

Assessing Palestinian Armed Struggle

July-December 1986

The article below assesses Palestinian military operations against the Zionist occupation forces in Palestine in the latter half of 1986.

In the four decades of Palestine's occupation by the Zionists, a number of basic facts have been established. One of these is that the Palestinian national liberation struggle depends on both the struggle of our people in the occupied homeland, and the struggle of our people in exile. It is also an established fact that the basic form of struggle for confronting the Zionist state is armed struggle, both based inside occupied Palestine and launched across the borders, and at times attacking specified targets in other parts of the world. It is also clear that due to the nature of the Zionist state and its organic relation with world imperialism, the only solution to the conflict lies in the negation of this state.

In the light of these facts, one can assess the revolutionary armed struggle in occupied Palestine. Due to the particular nature of the Palestinian-Zionist conflict, armed struggle is an essential component of the liberation struggle at all stages. The strategic aim of armed operations is developing into a popular liberation war which will culminate in liberating Palestine. The last four decades have definitively proven that the vitality of the Palestinian cause is directly related to the level of the armed struggle.

Besides striking blows to the Zionist military forces, the immediate effects of armed struggle on the Israeli settler society are apparent. Deteriorating security is one of the main causes of Zionist emigration from 'Israel', as has been reflected in a number of polls. The armed struggle also plays an important role in reducing the Zionist state's income from tourism. In relation to the Palestinian population under occupation, armed anti-occupation operations have a visible effect on their morale. Armed struggle plays a vanguard role in relation to mass uprisings and daily resistance.

In assessing armed operations against the Zionist state in the last half of 1986, one should bear in mind that

during much of this period the Palestinian revolution outside the occupied homeland was preoccupied with defending the Palestinian people in Lebanon, and their right to bear arms, against Amal's war on the camps. Of course, this detracted from overall military operations against the Zionist forces, in terms of quantity and quality.

In reviewing the armed operations of this period, we have used the figures admitted by Israeli sources. It is important to note that these are conservative figures, as 'Israel' constantly plays down the effectiveness of the Palestinian military struggle for obvious reasons.

In the second half of 1986, there were 205 military operations in occupied Palestine, resulting in the death of 26 Israelis and the injury of 243. This compares with 220 operations in the first half of the year, which resulted in 20 dead and 200 injured. These figures reflect two facts: One, the reduction in

the number of operations reflects the revolution's preoccupation with self-defense in Lebanon. Two, the increase in Zionist casualties, despite a decrease in the number of operations, points to improvement in the quality of the operations carried out by the Palestinian freedom fighters.

METHODS OF STRUGGLE

In the second half of 1986, two new methods were initiated. One was ramming vehicles, especially trucks, into gatherings of Zionists. The other was that women revolutionaries started using their 'charm' to lure Zionists into an attack. Four Zionists were stabbed by women militants during this period. Remote-control explosions became increasingly common in this period; there were seven such operations. Stabbing Zionists became something of a mass phenomenon; 18 such operations were carried out. Table no. 1 lists the operations according to type.

Table 1

Type of operation	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
explosives	11	13	9	14	9	7	63
molotov cocktails	6	10	14	13	7	5	55
hand grenades	3	4	1	6	1	3	18
firearm attacks	3		3	3			9
attacks with hand grenades, molotovs	2	2			1	2	7
ambushes	1	1					2
armed combat			1	1			2
attacks with tools	1						1
land mines under vehicles		1		1			2
stabblings		2	4	4	5	3	18
marine landings	1						1
burning Zionist property	3	1	1	2	4	3	14
abducting soldiers and settlers			1	1	1		3
hitting soldiers and injuring them			1	1			2
attempts to storm barricades				1		1	2
resisting soldiers with knives during arrests					1		1
appropriating soldiers' weapons						1	1
axe-killing						1	1
attempted bus hijacking					1		1
ramming soldiers with truck					1		1
execution of collaborators					1		1
Total	31	34	36	50	30	24	