

Blade of jihad: Extremists embrace the knife as tool of terror

Paul Alster writes in [youth soccer tournament named for Muhannad Halabi](#), who [wife and two-year-old son](#) of one in a stabbing in Jerusalem in early October. Some terrorists, killed by Israeli security forces and police either during or in the immediate aftermath of their attacks, are revered as shahids (martyrs) and have had streets and squares named in their honor.

The bloody toll to date includes a dozen dead and at least 19 seriously wounded in 59 separate stabbing attacks, mainly in Jerusalem. Some 72 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli security forces, including 45 who Israel said were involved in attacks and another 27 Palestinians killed in clashes between stone-throwers and security forces.

The latest attack came on Friday afternoon, when a Palestinian stabbed an Israeli outside a supermarket in Sha'ar Binyamin "injuring him severely," according to local authorities.

Particularly chilling is the fact that the call to regular citizens to use readily available weapons appears to be creating a new wave of terrorists.

"Generally speaking, the terrorists have not been operatives of any established terrorist organization," the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted in a statement Thursday. "The current wave of terrorism has not been directed by any organization, but rather is directly inspired by the intensive incitement accompanying it."



Those who have been killed after committing random stabbings are deemed martyrs within the Palestinian territories.

Suspected weapons are removed from Arabs entering Jerusalem's Old City, but once inside the ancient walls, anyone can walk into a hardware store and by a hammer, or a kitchenware shop and purchase butcher knives. They could even visit a private house and take a carving knife from a kitchen drawer. Israeli security forces have found it almost impossible to restrict the proliferating use of knives, but recent increases in security patrols in Jerusalem have seen a decrease in attacks in the capital, only for more attacks to be perpetrated in other Israeli towns and cities, including in the disputed West Bank, especially Hebron.

The troubling trend was underscored last week, when a baby born in Gaza was [eportedly feature footage of the Temple Mount](#), punctuated by calls for Muslims to "liberate Al Aqsa" and "wage jihad against the Jews."

From the start, Israel stressed it has no designs on Al Aqsa –

a compound overseen by the Islamic "waqf" trust as part of a long-standing status quo agreement – insisting that the violence followed attacks on Jewish worshippers at the Western Wall, stoned by Muslims using the compound as safe haven. Israeli security forces reportedly discovered pipe bombs inside the mosque when they intervened to stop the violence.

"This incitement comes from the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamic Movement in Israel, Hamas, and – to our chagrin – also with the active participation of the Palestinian Authority," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said last month.

Now five weeks into the violence sparked by the Temple Mount crisis, Hamas continues to call for blood. While knifings constitute the lion's share of attacks, the other techniques for spreading terror are not forgotten. On Wednesday, a terrorist identified as Ibrahim al-Acri, 38, was killed by Israeli security forces in Jerusalem after slamming his car into 15 pedestrians, killing one and injuring 14 more. An official Hamas statement praised al-Acri as a "heroic martyr".

Some regional observers suggest the wave of attacks is a spontaneous reaction from Palestinians frustrated by lack of jobs, difficult housing conditions, travel restrictions, and the controlling hand of Israel, but also highlight disillusionment with the corruption of the West Bank-based Palestinian Authority controlled by Mahmoud Abbas. But experts who spoke to FoxNews.com said it would be naive to believe the wave of stabbings is organic.

"It's too simplistic to say it just rose from the people," a senior Israel Defense Forces officer told FoxNews.com. "Hamas is inciting what they now call the 'Al Aqsa Intifada' encouraging Palestinians in the territories to carry out terror acts... but the Palestinian Authority is not stopping it."

Yesterday, U.S. Rep. Ed Royce, R-Calif., chairman of the House

Foreign Affairs Committee, and Rep. Eliot Engel, D-N.Y., the committee's ranking member, along with 367 other House members sent a bipartisan letter to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, urging him to quell the incitement against Israelis.

"Now is the time for the Palestinian Authority to take concrete steps to avoid further violence," read the letter. "This starts with a sustained effort to publicly and officially repudiate these attacks, ending the unacceptable incitement to violence emanating from Palestinian Authority officials and institutions, continuing important security cooperation with Israel and agreeing to unconditionally renew direct talks with the Israelis."

"Mahmoud Abbas is trying to delegitimize Israel, but he does not want an intifada to happen. He thinks he can control the flames [of the uprising]. He's playing a dangerous game," the senior IDF officer warned. "An intifada is a bigger risk to his regime than it is to Israel."