



S. DANIEL ABRAHAM  
CENTER FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE

## Israel and Middle East News Update

*Thursday, September 22*

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# News Excerpts

September 22, 2022

## Ynet News

### **Lapid to Back a Two-State Solution in UN Speech**

Prime Minister [Yair Lapid](#) is expected to endorse a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in his speech to the UN General Assembly today. This will be the first time in many years that an Israeli prime minister will raise the possibility of the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel. Lapid will point out the possible threats that could arise from the establishment of an independent Palestinian state and will state clearly that Israel will not take any steps which could endanger the security of its people. He will say that the separation from the Palestinians will have to be part of Israel's vision for the future. A senior official said a two-state solution is the right option for Israel, but security concerns must be addressed. The official added that as Israel was nearing an election cycle, political fairness dictates that voters know where Lapid stands. Political observers said Lapid's speech would be an appeal to left-wing and centrist voters.

## Times of Israel

### **IDF Rearrests Palestinian Who Went on Hunger Strike**

A Palestinian former detainee who went on a well-publicized 141-day hunger strike prior to his release was reportedly rearrested in a raid by Israeli security forces. According to Palestinian reports, Hisham Abu Hawash was among 13 people arrested in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said it had arrested 11 wanted Palestinians across the West Bank, including in Hebron, where Abu Hawash lives. Abu Hawash was held under an administrative detention order from October 2020 until February 2022, when Israeli authorities agreed not to renew his detention as his condition deteriorated. Abu Hawash's hunger strike drew intense interest among Palestinians and international pressure on Israel. [Dig Deeper "Palestinians Reach Truce to End West Bank Clashes" \(Israel Hayom\)](#)

## Jerusalem Post

### **Israel, Region Conspiring Against Palestinians, PA Claims**

The Palestinian Authority (PA) claimed that it was facing a "conspiracy" by Israel and some regional countries that seek to harm the Palestinian national enterprise. The claim came in response to riots that erupted in Nablus after the PA security forces arrested two Palestinians, Musab Shtayyeh and Ameer Tbeileh. Shtayyeh was described as close to a senior member of Hamas's armed wing, Izaddin al-Qassam, who is wanted by Israel for his involvement in terrorism. The arrest of the two men is seen by some political analysts as a message from the PA to Israel and the US that it is cracking down on terrorism. They also noted that the riots reflected the state of deep discontent with the PA among the Palestinians. [Dig Deeper "At UN, Biden Reaffirms Commitment to Two-State Solution for Israelis, Palestinians" \(Times of Israel\)](#)

## **Israel Not Invited to Meeting on Palestinian Issue**

On the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, Saudi delegates invited representatives from 25 countries to a [closed meeting](#) on the Israeli-Palestinian issue; western diplomats said – Israel was not invited. The meeting was held to mark the 20-year anniversary of the [Arab Peace Initiative](#), also known as the Saudi Initiative, Walla! reported. The initiative offers normalization of relations by the Arab world with Israel in return for the full withdrawal by Israel from the “occupied territories,” the establishment of a Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital, and a “just solution” to the Palestinian refugee problem. In the invitation to the forum, the Saudi delegation stated that the meeting was intended to deal with the stagnation of the peace process and the status of a two-state solution. Israel was surprised by the meeting and only found out about its existence from an advertisement on the Saudi Al-Arabiya network.

Ha'aretz

## **AG Allows Interim Gov't to Sign Lebanon Maritime Deal**

Israel's attorney general stated that she will defend the interim government's right to sign an agreement delineating Israel's maritime border with Lebanon, a senior Israeli official said. According to the official, Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara said that the pending deal will only need to be presented to the public after its approval, as it requires authorization from the security cabinet rather than the Knesset. It will also not be subject to a referendum. In 2014, the Knesset passed Basic Law: Plebiscite, which states that any diplomatic agreement which includes the relinquishing of territories where Israeli “Law, jurisdiction and administration” apply shall be subject to a plebiscite unless passed by the Knesset with a majority of 80 members or more. The law was passed in order to make it harder for future governments to change the status of Jerusalem and the Golan Heights or to make border corrections through swaps of lands under Israeli sovereignty as part of a diplomatic agreement. This law does not apply to the West Bank, which is under martial law.

Axios

## **Ukraine Asks Israel for Intel on Iranian Support to Russia**

Ukraine asked Israel to share intelligence on any support Iran is giving to the Russian military in the war, senior Israeli officials said. Russia, in recent days, attacked several Ukrainian military positions with “Kamikaze drones” that Ukraine's military said were repainted Iranian [Shahed-136 drones](#). The US and Ukraine have accused Iran of sending hundreds of sophisticated attack drones to Russia. Ukrainian military commanders told [the Wall Street Journal](#) that the Iranian drones gave the Russians a significant advantage in several areas. Russia and Iran have grown increasingly close as the world seeks to isolate Moscow. The deepening ties also come as efforts to revive the Iran nuclear deal, which would remove most of the sanctions that have been imposed on Tehran, continue but without any breakthrough. [Dig Deeper “Israel Condemns Russia’s Call-up of Reservists, Nuclear Threats” \(Times of Israel\)](#)

Reuters

## Turkey Sells Armed Drones to United Arab Emirates

Turkish defense firm Baykar has delivered 20 armed drones to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) this month and could sell more, two Turkish sources said, as a diplomatic detente between the former regional rivals expands into military contracts. International demand for [Baykar's drones](#) soared after their impact on conflicts in Syria, Ukraine, and Libya, where their laser-guided armor-piercing bombs helped repel an offensive by UAE-supported forces two years ago. That civil war in Libya was one of several theatres where the two countries played out a bitter, decade-long battle for influence in the Middle East until a reconciliation last year. Now the UAE and its ally Saudi Arabia are hoping to leverage their rapprochement with Turkey to counter a growing security challenge from Iran and its proxy forces, military sources say. Both Gulf Arab oil states have faced drone attacks on cities and oil facilities that they blamed on Iran-aligned Houthi fighters in Yemen. [Dig Deeper "Israel Successfully Tests 'Gabriel 5' Anti-ship Missile" \(I24 News\)](#)

Associated Press

## Amnesty Says Egypt Trying to Cover up Rights Violations

Amnesty International accused Egypt of attempting to cover up a decade of “unrelenting violations of human rights” in order to improve its international standing ahead of hosting the world climate summit. Egypt’s human rights record has come under intensified scrutiny ahead of the November global COP27 summit in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh. Dozens of international rights groups have called on Egypt to end its crackdown on civil society and protect freedom of expression. The [48-page report](#) by Amnesty urged the Egyptian government to implement changes and stop abuses, citing a relentless clampdown on dissent, rollback of personal freedoms, and mass incarcerations after President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi came to power in 2013. Rights groups estimate that thousands of political prisoners are held in Egyptian jails. Amnesty recommended the government act to advance workers’ rights, end arbitrary detention, and outlaw censorship of independent media. The London-based group said its findings were based on interviews with victims of human rights violations and lawyers, as well as other documentation and Amnesty publications compiled over the past decade. [Dig Deeper "Tunisia: Journalists Condemn Law on Prison Terms for Fake News" \(I24 News\)](#)

## **Dangerous Noise, Dangerous Quiet**

By Amos Gilad and Michael Milshtein

- The claim has been made several times in the last few weeks that the current escalation in the Palestinian theater is the realization of a strategic warning issued less than a decade ago about what was liable to develop. The warning was not inaccurate but suffered from two major faults: it has been repeated too often in the last few years, causing it to suffer from the crying wolf syndrome and its central components—first and foremost, the eruption of a third Intifada and the PA’s unraveling—did not happen. Furthermore, the current escalation is no different in its magnitude than previous waves of violence in the Palestinian theater over the last decade and certainly is far less than the threats posed by the second Intifada.
- Such strategic warnings have great importance, but they do not belong to the security realm but rather should be discussed in the public arena and by decision-makers. The story is not just the increase in the level of violence or the growing weakness of the PA—largely due to internal ills unrelated to the lack of a peace process or to Israeli economic backing—but are rather long-term challenges whose roots are civilian and social and are liable to develop into an existential challenge in the future.
- The current wave of violence in Judea and Samaria (West Bank) is likely to gradually subside, as has happened in the past. At that point, it will become clear that the central problem is not necessarily the “noise” of security threats but the quiet of the ongoing, underground merger taking place between Judea and Samaria (West Bank) and Israel on the civilian and economic levels, which is liable to serve as the basis for an administrative and governmental merger.
- This quiet is illustrated in the increasing merger between the infrastructure and economies, for example, in electricity, water, communications, and transportation, which on the one hand, improves the Palestinians’ lives, but on the other hand, increases the fusion between the two communities. The true strategic warning is not, therefore, the rise in violence—whether it is being carried out by aimless young people, members of the PA, or Hamas—but rather the steady progress toward a reality of one state, a scenario that is liable to be created even if this is unplanned or unwanted.
- On the Palestinian side, there is growing support for the idea, which is viewed as a means of obtaining civilian rights and, in the future, perhaps even realizing national aspirations if and when they become a demographic majority between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. This is a topic in the Israeli conversation but is not sufficiently perceived and understood—because, with every day that passes, we come closer to the point of no return, which will make a physical separation in the future difficult. The critical question that the decision-makers, the professional echelons, and mainly the public must ask is whether it is possible to continue with the current situation over time—which is the approach endorsed by those who are opposed to making any decision on the Palestinian issue—and whether it is understood that this increased merging will

place Israel at a historic crossroads when it has to choose between maintaining two separate kinds of citizenship or consenting to have all the Palestinians living in Judea and Samaria (West Bank) becoming citizens. Even if applying sovereignty over the West Bank does not immediately mean a binational state but rather a Jewish majority of 60 to 70%, it will be a precarious arrangement—and also a volatile one down the road—that will threaten the ability to continue to run Israel as a Jewish and democratic state.

- With a month to go until the election, it is essential to pose these questions and put them at the center of the debate, and demand that the politicians give clear answers without resorting to slogans. Any government that is elected will have to realize that it must place the Palestinian issue at the top of its agenda. Time does not let us continue to maintain the current situation by economic means or by such cosmetics as “managing the conflict,” and it will compel the decision-makers to formulate an orderly long-term strategy—and mainly, prepare to make historic decisions, decisions that the founding fathers excelled in, and which have not been made for two decades.

## **West Bank Violence Is Prelude to Uprising Against the PA**

By Mohammad Al-kassim

- **Violent, intense clashes broke out between Palestinian Authority (PA) security forces and Palestinian residents in the city of Nablus in the northern West Bank after the arrest of two men, one of them a Hamas operative wanted by Israel. The PA security forces' arrest raid that began was confronted with stiff resistance that turned deadly. The sound of bullets shot by protesters at PA security and the return fire could be heard in several places throughout the city. Sporadic gunfights continued with angry young Palestinians hurling stones at the PA security's armored vehicles, a scene usually reserved for clashes with the Israeli army. The city looked like a ghost town with its deserted streets, while the municipality suspended work at its offices due to shots fired at its building, and An-Najah National University told its students that classes would be held remotely.**
- **Shots also were fired at the Radio Hayat studio during its morning show, forcing the anchor to interrupt the regular programming and stop broadcasting for the safety of the workers. At least 17 people were injured in the clashes, including two in serious condition, Palestinian medical sources reported. Meanwhile, the area of closures and protests widened to include the Old City of Nablus, as well as the Balata, Askar, and Al-Ain refugee camps. Palestinian factions in the city harshly criticized the PA actions, calling for a general strike and demanding the release of both men while threatening that they will not let security forces enter the city until the men are freed.**
- **The PA Minister of Interior Ziad Hab al-Reeh arrived in Nablus, in an attempt to contain the situation. A security meeting was held inside the governorate headquarters in Nablus. Clashes have continued in the vicinity of Nablus' Old City. The intense clashes may be a prelude to the end of the era of PA President Mahmoud Abbas, with intense internal disputes taking place between those eyeing the PA presidency. "I think we are living in a preparatory phase for an uprising against the PA. Unfortunately, some ill-considered measures are hastening this," a Fatah member from Nablus said. The raid sparked strong reactions from Palestinian factions. Hamas, in a statement, condemned the arrests by the PA's security forces, calling for the "immediate release of all the resistance fighters and political detainees." Hamas described the actions by PA security forces as "a new stain on the forehead of the PA and the black record of its security coordination."**
- **Ramallah-based political analyst Faris Sarafandi said that the PA "must read the Nablus message clearly before it is too late." Majdoleen Hassona, a Palestinian journalist based in Nablus, tweeted that "what is happening now in Nablus is a new shame in the history of the Palestinian Authority," adding that "bullying a defenseless people exhausted by the occupation with its crimes, arresting its resistance, killing its sons, destroying their future and carrying out the tasks of the occupation, as the security services do, is something that cannot be tolerated." Dr. Nasser Al Qudwa, president of the National Democratic Assembly, in a statement, condemned the PA's actions.**

- **“The arrest of the two young men, Musab Shtayyeh and Ameer Tabila, who are wanted by the occupation, by the Palestinian security services that is affiliated with the influential group in Ramallah, is disgraceful and betrays the sacrifices of the sons of the security services and calls for a decisive national pause to confront this blatant coherence with the occupation,” the statement said.**
- **The Palestinian presidency called for calm from all Palestinians, urging them “to confront the conspiracies of the occupation and some regional countries that want to harm our national project.” PA presidency spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeineh said: “We call on our people to unite, and to close ranks in this dangerous stage that our national cause is going through, and not to be drawn behind malicious agendas, and to miss the opportunity on the enemies of our Palestinian people, in order to preserve our national principles, which President Mahmoud Abbas holds, in the face of all the conspiracies surrounding the Palestinian cause and the rights of our people.” Last week, Israel Defense Forces Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Aviv Kochavi criticized the Palestinian Authority security forces, saying that the increase in the number of attacks in the West Bank is due to its incompetence. “The lack of governance of the Palestinian security forces in certain areas of the West Bank constitutes fertile ground for the growth of terrorism,” Kochavi said.**