsters were bludgeoned and stoned to death by terrorists while hiking near their homes.

Shalhevet Pass, age 10 months, was killed by a Palestinian sniper at the entrance to the Avraham Avinu neighborhood of the ancient Jewish community in Hebron (Mar 26, 2001).

Suicide bombers have murdered dozens of Israel youths, choosing to strike at places where young people are known to congregate - discos, bus stops, fast-food restaurants and shopping malls.

Although the suffering of every child is tragic and regretful, a basic difference exists between the two sides. Most Palestinian children have been hurt due to their direct participation in violent confrontations, while a minority of the casualties were the unfortunate result of crossfire or return fire directed towards terrorist targets. By contrast, Israeli child victims were deliberately targeted by their terrorist attackers - the intended and preferred victim of the Palestinian bombers, snipers and gunmen.

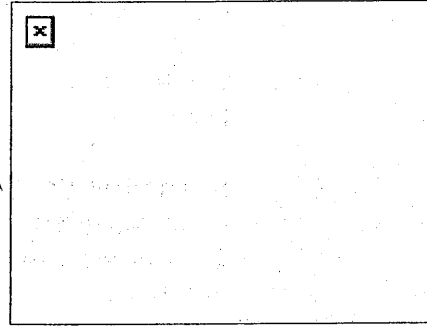
[return to top](#)


**◆ What about claims that holy sites are being desecrated?**

**The Palestinians have carried out a campaign of destruction and desecration of holy sites and rituals, orchestrated so that any Israeli response would inflame religious passions worldwide. The Palestinian leadership has not hesitated to desecrate sacred Jewish, Christian and Muslim sites and ritual gatherings.**

From the earliest

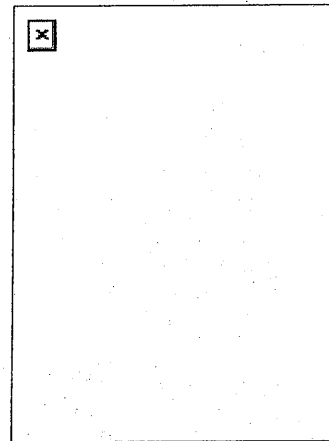
days of the violence, the Palestinians have targeted Jewish holy sites and observances. The goal of these attacks is similar to their motivation for targeting children - by striking at that which Israel holds most dear, the terrorists hope to provoke an Israeli response harsh enough to bring about outside intervention. This same hope for international pressure also inspires the Palestinians to attempt to draw the Christian world into the conflict.




©2000 Reuters   
Palestinians display burned Jewish prayer books at Joseph's Tomb (Oct 7, 2000)

One such attack occurred when a Palestinian mob sacked, demolished and then torched Joseph's Tomb in Nablus, in October 2000. This was perpetrated just after the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the shrine as part of an agreement according to which the Palestinian Authority undertook to protect the Jewish holy site from harm. Following the attack, Palestinians seized the site, destroyed the Jewish artifacts, burned the interior and rededicated the structure as a mosque.

Subsequently, there have been additional Palestinian attacks on Jewish synagogues, including the ancient synagogue of Jericho that was severely damaged by arson, a synagogue in the town of Efrat that was almost destroyed and a synagogue in Tekoa which was irreparably vandalized. The ancient shrine of Rachel's Tomb adjacent to Bethlehem has been subjected to repeated Palestinian

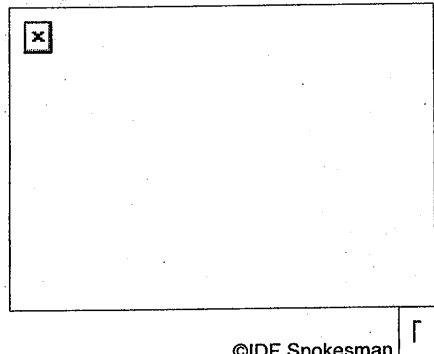


©2001 Reuters   
Jewish worshippers are evacuated from the Western Wall on Tisha B'Av (July 24, 2001)

machine-gun fire and fire bombs, while shots have been fired at worshippers at the Me'arat Hamahpelah Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron.

In another deplorable tactic, Palestinian terrorists have targeted Jewish ritual observances. Teenagers have seen their bar and bat mitzvah celebrations turned by terrorists into assemblies of carnage and death. All of Israel mourned when 29 Jews were killed in Netanya as they gathered to celebrate the Passover Seder dinner. The forced closure of the Western Wall plaza due to the Palestinian stoning of Jewish worshippers on the eve of the Rosh Hashanah High Holiday and again on the solemn fast day of Tisha B'Av can be considered tantamount to the evacuation of St. Peter's Square on Christmas, or the shutdown of Mecca's Qabaa during the height of the Muslim Haj.

Christian sites have also been deliberately dragged into the fray by Palestinian terrorists. Perhaps the most sacrilegious event was the forced entry of armed Palestinian terrorists into the church that marks



©IDF Spokesman  
IDF soldiers evacuating hostages from the Church of the Nativity (Apr 6, 2002)

the birthplace of Jesus. These gunmen not only violated Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity by the very presence of their automatic weapons and explosives, they used the church windows as firing positions, and deliberately exploited the resident clergy as human shields, forcing them to be in the middle of a very volatile situation.

Places of worship are offered special protection under international law. The presence of armed Palestinian terrorists in the Church of the Nativity and in the vicinity of other holy sites - whether to hide out or to commit acts of hostility - is a gross abuse of the immunity and special protection granted to such places. These acts are grave

breaches of the First Additional Protocol (1977) to the Geneva Conventions and are considered war crimes by any standard of international humanitarian law. The conduct of the Palestinian gunmen directly endangered the lives and security of the clergy who reside and worship there, a serious violation of their rights. The armed Palestinians used the religious officials at the Church of the Nativity as human shields against military attack - conduct that clearly constitutes a war crime in accordance with international law, and is a grave breach of the Geneva Conventions and its Additional Protocols.

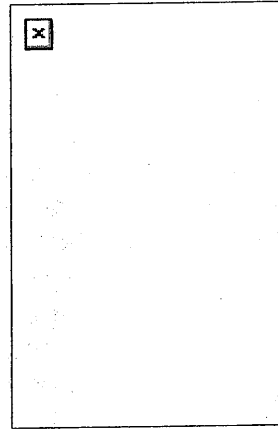
The Palestinian gunmen chose to barricade themselves in the Church of the Nativity, safe in the knowledge that Israel would make every effort to respect the sanctity of the site, even at the risk of its soldiers' lives. The Palestinians cynically manipulated Israel's dedication to maintaining its standards of morality and deep respect for the religious beliefs of others. The Palestinian leadership was also aware that should the IDF be forced to react, presumably Israel would be blamed for any unfortunate consequences.

Attempts by the Palestinians to involve the Christian world in the conflict are nothing new. The invasion of the Church of the Nativity was not the first time that the Palestinians have used that holy place and other Christian sites as hiding places for armed men or as positions for snipers. Frequent gunfire attacks against the southern Jerusalem neighborhood of Gilo have been launched from the adjacent Christian Arab village of Beit Jala, by Palestinian terrorists who have deliberately chosen to open fire from positions close to churches and schools. These attacks are a wanton attempt to draw Christians world-wide into the conflict by provoking Israeli return fire that would damage the village's many Christian locations. For its part, Israel has done its utmost to respond to these unprovoked attacks with the greatest possible restraint, pinpointing only those terrorist positions from which the attacks have been launched.

Recent history has shown  
that freedom of worship



and the sanctity of Islamic, Christian and Jewish sites in the Holy Land has been guaranteed only when these sites have been under Israeli control. During the present wave of violence, the Temple Mount has remained open for Muslim worship, despite the fact that prayers there have become a forum for incitement and rioting. Muslims have even used the Temple Mount courtyard as a location from which to hurl rocks on Jewish worshippers gathered below at Judaism's most revered place of prayer - the Western Wall plaza.



©2001 Reuters  
Muslim Ramadan worshippers on the Temple Mount (Nov 23, 2001)

When the Palestinians began the violence in late September 2000, the Arab world blamed then opposition leader Ariel Sharon for having provoked the violence by visiting Jerusalem's Temple Mount - the site most holy to Judaism and the third most holy to Islam - in what was purported to be a show of disrespect for Muslim sensitivities.

Various Arab spokesmen continue to maintain that this brief visit by an Israeli leader to Judaism's most holy site was an unforgivable provocation, even though Ariel Sharon never even set foot inside either mosque. This despite the fact that the Mitchell Fact-Finding Committee has since determined that this visit was not the cause of the violence, which had political, not religious motivation.

Palestinian abuse of holy sites and assemblies, including the murderous attacks against Jews gathering for religious observances and the forced entry of heavily armed Palestinian terrorists into Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity, are violations of every religious and legal doctrine. The international community should strongly condemn these acts, and the Palestinians must adopt the

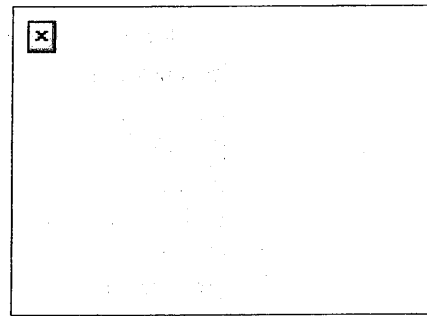
principle that the religious observances of all faiths must be respected.

[return to top](#)

**◆ What is the connection between Palestinian violence and the rise in anti-Israel and antisemitic incidents in the region and throughout the world?**

**The vehement campaign of Palestinian incitement is generating violence, destroying regional peace efforts and giving rise to antisemitism throughout the world.**

The Palestinian Authority's institutionalized campaign of incitement constitutes the driving force behind the violence and the main instrument for recruiting new terrorists and for mobilizing public participation in violent acts. The



©2000 Reuters

Palestinians display Nazi swastika in front of Israeli army outpost at Netzarim junction, Gaza Strip (Oct 6, 2000).

PA television stations and official daily newspapers present distorted accounts of Palestinian casualties, praise the "martyred" Palestinian suicide terrorists, spread unfounded rumors, stir up anti-Jewish fervor, and urge the public to take to the street for well-orchestrated and violent confrontations with Israeli soldiers. PA-financed clergy use the pulpit to preach hatred of Jews and praise of Jihad (holy war). Senior Palestinian leaders and spokespersons fabricate and repeat inflammatory lies about non-existent Israeli "atrocities", "massacres", or "religious desecrations". Palestinian educational television airs programs glorifying the murder of Jews, praising child martyrdom, teaching nursery rhymes of hate and revenge and calling on children to "drop your toys and take up arms".

Extensive media coverage is given to rallies and protests in which mock-up Jewish school buses or

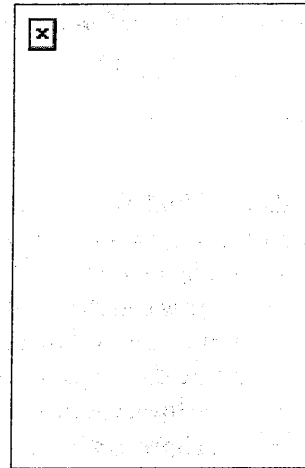
villages are destroyed, leaders urge the crowd to intensify the confrontation and violence, and religious authorities extol the virtues of self-immolation and suicide bombings in the name of Allah. In the face of the overwhelming campaign of incitement, it is no wonder that the Palestinian public has been swept up in an ultimately self-destructive vortex of violence that has been chosen as the preferable course of action by the irresponsible Palestinian leadership.

The Palestinian's vehement anti-Israel rhetoric has also had a crippling impact on the support for Arab-Israeli peace and reconciliation efforts throughout the region. The intense coverage of the Palestinian perspective of the events, the incitement of Palestinian spokespersons and the political pressure of radical Arab regimes has given rise to an anti-Israeli ground-swell among the general public throughout the Arab world, influencing many pro-peace Arab states to downgrade their ties with Israel. At a time when all parties in the Middle East should be working to contain the conflict and to restore calm to the region, it is of utmost importance to keep all possible lines of direct communication and cooperation open. In this light, the limiting of relations between states runs counter to the interests of the region and is particularly unfortunate.

False Palestinian claims are magnified by Arab media reports that often fail to differentiate between action and reaction, between innocent victims and armed terrorists and between soldiers trying to prevent attacks and terrorists striving to kill and destroy. They supply ammunition to those who would deny Israel the right to self-defense granted naturally to all other nations, while turning a blind eye to Palestinian acts of violence and terrorism.

The effects of the Palestinian campaign of hate have not been limited to the Middle East. Israel is gravely concerned by the recent, significant rise in antisemitism, directed

against Jewish communities in Europe and elsewhere that has been engendered by the virulent anti-Israeli rhetoric and anti-Jewish violence that is taking place in the region. The relentless flow of outrageous and totally unfounded accusations emanating from Palestinian spokespersons has greatly contributed to the growing wave of antisemitism.



©2002 Reuters

Damage after attack on synagogue in Djerba, Tunisia (Apr 11, 2002).

Antisemitic attacks have included bombings of synagogues and Jewish schools, death threats and violence against Jews, unprovoked assaults including murder, desecration of Jewish cemeteries and other forms of vandalism. On April 11, 2002 a suicide terrorist drove a fuel truck into the ancient synagogue in Djerba, Tunisia, killing more than 20 people, most of them German tourists. Recent intelligence indicates that more such attacks are being planned against Jewish communities throughout the world. These hate crimes against individuals and Jewish community institutions are often disguised as "anti-Zionist" actions. Racist incidents such as these should arouse the deep concern of all civilized peoples. Israel calls on the governments of countries where the scourge of antisemitism is spreading to take all measures necessary to ensure the security of Jewish communities - and to bring the perpetrators of these deplorable attacks to justice.