

Palestinian-Israeli Political Fatalities, September 28, 2000–April 30, 2001

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Brief Analysis

The following report evaluates trends in Israeli-Palestinian violence during the past seven months using fatality statistics. This analysis covers the period from the outbreak of the "Al Aqsa Intifada" on September 28, 2000, through April 30, 2001. The following statistics are based primarily on information provided by the Israeli human rights group B'tselem. This data has been cross-checked for accuracy with the Israeli government and U.S. and other Western media sources. For information about fatalities in earlier periods and about methodology, see [PeaceWatch no. 317 \(templateC05.php?CID=2008\)](#) and [Research Note no. 8. \(templateC04.php?CID=216\)](#).

General Statistics. During the seven-month period under review, the daily averages of lethal incidents and fatalities involving Palestinians were substantially higher than those of Israelis; there were 1.3 lethal incidents and 1.7 fatalities per day involving Palestinians compared to 0.2 and 0.3, respectively, for the Israelis. By contrast, Israelis had a higher rate of fatalities per lethal incident (1.5) than the Palestinians (1.2). (Note: lethal incidents are those violent events that cause deaths, and therefore do not include Israeli–Palestinian violence that results only in injuries. One lethal incident can cause several fatalities; for example, the March 4, 1996 bombing in Tel Aviv was one lethal incident that caused thirteen Israeli fatalities.)

Daily Averages of Lethal Incidents and Fatalities Involving Palestinians

	Lethal Incidents	Fatalities	Fatalities per Lethal Incident
October 2000	2.4	3.5	1.5
November 2000	2.6	3.7	1.4
December 2000	1.2	1.6	1.3
January 2001	0.6	0.6	1.1
February 2001	0.7	0.7	1.0
March 2001	0.7	0.8	1.2
April 2001	0.8	0.8	1.0

November 2000 was the deadliest month for both Palestinians and Israelis. November's daily averages of lethal incidents and fatalities involving Palestinians were 2.6 and 3.7 respectively; these figures were only slightly higher than those of October (note: for the purposes of this study, October 2000 includes the last three days of September). However, December showed a dramatic decrease in both lethal incidents and fatalities involving Palestinians and

from January through to April 2001, the daily average of lethal incidents and fatalities involving Palestinians stabilized within a narrow range of 0.6 and 0.8. The average number of fatalities per lethal incident involving Palestinians likewise fell from a high of 1.5 in September to 1.0 in April.

Daily Averages of Lethal Incidents and Fatalities Involving Israelis

	Lethal Incidents	Fatalities	Fatalities per Lethal Incident
October 2000	0.3	0.3	1.1
November 2000	0.5	0.8	1.4
December 2000	0.2	0.3	1.6
January 2001	0.2	0.2	1.2
February 2001	0.2	0.4	2.4
March 2001	0.2	0.3	1.6
April 2001	0.2	0.2	1.0

Similarly, November produced the highest daily average of both lethal incidents (0.5) and fatalities (0.8) involving Israelis. However, in the Israeli case, November has no equivalent—these numbers are almost double the figures of the next most violent month. The daily average of lethal incidents involving Israelis levels off at approximately 0.2 from December 2000 through April 2001; by contrast, the daily average of Israeli fatalities varies between 0.2 and 0.4. In this seven-month period, the average number of fatalities per incident is erratic, ranging from 1.0 to 2.4.

Comparison to the First Intifada. Comparing the first seven months of each episode, it is clear that the period between October 2000 and April 2001 was more violent than the Intifada that began December 9, 1987. Daily averages of both lethal incidents and fatalities involving Palestinians were fifty percent higher between October 2000 and April 2001 than in the first seven months of the first Intifada. For Israelis, the difference is more marked: the daily average of lethal incidents in the Al Aqsa Intifada was more than ten times that of the first Intifada, with the daily average of fatalities fifty times higher. Similar results appear when comparing the averages of the first seven months of the Al Aqsa Intifada to the averages of the entire first Intifada. Interestingly, for both Israelis and Palestinians, daily averages of lethal incidents and fatalities were approximately 3 times higher between October 2000 and April 2001 than the period between December 1987 and September 1993.

Location. Palestinian fatalities were overwhelmingly concentrated in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (98.2%), most likely due to restrictions on movement out of these territories; 54.1% of Palestinian fatalities occurred in the West Bank, and 44.1% were located in the Gaza Strip. Palestinian fatalities occur in a greater proportion in the West Bank in five of the seven months.

During this seven-month period, 52.6% of Israeli fatalities occurred in the West Bank, 34.6% inside pre-1967 Israel, and 12.8% in the Gaza Strip. Despite these overall statistics, the proportion of Israeli fatalities within pre-1967 Israel from February to April 2001 was more than double the rate of the first four months of violence. It is interesting to note that Israeli fatalities in Gaza occurred only between November 2000 and January 2001; there have been no fatalities in this area, despite the heightened level of violence in more recent months, since February 2001.

Involvement. The Israeli military was involved in the vast majority of Palestinians fatalities (97.9%) during this

seven-month period (note: these figures do not include the 13 Israeli Arabs killed at the beginning of the violence). Since January 2001, the Israeli military has been responsible for 100% of Palestinian fatalities.

Determining Palestinian involvement in Israeli fatalities is more complicated considering that the vast number of Israeli fatalities are unclaimed or are claimed by more than one group; moreover, involvement can often be determined only after a significant period of investigation. It was possible to attribute Palestinian security forces' involvement in Israeli fatalities only during the first three months of the Intifada; after January 2001, attribution became more difficult. In total, the Palestinian security forces were involved in (at least) 13.4% of Israeli fatalities. Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) operated irregularly, but nevertheless claimed 10.2% and 4.8% of Israeli fatalities respectively. There was also a proliferation of new groups claiming involvement in Israeli fatalities, such as the Saladin Brigades, which claimed 12.1% of all Israeli fatalities. 59.5% of Israeli fatalities were carried out by unaffiliated Palestinians or unknown individuals or groups. According to Israeli security officials, at least some of these incidents involved individuals or groups affiliated with the Palestinian security forces.

Security Forces and Civilian Fatalities. During this seven-month period, civilians constituted an average of 85.7% of Palestinian fatalities, ranging from a low of 79.6% to 91.8%, in a wholly uneven pattern. Palestinian security forces' fatalities likewise fluctuated between 8.2% and 20.4%, averaging 14.3%. Among Israeli fatalities, the percentage of civilians fluctuated more widely than Palestinian figures, ranging from 33.3% to 100%—this latter figure occurring both in January and March 2001. The average monthly proportion of Israeli civilian fatalities was 62.6%, with 37.4% of all fatalities being Israeli military personnel.

Conclusion. Using fatality rates as an indicator of the level of violence in the first seven months of the Al Aqsa Intifada, the data shows that there has been a noticeable decrease in Palestinian fatalities since the initial months of the violence in the fall of 2000. By contrast, Israeli fatalities did not show the same downward trend, instead following a more erratic pattern, though remaining below the high reached in November 2000. In recent months, the proportion of Israeli fatalities within the Green Line has increased markedly. Overall, the severity of the current violence is far higher than it was during the first Intifada. Compared to the first Intifada, the first seven months of the Al Aqsa Intifada were three times more deadly for both Israelis and Palestinians.

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