

# BELOW

# THE SURFACE

**1** Social media have resumed circulating in recent days the "incitement video" of the Islamist preacher from Sur Baher (eastern Jerusalem), Assam Amira. He is the leader of the Jerusalem branch of Hizb a-Tahrir – an international Islamist fundamentalist organization that aims to re-establish the Islamic caliphate. The recirculation of the video is apparently a response to his recent sentencing to nearly three years in prison, after he was found guilty of incitement.

In the framework of the hostage release deal, many Jerusalem terrorists have been released from Israeli prisons – but this has not led to celebrations in the Arab neighborhoods of the city. Attempts were made to have such commemorations when the deal was beginning to be implemented, but these quickly fizzled out.

Still and all, the Al-Busawla webpage continues to make sure to report the names of some of the released terrorists, with an emphasis on what it calls the "saints" who were jailed for extensive periods. Al-Busawla also terms suicide terrorist attacks as "suicide operations," and has uploaded videos and photos showing small celebrations of their release. One video shows that among the celebrants at one of the releases is a Red Crescent employee; the Red Crescent is the body chosen in a government tender to provide some of the services that the now-outlawed UNRWA used to provide.

**2** While President Trump was meeting with King Abdullah of Jordan regarding the former's plan to transfer Gazans to other Arab countries, Jordanians were holding rallies of support for their king's rejection of the idea. Abdullah has, however, reportedly agreed to take in up to 2,000 "very sick" children from Gaza, and presumably their families as well. Arabs in Jerusalem sought to copy the Jordanian rallies in their own city as well, but these efforts did not get past the planning stage.

**3** Fatah is seeking to rebuild its prestige in Jerusalem, following a long period in which Hamas gained popularity and standing among the populace. To this end, Fatah is trying to stir up anti-Israel sentiment.

**4** The month of Ramadan, lately known for its potential for anti-Israel violence, will begin in less than two weeks. Preparations have begun, and it is likely that attempts to stir up violence will be made at the large prayer gatherings. Such attempts do not require much advance planning, as large numbers of people will already be on hand.

**5** Confusion abounds regarding whether a big snowstorm will hit Jerusalem this weekend, but still, Arab elements – especially in the neighborhoods behind the security barrier, and in other neighborhoods as well – are expressing fear that city officials are not preparing to provide necessary emergency help. This, despite the following facts: Snow plows have been stationed in central locations to make sure that roads are clear; city officials have informed them that the snow is not expected to pile up; the local administrations are making appropriate preparations; food is in abundant supply in any event because of the approaching Ramadan.



Snow on the Mount of Olives in previous years

القُدس · Follow  
Feb 15 ·



A scene from the video of the release of terrorist Marad Al-Ajluni from Kafr Akeb, who was found guilty of taking part in the murder of three Israelis, including a Druze policeman, in the Sea Food Market attack in Tel Aviv in 2002. Courtesy of Al-Busawla. A Red Crescent employee can be seen taking part in the "happy" event.

**6** The controversy regarding the forced closure of two Arab bookstores selling anti-Israel books and "content of incitement" – such as "From the River to the Sea" coloring books for children – continues, but more facts are beginning to emerge. In a media interview with one of the owners, he claimed that some of the books that were confiscated were not even in the store, but only in its warehouse. He said that they were in the midst of deciding whether to sell them from the store or not to include them in their inventory.

However, a person familiar with the store and with the recent events has told us that the store is known for "under the table" sales of textbooks that were not checked by the censor and are therefore forbidden for sale both by Israeli law and by the agreements between Israel and the PA. Both the bookstore owner and our source therefore imply that the books were apparently not in the regular display so as to prevent unfriendly eyes from seeing them, but were still available for purchase by those who knew to ask for them.

