



Analysis of the Identities of Gazans Killed During the "Great Return March"

April 25, 2018

Overview¹

The Hamas-controlled ministry of health in the Gaza Strip reported that 40 Palestinians have been killed during the "great return march" events since March 30, 2018, when the rioting began along the Gaza Strip-Israel border (updated to April 25, 2018).² The information provided by the Gaza ministry of health, which is used by the Israeli and international media, does not include a statistical distribution or distinguish between terrorist operatives (and those affiliated with them) and civilians. As far as the ITIC has been able to determine, no sources in the Gaza Strip make such a distinction. As a result, the impression given to world public opinion is that all the casualties were innocent Palestinian civilians. The analysis conducted by the ITIC shows that most of the Palestinians killed were terrorist operatives or individuals affiliated with the terrorist organizations.

- ▶ The interim findings of the ITIC analysis revealed that **32 of the 40 Palestinians killed (80%)** were terrorist operatives or individuals affiliated with them, distributed as follows:
 - ◆ **18 of the 32 (about 56%) were terrorist operatives belonging to or affiliated with Hamas:**
 - **Nine were operatives in Hamas' military wing (the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades) and operatives in Hamas' security forces.**
 - **Nine were affiliated with or linked to Hamas, based on circumstantial evidence** (Hamas issued death notices for them, their bodies were wrapped in Hamas flags, or other supporting evidence).
 - **Ten were members of Fatah**, two of them operatives in its military wing and eight with organizational affiliation or connections.³

¹ Update of the April 11, 2018, bulletin, "Analysis of the Identities of Gazans Killed During the "Great Return March" on March 30 and April 6, 2018."

² The data provided by the ministry of health in the Gaza Strip do not include Palestinians killed in "work accidents," tunnel collapses, explosions or IDF aerial attacks.

³ Fatah in the Gaza Strip is involved in carrying out terrorist attacks against Israel.

- Two belonged to the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), one to the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), one to Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

Identities of Palestinians killed during the "great return march" who were terrorist operatives or affiliated with terrorist organizations

Organization	Clear membership	Affiliation ⁴	Total
Hamas	9 military wing and security force operatives	9 affiliated with Hamas	18
Fatah	2 military operatives	8 affiliated with Fatah	10
PIJ	1 military operative		1
DFLP	1 military operative	1 affiliated	2
PFLP		1 affiliated	1
Total			32 Palestinians killed

The ITIC's interim findings clearly show that **terrorist operatives** (especially Hamas operatives), or Palestinians affiliated with terrorist organizations, **play a key role in the front lines of the "great return march" demonstrations near the fence**. They are primarily **involved in violent clashes with the IDF** and on occasion carry out terrorist attacks. Conspicuous is the small number of civilian activists and ordinary civilians, who were involved in organizing the march, involved in rioting with the IDF. **They were left behind when the violence began.**

Methodological note

► Among the Palestinians killed the ITIC found terrorists at several levels of **organizational identification**. The **highest level** is that of **operatives** in the terrorist organizations' military wings or security forces; the **lowest** is **membership or affiliation, or a link**. In addition, there are various levels in the quality of the information relied on, from concrete information to circumstantial evidence.

⁴ For the distinction between the levels of affiliation, see the Methodological note.

Gazans killed on April 20, 2018, and those who later died of their wounds⁵

► The spokesman for the ministry of health in the Gaza Strip reported that during the events of April 20, 2018, **four Palestinians were killed by IDF fire**, three in the northern Gaza Strip:

► **Ahmed Nabil Abu Aqel (al-Shanbari)**

- ◆ **Personal details:** 25 years old, from the Jabalia refugee camp.
- ◆ **Circumstances of his death:** Shot in the head by IDF fire in the eastern part of Jabalia and died later in the hospital.
- ◆ **Organizational affiliation: Fatah.** The Fatah branch in the northern Gaza Strip issued a death notice for him and announced he was a Fatah member (Facebook page of the Fatah branch in the northern Gaza Strip, April 20, 2018). His father, **Nabil Aqel**, said his son was wounded in the leg in a riot on April 13, 2018, but nevertheless returned to demonstrate the following week (Dunia al-Watan, April 21, 2018).



The death notice issued for the "heroic shaheed," Ahmed Nabil Abu Aqel (al-Shanbari) by Fatah in the northern Gaza Strip (Facebook page of the Fatah branch in the northern Gaza Strip, April 20, 2018).

► **Ahmed Rashad al-Athamnah**

- ◆ **Personal details:** 26 years old, from Beit Hanoun.
- ◆ **Circumstances of his death:** Killed by IDF fire in the northern Gaza Strip on April 20, 2018.
- ◆ **Organizational affiliation: Fatah.** The Fatah branch in the northern Gaza Strip announced he was a Fatah operative (Facebook pages of the spokesman for the

⁵ Palestinians who died before April 20, 2018, were analyzed in the previous document. Four new names were added by the ministry of health in the Gaza Strip as having been killed on April 20, 2018, and two more died of their wounds, one on April 22 and the other on April 23.

ministry of health in the Gaza Strip and of the Fatah branch in the northern Gaza Strip, April 20, 2018).



Right: The death notice issued by Fatah for the "heroic shaheed" Ahmed Rashad al-Athamnah (Facebook page of the Fatah branch in the northern Gaza Strip, April 20, 2018). Left: The funeral held in Beit Hanoun for Ahmed Rashad al-Athamnah. His body is wrapped in a Fatah flag (fathemedia website, April 20, 2018).

► Muhammad Ibrahim Ayoub

- ◆ **Personal details:** 15 years old, from the Jabalia refugee camp.
- ◆ **Circumstances of his death:** Killed by IDF fire in the eastern part of Jabalia.⁶
- ◆ **Organizational affiliation: Fatah. The northern branch of Fatah announced he was a Fatah member** (Facebook page of the Fatah branch in the northern Gaza Strip, April 20, 2018). His body was wrapped in a Fatah flag for burial. The Israeli media reported that **Muhammad Ibrahim Ayoub's father** was an operative in the Palestinian Authority (PA) security forces in Gaza until Hamas took over the Strip (Haaretz, April 24, 2018).

⁶ The IDF announced it was conducting an investigation into the circumstances of his death, adding that Hamas deliberately endangers the lives of young Palestinians by sending them to the fence to serve as human shields (Ynet, April 21, 2018).



Right: The Fatah-sponsored mourning tent erected for Muhammad Ayoub in Jabalia (Dunia al-Watan, April 21, 2018). Left: The death notice issued for Muhammad Ayoub by the northern branch of Fatah in the Gaza Strip. It states that the Fatah, the national liberation movement, northern Gaza branch, mourns the death of its son, the heroic shaheed Muhammad Ibrahim Ayoub (Facebook page of the Fatah branch in the northern Gaza Strip, April 20, 2018).

- On April 21, 2018, the Fatah branch in the northern Gaza Strip posted a special notice to its official Facebook page about the deaths of three of its movement members in the marches on April 20, 2018. The Arabic reads, "**Fatah is parting from three of its heroes on the Friday [dedicated to] shaheeds and prisoners. The Fatah movement mourns the deaths of four shaheeds on the Friday [dedicated to] shaheeds and prisoners, and states that shaheed Ahmed Aqel from the Jabalia refugee camp, shaheed Ahmed al-Athamneh from the city of Beit Hanoun and shaheed Muhammad Ayoub Aqel from the Jabalia refugee camp, are sons of Fatah and members of [Fatah's] staff**" (Facebook page of the Fatah branch in the northern Gaza Strip, April 21, 2018).⁷

⁷ ITIC emphasis.



The notice posted to the Facebook page of the Fatah branch in the northern Gaza Strip calling Ahmed Aqel, Ahmed al-Athamnah and Muhammad Aqel "sons of Fatah and members of [Fatah's] staff" (Facebook page of the Fatah branch in the northern Gaza Strip, April 21, 2018).

► **Sa'ad Abd al-Majid Abd al-'Al Abu Taha**

- ◆ **Personal details:** 29 years old, married and father of one, from the town of al-Qarare in the southern Gaza Strip.
- ◆ **Circumstances of his death:** Killed by IDF fire in the eastern part of Khan Yunis (Facebook page of the spokesman for the ministry of health in the Gaza Strip, April 20, 2018).
- ◆ **Organizational affiliation:** Unknown. His mother, interviewed by the Hamas newspaper Felesteen, said her son always said **he wanted to die as a shaheed, a martyr for the sake of Allah** (Felesteen, April 22, 2018). **His funeral was attended by armed operatives who fired their guns into the air** (Facebook page of Shehab, April 21, 2018).



Sa'ad Abu Taha (Flesteen, April 21, 2018).

Other Palestinians killed

► On April 22, 2018, the ministry of health announced the death of **Abdallah Muhammad Jibril al-Shimali**, who was wounded in a riot on April 20, 2018.

- ◆ **Personal details:** 20 years old, from the al-Barazil neighborhood in Rafah.
- ◆ **Circumstances of his death:** Wounded by IDF fire on April 20, 2018.
- ◆ **Organizational affiliation:** His body was wrapped in the flag of Hamas' military wing (Palinfo Twitter account, April 23, 2018). That is the only indication the ITIC found for his being a military wing operative. Hamas' military wing did not issue a death notice for him as it did for other operatives who were killed. His body may have been wrapped in the flag because in the past his father, **Jibril al-Shimali**, was a commander in Hamas' military wing (Facebook page of the spokesman for the ministry of health in the Gaza Strip and Ma'an, April 22, 2018).



Abdallah Muhammad Jibril al-Shimali, photographed with his father (Facebook page of Rafah 24, April 23, 2018).



The body of Abdallah Muhammad Jibril al-Shimali wrapped in an Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades flag (Facebook page of QudsN, April 23, 2018).

► On April 23, 2018, a spokesman for the ministry of health in the Gaza Strip announced the death of **Tahrir Sayid Mahmoud Wahba**, who died of wounds incurred during a demonstration (Facebook page of the spokesman for the ministry of health in the Gaza Strip, April 23, 2018).

- ◆ **Personal details:** 18 years old, from Khan Yunis
- ◆ **Circumstances of his death:** Wounded in the head by IDF fire on March 30, 2018, east of Khan Yunis. Was deaf and dumb (Wafa, April 23, 2018). His mother said it was not the first time her son had participated in demonstrations against IDF forces and that even before the marches he had participated in demonstrations near the border fence on every Friday. She said she had tried, using sign language, to prevent him from going to the march, but **he signed her that he wanted to die in a demonstration ("to achieve *shahadah* through a bullet in his head", i.e., to become a shaheed)** (Quds Press, April 23, 2018).



Tahrir Sayid Mahmoud Wahba (PNN, April 23, 2018).

► On April 12 and 13, 2018, the ministry of health in the Gaza Strip reported the deaths of two more demonstrators (Facebook page of the spokesman for the ministry of health in the Gaza Strip, April 12 and 13, 2018). They were:

► **Abdallah Muhammad al-Shuhri**

- ◆ **Personal details:** 28, from Khan Yunis
- ◆ **Circumstances of his death:** Critically wounded by IDF fire in the eastern part of Khan Yunis and died later in the hospital.
- ◆ **Organizational affiliation:** **Fatah member. The Fatah branch in western Khan Yunis issued a death notice for him** (Facebook page of the Fatah branch in western Khan Yunis, April 13, 2018).



Death notice issued by the western branch of Fatah in Khan Yunis for Abdallah al-Shuhri (Facebook page of the Fatah branch in western Khan Yunis, April 13, 2018).

► **Islam Muhammad Harzallah**

- ◆ **Personal details:** 28, from the eastern part of Gaza City
- ◆ **Circumstances of his death:** Wounded in the stomach on April 13, 2018, by IDF fire while participating in the "great return march" east of Gaza City (Sama News, April 13, 2018).
- ◆ **Organizational affiliation:** His body was wrapped in a green Hamas flag. A Hamas banner was hung in the mourning tent erected for him. Two senior Hamas figures, Isma'il Haniyeh and Khalil al-Haya, came to offer condolences to the family. On the other hand, the "popular resistance movement" in the Gaza Strip claimed him as an operative (Palinfo Twitter account, April 15, 2018). His father, **Muhammad Harzallah**, is an operative in the Hamas-controlled national security force. Members of the national

security force attended the funeral of Islam Muhammad Harzallah and senior figures paid condolences calls to the family (Facebook page of the national security forces in the Gaza Strip, April 13 and 15, 2018).



Right: The funeral held for Islam Muhammad Harzallah. His body is wrapped in a green Hamas flag (Facebook page of al-Risalah, April 14, 2018). Left: Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau and Khalil al-Haya come to give their condolences to the family (Palinfo Twitter account, April 15, 2018).



High-ranking officers in Hamas' national security forces, headed by Na'im al-Ghoul, come to pay their respects of the family (Facebook page of the national security forces in the Gaza Strip, April 15, 2018).

Appendix

The 40 Gazans killed between March 30 and April 25, 2018

	Name	Age⁸	Residence	Circumstances	Affiliation	Notes
1	Muhammad Kamal al-Najar	25	Tel-Zaatar, Jabalia refugee camp	March 30 riots		
2	Omar Wahid Nasrallah Abu Samour	28	Bani Suheila	March 30 riots	Fatah	Also referred to by the media as Omar Wahid Samour
3	Amin Mansour Abu Muammar/Amin Mahmoud Mansour Muammar	22/25	Rafah	March 30 riots	PFLP	
4	Muhammad Na'im Muhammad Abu Amro	27	Shejaiya neighborhood, Gaza City	March 30 riots	Hamas military wing operative	
5	Ahmed Ibrahim 'Ashour Odeh	19	al-Shati refugee camp	March 30 riots	Hamas military wing operative	
6	Jihad Ahmed Farina	33/35	al-Nafaq neighborhood, Gaza City	March 30 riots	Hamas military wing operative	Commander in the military

⁸Various sources may give different ages for the same person.

						wing
7	Mahmoud Sa'adi Younes Rahmi	33/34	Shejaiya neighborhood, Gaza City	March 30 riots	Hamas-affiliated	Memorial service held by Hamas
8	Abd al-Fattah Bahjat Abd al-Nabi	18/19	Beit Lahia	March 30 riots		Family rejected IDF version of affiliation with Hamas' military wing insisting he was not an operative in any organization
9	Ibrahim Salah Abu Sha'er	17/20/22	al-Shaboura refugee camp, Rafah	March 30 riots		
10	Abd al-Qader Murdhi Suleiman al-Hawajri	42	Nuseirat refugee camp	March 30 riots	DFLP	Described as a senior figure
11	Sari Walid Abu Odeh	27	Beit Hanoun		Hamas military wing operative	
12	Hamdan Isma'il Saber Abu 'Amsha	23	Beit Hanoun		Fatah military wing operative – Nabil Masoud unit	
13	Jihad Zuhair	30			Fatah military	

	Abu Jamous "al-Najar" (Abu al-Mu'atasseem)				wing operative – Shaheed Nidal al-'Amoudi Battalion	
14	Bader Fayek Ibrahim al- Sabagh	19/22	Sheikh Zayed neighborhood, northern Gaza Strip	March 30 riots	Apparently a Hamas operative	Hamas flags and notices hung in mourning tent
15	Naji Abdallah Shahadeh Abu Hujair	25	al-Bureij refugee camp	March 30 riots	Possibly a Hamas operative	Buried wrapped in a Hamas flag
16	Musab Zuhair Anas al-Saloul	23	Nuseirat refugee camp		Hamas operative	Body held by Israel
17	Muhammad Muhareb Muhammad al- Rabi'h	22	Nuseirat refugee camp		Fatah operative	Body held by Israel. Isma'il Haniyeh paid condolence call to family.
18	Fares Mahmoud Muhammad al- Raqab	26/29	Bani Suheila district, Khan Yunis		PIJ operative	
19	Shadi Hamdan al-Kashef	34	Rafah			Had special needs.
20	Tha'er Muhammad Rabi'h	30	Jabaliya		Fatah operative	

21	Ahmed Omar 'Arafa	25	Deir al-Balah		DFLP operative	
22	Mujahed Nabil Marwan al-Khudari	23	Gaza City		Possibly a Hamas operative	Buried wrapped in Hamas flag
23	Usama Khamis Musalam Qudieh	38	Abasan al-Kabira	April 6 riots	Apparently an operative of Hamas' security forces	Military-style funeral held
24	Majdi Ramadan Musa Shabat	38	Beit Hanoun	April 6 riots	Officer in the Palestinian police force	
25	Hussein Muhammad 'Adnan Madhi	14/16	Sheikh Radwan neighborhood, Gaza City	April 6 riots	Affiliated with Hamas	Activist in the Hamas Islamic Bloc of the Salah al-Din B middle school
26	Ibrahim Zeid Salameh Al'ar	20	Nuseirat refugee camp	April 6 riots	Apparently a Fatah operative	Buried wrapped in Fatah flag
27	Muhammad Sayid Musa al-Haj Saleh	33	Rafah	April 6 riots		
28	Sidki Faraj (or Taleb) Abu Atiwi	45	Nuseirat refugee camp	April 6 riots	Possibly a Hamas operative	Buried wrapped in Hamas flag
29	'Alaa' al-Din	15/16	Rafah	April 6 riots		

	Yahya al-Zamli					
30	Hamza 'Eid Abd Al'al	20/23/25	al-Zuweida		Possibly a Hamas operative	Memorial service held by Hamas on April 9, 2018
31	Yasser Abd al-Rahman Murtaja	30			Operative in Hamas' security forces	
32	Marwan Odeh (or Awad) Qudieh	45		Khirbat Ikhza'a	Apparently an operative in Hamas' military police	Buried wrapped in Hamas flag
33	Abdallah Muhammad al-Shuhri	28		Critically wounded in the chest by IDF fire in the eastern part of Khan Yunis on April 12, 2018; died a short time later in the hospital	Fatah member	
34	Islam Muhammad Harzallah	28	Eastern Gaza City	Wounded on April 13, 2018, in the stomach by IDF fire while participating in the "great	Buried wrapped in a Hamas flag. Hamas banner hung in mourning tent. The "popular resistance	His father was an operative in Hamas' national security forces in

				return march" east of Gaza City	movement" in Gaza claimed him as a member.	Gaza. National security operatives attended his funeral and senior figures offered condolences to the family.
35	Ahmed Nabil Aqel (al-Shanbari)	25	Jabalia refugee camp	Wounded in the head by IDF fire in the eastern part of Jabalia and died in the hospital on April 20, 2018	Fatah in the northern Gaza Strip claimed him as a member.	
36	Ahmed Rashad al-Athamnah	26	Beit Hanoun	Killed by IDF fire in the northern Gaza Strip on April 20, 2018	Fatah branch in the northern Gaza Strip claimed him as a member.	
37	Muhammad Ibrahim Ayoub	15	Jabalia refugee camp	Killed by IDF fire in the eastern part of Jabalia on April 20, 2018	Unknown	Fatah in the northern Gaza Strip claimed him as a member, in

						ITIC assessment because his father was a national security operative.
38	Sa'ad Abd al-Majid Abd al-'Al Abu Taha	29	Al-Qarare	Killed by IDF fire in the eastern part of Khan Yunis on April 20, 2018	Unknown	
39	Abdallah Muhammad Jibril al-Shimali	20	Al-Barazil neighborhood of Rafah	Wounded in Rafah by IDF fire on April 13, 2018; died on April 22, 2018	Hamas	Son of Muhammad Jibril al-Shimali, former commander of the Hamas' military wing.
40	Tahrir Sayid Mahmoud Wahba	18	Khan Yunis	Wounded in a demonstration east of Khan Yunis on March 30, 2018; died on April 23, 2018	Unknown	Was deaf and dumb