

JERUSALEM

Jan. 2: In Jerusalem, Israeli police breaks up a political gathering of Fateh supporters at the Christmas Hotel, but makes no arrests.

Jan. 3: On the official opening day of campaigning for the upcoming elections, Israeli police detains at least eight PLC candidates campaigning in Jerusalem, incl. Hanan Ashrawi, Mustafa Barghouthi, Hatem Abdul Qader and Ahmed Ghneim. ►



- Hamas officials (led by Mohammad Abu Ter) and leaders of the Northern Branch of the Islamic Movement (led by Sheikh Ra'ed Salah) hold a news conference at the Ambassador Hotel in East Jerusalem, presenting a video and pictures showing excavations near the Western Wall Tunnel, and a synagogue they said was under construction, both endangering the foundations of the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

- *Ma'ariv* reports that the 2001 sale of a building in the Old City to the "Esh HaTorah" yeshiva is worsening Israel's relations with the Vatican and the Christian world.

Jan. 4: The Israeli Min. of Infrastructure closes six gas stations in Hizma village.

- The WJM demolishes a house under construction belonging to Osama Abu Khalaf in Beit Hanina under the pretext of being unlicensed.

- Palestinians protesting against the construction of the separation barrier being built in Anata, clash with the army.

- Construction begins along a 2.5 km stretch of the separation barrier south of Ma'ale Adumim and Kedar.

Jan. 10: Pres. Abbas says the US has assured him that, despite Israeli misgivings, East Jerusalem Palestinians will be allowed to vote in the city, saying "We are on the way to elections and there's no doubt about it, but if something happens along the way, we'll decide how to act."

- Acting PM Olmert tells Sec. of State Rice that Palestinians living in East Jerusalem will be allowed to vote in the PLC elections, but that "terror organizations and their representatives will not be able to participate in the vote in Jerusalem."

- Israeli state TV reports that Israeli DM Mofaz had ordered that a "provisional" barrier be built in three areas around East Jerusalem, for which the High Court of Justice had ordered in 2005 the suspension of work: Bir Nabala, Shu'fat RC, and Sheikh Sa'ad.

- Israeli DM Mofaz says that Jerusalem's Palestinians would be permitted to vote along the same lines as in previous Palestinian elections, when some residents were allowed to cast "absentee" ballots at five post offices while the remainder cast ballots in West Bank suburbs.

Jan. 11: Israeli police arrests and fines six Palestinians for hanging campaign posters for the upcoming PLC elections on billboards in East Jerusalem.

Jan. 12: Israeli DM Shaul Mofaz decides to construct three parts of a temporary fence in East Jerusalem near Bir Nabala and Shu'fat RC in the north and Sheikh Sa'ad in the south of Jerusalem. ▼►



Shu'fat RC



Sheikh Sa'ad



Bir Nabala

Jan. 15: An unanimous Israeli Cabinet decision states, *inter alia*: "Due to the participation of Hamas, Israel has announced that it will not cooperate with these elections and will not coordinate them on a political level with the PA. However, Israel will not prevent the elections from being held... Opening hours at the crossings will be expanded on Election Day... Freedom of movement and passage will be allowed for those involved in the elections, candidates and activists except for those identified with terrorist organizations. The presence and freedom of movement of international observers and local observers not identified with terrorist organizations will be allowed. Election propaganda by persons identified with terrorist organizations will not be permitted within Jerusalem; The Communications Min. will prepare to operate five post office branches [in East Jerusalem] as was done in the past." In a phone conversation with Sec. of State Condoleezza Rice, Pres. Abbas later complains about Israel's electoral restrictions.

- In East Jerusalem, Israeli raids a Hamas office allegedly being used for election-related activities and detains six people, incl. Hamas candidate Mohammed Abu Ter. They are released the next day.

- The Israeli bulldozers demolish three houses in Beit Hanina, Silwan and Jabal Al-Mukabber under the pretext of not having building permits.

Jan. 16: Israeli police raid the Fida's offices in East Jerusalem, arresting five people, claiming the office harbored activities of the DFLP, which Israel considers a terrorist group.

Jan. 18: The CEC begins registering voters from East Jerusalem in preparation for the PLC elections.

- Israeli police break up a PFLP campaign meeting at a hotel in East Jerusalem and arrests seven party activists on the grounds that the faction was outlawed by Israel.

- A public opinion poll carried out by Dr. Aharon Fein and the Tazpit Research Institute for the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies shows that 54.4% Israeli Jews would be willing to give up East Jerusalem's Arab neighborhoods (36% are not) and effectively re-divide the city as part of a genuine peace agreement, though 75% of those ready for such concessions do not believe it is possible to achieve genuine peace with the Palestinians. Only a small percentage are willing, even as part of a genuine peace agreement, to give up the Old City, the Western Wall and the Temple Mount.

- The WJM and the Israeli Min. of Transportation reportedly announced plans to construct eight new railways in Jerusalem, with the first connecting the settlements to the north of Jerusalem (Pisgat Ze'ev and Neve Ya'acov) with settlements to the west of the city, cutting through Shu'fat.

Jan. 19: Israeli police raids a Hamas election office in East Jerusalem and orders it shut down for 15 days to prevent Hamas from operating in Jerusalem.

- Senior Fateh member and adviser to Pres. Abbas Ahmed Abdel Rahman is detained for illegally campaigning in the Old City of Jerusalem.

- EU monitors and CEC officials says that the logistics provided by the Israeli Govt. to allow East Jerusalem residents to vote in the PLC elections would not provide a "free and fair" environment.

Jan. 20: Israeli forces storm a Fateh election rally in At-Tur and arrest Fateh candidate Othman Abu Gharbiyeh. ►



Othman Abu Gharbiyeh

Jan. 22: Israeli forces storm an election campaign rally in East Jerusalem and arrest independent candidate, Abdul Latif Ghaith, and seven other Palestinians.

- Labor Party candidate Ami Ayalon tells *Israel TV* that "When there will be a final arrangement with the Palestinians, the Arab neighborhoods [of Jerusalem] won't be part of the State of Israel."

Jan. 24: The WJM fines Hamas, Fateh and the PFLP NIS 500,000 for hanging campaign posters in East Jerusalem in violation of city bylaws, claiming special municipal bulletin boards had been set up to hang

campaign posters legally, but as the Palestinian factions boycott the municipality they refused to apply for municipal permits to do so.

Jan. 25: The Palestinians of East Jerusalem participate in the election of the PLC at the post offices in the city and the suburbs. ▼▶



Jan. 26: Israel reportedly plans to reroute part of the separation barrier in Beit Iksa near Jerusalem in order to close all gaps in the wall to prevent Palestinian workers from accessing Israel.

Jan. 27: *Ha'aretz* reports that five Israeli Arab families have offered to purchase five new abutting homes built in Har Homa valued at \$1 million.

Jan. 28: Israeli police summon newly elected PLC member Mahmoud Abu Ter (Hamas - Jerusalem) and warn him not to carry out any Hamas activity in Jerusalem.

Jan. 29: The Israeli army constructs new parts of the separation barrier in Dahiet Al-Barid.

Feb. 1: *Ha'aretz* reports that thanks to ACRI, East Jerusalem residents who wish to apply for residency permits for their spouses will now benefit from a streamlined process, promised by Sasi Katzir, head of the Interior Min.'s Population Administration, according to which the waiting period for an appointment to start the process of obtaining a residency permit will be reduced from the current 10 months to no more than 60 days.

Feb. 5: The Yesha Council organizes a protest of tens of thousands in Jerusalem, performing scenes from the Amona evacuation and displaying the slogan "Olmert is bad for the Jews. Olmert wants a civil war."

Feb. 7: The Israeli authorities hand out a new military order to Beit Hanina residents to confiscate 129 dunums of lands in order to construct part of the separation barrier in the area.

- Israeli forces demolish a three-storey building belonging to the Joulani family in Beit Hanina for not having building permits.

Feb. 9: Israeli bulldozers dig a tunnel near Anata to construct Road #70 and the separation barrier around the area.

- *Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda* reports that the WJM has set aside some NIS 2.4 millions to cover expenses related to the demolition of 'illegally' built Palestinian houses in Jerusalem.

- Israeli bulldozers demolish a four-storey building owned by Ibrahim Abu Khdeir in Beit Hanina for not being licensed.

Feb. 14: Israeli forces demolish the house of Farid Abu Al-Dab'at in Sawahreh Ash-Sharqiya and the house of Nasim Siam situated in Jabal Mukabber under the pretext of not being licensed.

Feb. 16: In Jerusalem, a Palestinian woman from Bethlehem tries to stab an Israeli police officer at the Al-Aqsa compound – apparently to avenge the death of her husband - but is prevented and arrested.

Feb. 17: Israeli police prevents Palestinian male worshippers under 45 to attend Friday prayers in Al-Aqsa Mosque, forcing them to pray outside Damascus Gate. ▶



Feb. 19: The Israeli Supreme Court issues an order to cancel the third part of the separation barrier which was supposed to be constructed in Bir Nabala and was about to divide the village into two parts east and west of the bridge.

Feb. 22: The Israeli Chief Commander Ya'ar Naveh issues a new military order to confiscate over 41,3 dunums of lands from Beit Hanina and Bir Nabala for the separation barrier.

Feb. 24: *Kol Ha'Zeman* reports that the ILA is working on a plan to expand Pisgat Ze'ev settlement (currently 40,000 residents) by 1,100 new housing units.

Feb. 27: Israeli authorities open a new passage in the separation wall in Al-Za'im village to Palestinians holding special permits.

- Israeli forces demolish the house of the Al-Ja'bari family in Beit Hanina under the pretext of not having building licenses.

March 1: Newly elected Hamas MP Mohammed Abu Ter is questioned by Jerusalem police on suspicion of illegal Hamas activities.

March 2: Israeli bulldozers demolish the house of Ibrahim Al-Faqeh in Umm Al-Lahem northwest of Jerusalem.

- An Israeli truck driver is stabbed and injured in the Atarot industrial by Palestinian attacker who manages to flee.

- *Ma'ariv* reports a 31% growth in private home sales in Jerusalem and a 23% decrease in home sales in the West Bank. Of 12,372 private housing units sold in Israel and the settlements in 2005, 9.5%, or 1,180, of those were in Jerusalem and 3.5%, or 436, in the West Bank. Israel's housing inventory plummeted to 11,900 in 2005, with Jerusalem's housing inventory decreasing by 52% and West Bank housing inventory decreasing by 15.6%.

March 3: Following a petition by residents of Abu Dis, Israel's High Court issues a 14-day interim decision to suspend the construction of the separation barrier around Ma'ale Adumim.

March 4: *Ha'aretz* reports that a Hamas meeting in Dahiet Al-Barid created a "Jerusalem Committee" of its PLC representatives in the city that will operate as an "alternative Orient House" and deal with issues related to land, house demolitions, education and the Haram Ash-Sharif.

March 5: The Israeli Local Nature Authority announces a new plan to build a garden on the eastern slopes of Mt. Scopus and Mt. of Olives on 750 dunums of lands between Issawiyya and At-Tur.

March 6: Israeli forces hand Abu Dis Municipality an order to stop building a garden in the town claiming that the area is under Israeli control.

March 7: Israeli bulldozers demolished the house of Wajeh Dhaher in Al-Jib north of Jerusalem city for not being licensed.

March 8: The Israeli High Court issues a restraining order to stop the construction of the separation barrier in Abu Dis due to the appeal handed by the residents.

March 9: In an interview with *Ha'aretz*, Acting Israeli PM Olmert promises to build up the E-1 area linking Jerusalem and Ma'ale Adumim despite the fact that the plan was frozen last year due to US opposition, saying: "It is completely clear that the contiguity between Jerusalem and Ma'ale Adumim will be built up ... This is clear both to the Palestinians and to the U.S. In my opinion, on this matter there is a full consensus in Israel."

March 11: The WJM Court approves the demolition of the house of the Grand Mufti Haj Amin Al-Husseini (known as the 'Shepherd Hotel') in order to construct a new Israeli settlement at the site. ▼



- Israel imposes a general closure on the OPT on March 11 during the Jewish Purim holiday.

March 13: Israel's Channel 2 reports the start of construction on a police station in the E1 area between Ma'ale Adumim and Jerusalem.

March 15: Israeli Border Police fire tear gas and rubber bullets at Palestinians throwing stones in the Shu'fat RC during a protest against the construction of the separation barrier. A 20-year-old Palestinian is killed by live ammunition.

March 16: Israeli Police invades the Ambassador Hotel to prevent the holding of a Palestinian conference on elections and the future of Jerusalem.

March 20: The Israeli Reconciliation Court issues an order to cancel part of the separation barrier planned to be constructed near Sheikh Sa'ad in response to an appeal handed by the residents.

March 21: Israeli forces confiscate seven diesel tanks in Kasarat Al-Baja (between Ar-Ram and Jaba') belonging to Musa Mleihat, claiming they were located in an illegal area.

- A Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies report says that 63% of the Israelis polled were willing to make concessions on Jerusalem within the framework of a peace agreement with the Palestinians, though 54% of those oppose any compromise over the Old City. Only 36% were not willing to give up any part of the city

March 23: The Israeli DM hands out military orders to residents of Shu'fat RC to confiscate 20 dunums of lands for the separation barrier.

- The WJM plans to establish by 2008 a "Telepherique" in order to transport people from the new part of Jerusalem to the Western Wall at a cost of \$8 millions.

March 24: Construction activities are taking place on the main road between Dahiet Al-Barid and the checkpoint opposite to the Nusseibeh housing complex to construct part of the separation barrier.

March 27: *Ha'aretz* reports that Israel begins operating the Qalandia as an international border crossing.

March 29: Israeli settlers from the El Ad association accompanied by Israeli forces take over the five-storey building of Ibrahim Ghazlan in the Wadi Hilweh area in Silwan, claiming the land belongs to a Jewish organization since 1923. In addition, the Israeli settlers took over another two buildings in At-Tur.

March 31: *Yerushalim* reports an increase in demand for apartments in Har Homa settlement, causing a 15%-increase in prices.

April 4: Israeli military sources disclose plans to turn the Qalandia checkpoint into an international border crossing and rename it "Aterot."

April 6: Israeli police and the Shin Bet detain PA Min. for Jerusalem Affairs Khalid Abu Arafah at a checkpoint on his way to Al-Izzariyya to take over his ministry. He is released after a few hours at the Ma'ale Adumim police station.

April 7: *Ha'aretz* reports that some 5,000 Palestinians holding Israeli identity cards but residing outside Jerusalem have relocated to East Jerusalem neighborhoods since the beginning of the year.

- In At-Tur, settlers and police clash with a Palestinian family into whose house the settlers attempt to move, which was allegedly purchased by the El Ad.

April 9: Four Israeli police are lightly wounded in clashes with Palestinians in East Jerusalem after a group of Jews confront the Palestinians over the purchase of a house belonging to Adnan Qirresh in At-Tur.

- The Israeli army says it will give permission to 34,000 Palestinian Christians to travel from the West Bank in order to attend festivities over the upcoming Easter weekend in the Holy Sepulchre Church in the Old City. ▶



April 11: *Ha'aretz* reports that security responsibility for the separation barrier around the Jerusalem and West

Bank environs is transferred from the Israeli army to the WJM police.

- *Kol Ha'ir* reports the local Committee for Construction and Planning in Jerusalem has approved a new route for the Eastern Ring Road between Abu Dis and Sur Baher that is farther away from residential areas.

April 13: *Al-Quds* reports that a WJM company developing the Jewish Quarter is planning to issue tenders for the construction of a new neighborhood near the Wailing Wall that will include houses, hotel and markets and cost some NIS 100 millions.

- A Palestinian resident of At-Tur, Mohammed Abu al-Hawa, 40, is found murdered near Jericho in what is seen revenge for his selling his house to the Elad settler organization.

April 14: Israeli forces demolish the house of Mahmoud 'Ebaid in Issawiya for not being licensed.

April 16: Thousands of pilgrims pack the narrow alleyways of the Old City to celebrate Easter and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

April 17: WJM police detain for questioning PLC member Mahmoud Abu Ter and six other Hamas leaders in Jerusalem. They are released with a warning not to hold a rally in the city.

April 18: The Israeli High Court of Justice rejects petitions by Palestinians to delay the completion of the separation barrier near the villages of Al-Jib, Ar-Ram, Beit Hanina, Bir Nabala, Jedira, and Qalandia.

April 19: Construction of the separation barrier continues around Jerusalem, with the exception of the area northeast of Al-Izzariya toward Ma'ale Adumim.

- The Israeli High Court decides on closing the two gaps of Ar-Ram and Bir Nabala leaving the Qalandia terminal as only access to residents of the area. The Court also allows the State of Israel to complete the construction of the separation barrier in northern Jerusalem, rejecting petitions from residents of Bir Nabala, Beit Hanina, Al-Jib, Jedira, Qalandia and Ar-Ram that completion be delayed.

- MKs from the United Arab List-Ta'al - Talab As-Sana, Ibrahim Tzartzur and Abbas Zacur - meet with Hamas MPs in the home of Mohammed Abu Ter in Sur Baher in a show of support after Israel stripped them of their residency rights in the city.

April 22: Police prevent hundreds of Armenian worshippers from taking part in a pre-Easter ceremony at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher despite all having entry permits. Armenian Archbishop Nourhan Manougian complains that "the police acted like a despot to the pilgrims. There were some who had come especially for the ceremony from the U.S., from Canada and from Australia who were not allowed in."

April 25: *Ha'aretz* reports that right-wing settler associations are building a new "Judea and Samaria District Police" building in the E-1 corridor between Jerusalem and Ma'ale Adumim. In exchange they will receive the current police building in Ras Al-Amud to expand the tiny Ma'ale Hazeitim settlement there.

April 26: Interim PM Olmert orders construction of a temporary barrier to close off the parts of the "Jerusalem envelope" segment of the separation barrier that have yet to be completed, saying these gaps have become the principal route for terrorists entering Israel.

April 27: Israeli bulldozers demolish a house owned by Ziad Jaber along with four barracks owned by Mahmoud Sbeih in Az-Za'im under the pretext of not having building permits. ▶



April 30: Israeli bulldozers raze lands to erect a road to make Ramallah accessible from northwest Jerusalem through Al-Jib; thousands of dunums of lands will fall victim to the construction of this road.

- The Israeli cabinet changes the route of the separation barrier next to Al-Jab'a and around Beit Iksha, leaving it north of the barrier.

May 2: Israeli forces start constructing parts of the separation barrier near Shu'fat RC.

May 7: *Ha'aretz* reports the WJM has ordered the El Ad settler organization to stop its archaeological dig next to a children's playground in the Wadi Hilweh area of Silwan for fear that school property is being damaged.

May 8: Israeli forces demolish a two-storey house belonging to the Al-Ja'bari family in Beit Hanina for not having building licenses.

May 9: The Israeli Civil Admin. hands four residents of Anata military warnings to demolish their houses for the construction of the separation barrier and of Road #70.

May 10: Israeli troops demolish the house of Barakat Abu Sarhan in Jabal Al-Mukabber for not having building permits.

May 11: Israeli forces construct an iron gate on the barrier separating residents of Al-Sawahreh east and west from each other, and allowing only Palestinians holding Jerusalem ID's from accessing it.

May 13: In Ar-Ram, over 2,000 Palestinians and 150 Israeli peace activists clash with Israeli soldiers during a rally against the Israeli separation barrier. Also participating are PLC members from Hamas who live in Jerusalem, led by Mahmoud Abu Tir.

May 17: *Ha'aretz* reports that 95% of the 80 demolition orders issued in East Jerusalem in 2005 for illegal construction were carried out while only 65% of similar orders were carried out in West Jerusalem.

May 18: The Israeli Reconciliation Court issues a restraining order to stop constructing part of the separation barrier along Issawiya-Anata-Az-Za'im bypass road extending to Ma'ale Adumim settlement. The order includes the halt of construction at a nearby road.

- After a "terror" warning for Jerusalem, large numbers of Israeli forces are deployed and set up additional checkpoints in and around the city.

May 19: Israeli forces partially demolished the house of Abdul Qader Abu Snehneh in Wadi Al-Joz for not being licensed.

- Border Police firing rubber-coated bullets injure seven Palestinians protesting against the separation barrier in the Shu'fat RC.

May 22: Hamas lawmaker Mohammed Abu Ter is questioned by Israeli police on suspicion of involvement in an illegal event.

May 23: The Israeli High Court rejects an appeal by residents of Al-Izzariyya to stop the construction of the nearby separation barrier.

May 25: A recent report issued by the Israeli institute for Jerusalem Studies states that the total number of Israeli settlers in East Jerusalem and the surrounding areas reached 287,000; of those, 182,200 settlers live in East Jerusalem, 30,000 in Ma'ale Adumim, 27,000 in Beitar Illit, 12,100 in Gush Eztion, 10,700 in Giv'at Ze'ev and 18,500 in the Benjamin bloc.

- The ILA fences the M'aman Allah cemetery with barbed wires, closes the main entrance with cement blocks and hinders Palestinians from accessing it.

May 26: *Kol Ha'Zeman* reports an Israeli government decision to authorize the expansion of the Ramat Shlomo settlement by some 2,000 units, adding to the 2,200 units housing 16,000 residents.

May 27: Israel announces new plans to construct two new neighborhoods in Ramat Shlomo containing 1,960 new housing units on 597 dunums of land of Shu'fat.

May 29: Hamas PLC members in Jerusalem - Mohammed Abu Ter, Ahmed Atoun, Khaled Abu Arafah and Mahmoud Totah - are informed by Interior Min. Ronnie Bar-On that they must renounce their Hamas membership if they were to continue to have residency rights in Jerusalem. ▶

- At the Russian Compound police station, Israeli police issues warning letters to the Hamas PLC members in Jerusalem, stating they



must cut all ties with the PA within two months or steps would be taken against them.

- Israeli authorities hand four residents of Samiramis area military warnings to demolish their houses under the pretext of being unlicensed.

- *Al-Quds* reports that the Israeli Nature and Parks Authority plans to establish a public park over 800 dunums of lands on the slopes of Mt. Scopus and to develop a touristic road connecting Wadi Al-Joz with Silwan.

May 31: The Israeli Central Court of Jerusalem hands seven families in Qatanna military orders to demolish their houses under the pretext of being constructed on lands owned by the state of Israel.

June 1: *Kol Ha'zeman* reports that Yeshivat Bet Horot has placed a few caravans without proper permits in At-Tur, near the settlement of Ma'ale Zeitim.

June 11: *Ha'aretz* reports that Meretz-Yahad chairman Yossi Beilin has asked Atty. Gen. Menachem Mazuz to investigate whether police officers are involved with the Ateret Cohanim association, which purchases East Jerusalem properties from Arabs and settles them with Jews.

- Marwan Shweiki, 35, a resident of Abu Tor is killed in a shooting attack on Highway 443 near the Atarot checkpoint which Israel says was perpetrated by Palestinian gunmen who presumably mistook him for a Jew, though eyewitnesses who were in the car told the family that the gunfire had come from a passing settler car.

June 13: Israeli authorities issue a confiscation order for thousand of dunums of lands from Abu Dis to construct a Bedouin village.

June 14: The Israeli High Court approves the continuation of the construction of the separation barrier and the expansion at Ma'ale Adumim settlement.

June 16: *Ma'ariv* quotes a WJM spokesperson as responding to anger caused by the publication of plans for constructing high rises in the Old City, saying that in accordance with regulations, the buildings in the Jewish Quarter will be no higher than the walls of the Old City.

June 19: The Israeli High Court rejects two appeals handed by residents of Sheikh Sa'ad and Anata to change the path of the separation barrier in the area.

June 20: The Israeli Ministry of Housing and Construction publishes 12 tenders for private construction in Ma'ale Adumim. ▶



June 21: Israeli forces demolish the house of Ali Abu Teir in Umm Tuba and another house in Shu'fat for being built without permits.

- The WJM and the Ateret Cohanim movement are planning to erect a tunnel which will connect the Suleiman Grotto at Damascus Gate with a Palestinian house, occupied by settlers, behind Al-Maylawia School in the Old City.

June 26: Israeli forces block Mahmoud Abu Ter and other Hamas PLC members from participating in a West Jerusalem meeting of Muslim and Jewish clerics, attended by MK Sheikh Ibrahim Sarsour, chair of the UAL and leader of the Southern Islamic Movement and Menachem Froman, the rabbi of the settlement Tekoa. According to organizers, Abu Ter had planned to announce Hamas' readiness for a truce at the event.

June 27: The PCBS says that the estimated Palestinian population in the Jerusalem Governorate as of the end of 2005 was 402,712 or 10.5% of the total population in the WBGS.

June 28: Chief Justice of Islamic courts, Sheikh Taysir At-Tamimi, denounces anti Islamic slogans placed on cars and shops by settlers from Jerusalem.

- Fearing possible riots in protest against Israel's attacks on Gaza following the prayers Israel has limited access to Muslim worshippers attending

the prayers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque to men holding Israeli ID cards over the age of 45.

June 30: *Ha'aretz* reports that the security services recently began implementing a policy that makes it harder for East Jerusalem residents to travel to certain West Bank cities; for instance the main crossing between Jerusalem and Bethlehem is now closed to Palestinians who hold Israeli ID cards. The intention is to expand enforcement of the underlying Military Order 378 of Oct. 2000, which forbids Israeli residents from entering Area A of the PA, to other crossings.

- Interior Min. Roni Bar-On revokes the Jerusalem residency permits and Israeli identity cards of four senior Hamas officials living in East Jerusalem
- Mohammed Abu Ter, Ahmed Attoun, Khaled Abu Arafah and Mahmoud Totah - for failing to resign from the PA govt.

July 4: *Al-Quds* reports that the WJM and an Israeli development company plan to rebuild two Israeli synagogues (Tav'orta Israel and HaHorba) in the Old City at a cost of NIS 60 million.

July 6: Israeli bulldozers demolish a commercial store owned by Bilal Nasrallah in Al-Izzariyya along with several barracks owned by Isma'il Abu Hamad to make way for the separation barrier and the E1 plan.

- Israeli forces demolish a structure housing 13 people in Qatanna, Jerusalem, for being built without a permit.

July 7: Israeli border police bans Muslims under 45 years old from entering the Al-Aqsa Mosque for Friday prayers.

July 10: Israeli authorities issue new orders to confiscate more land from Abu Dis to expand the boundaries of the existing Bedouin village and expand settlements.



July 11: Israeli forces demolish the house of Mohammed Shamasneh in Qatanna without prior notification.

July 12: Israeli bulldozers demolish 25 meters of the separation barrier that surrounds Anata secondary school.

July 14: Israeli authorities restrict the entry of male Muslim worshippers to Al-Aqsa Mosque for Friday prayers to men over the age of 45 holding Israeli ID cards.

July 20: The Israeli reconciliation court agrees on an appeal handed by Palestinian residents of Ash-Shayyah in Jerusalem to stop the construction of the separation barrier in the area.

July 21: Israeli authorities restricted the age of male Muslim worshippers entering Al-Aqsa compound for Friday prayers to over 45 years.

July 27: Israeli forces break into the four-storey building of Mahmoud Al-'Amas in Sur Baher and take pictures in preparation for its demolition.

- Israeli bulldozers start razing lands east of Abu Dis in order to construct part of the separation barrier in the area.

- The Israeli High Court approves construction of a temporary fence in the area connecting Sheikh Sa'ad and Jabal Al-Mukabber with an opening to allow residents holding Jerusalem ID cards to access Jerusalem.

- Israeli police use stun grenades to disperse hundreds of Palestinian youths trying to gain access to the Al-Aqsa Mosque for Friday prayers.

Aug. 1: Israel's High Court of Justice rules that the Temple Mount Faithful can visit Al-Aqsa compound on Tisha B'Av, commemorating the destruction of both temples, which falls tomorrow, but only during public visiting hours and without carrying signs or behaving provocatively in any way. The group's leader, Gershon Solomon, is banned from visiting

Aug. 4: Palestinian worshippers clash with Israeli border policemen following Friday prayers.

Aug. 7: The Israeli High Court rejects an appeal handed by residents of Abu Dis to reroute the separation barrier in the area.

- *Al-Quds* reports that Israeli authorities confiscated 128 dunums of land belonging to Hizma to transfer the current checkpoint into a terminal with 4 lanes and gates.

Aug. 8: Israeli forces demolish three buildings in Beit Hanina belonging to the Abu 'Arafah family and housing over 84



Palestinians, under the pretext of being unlicensed. ▲

Aug. 10: The WJM Court issue an order to stop the demolition of a 1,560 m² residential building composed of 13 apartments in Shu'fat.

- Near Herod's Gate, an Italian tourist and volunteer aid worker, Angelo Frammartino, 24, is stabbed to death by an Arab youth, in what WJM police suspect was motivated by Palestinian nationalism, though no group claimed responsibility. The assailant manages to flee the scene.

Aug. 16: *Yediot Aharonot* reports that Costa Rica has announced it will move its embassy from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv, leaving the El Salvadorian embassy the only one in Jerusalem. Israel expresses "sorrow and disappointment" over the decision.

Aug. 20: The Israeli DM issues new military orders to confiscate 10 dunums of lands in Anata, belonging to the Dajani family, to construct a terminal in the area.

Aug. 22: Hamas PLC members from Jerusalem Khaled Abu Arafah, Mohammed Abu Ter, Mohammed Totah and Ahmed Attoun, appeal Israeli deportation orders against them.

Aug. 24: Israeli forces demolish two houses of Hani and Issam Zahaika in Jabal Al-Mukkaber for being unlicensed. ►



- A Jerusalem court extends the remand of Jerusalem Affairs Min. and Hamas PLC member Khaled Abu Arafah by another eight days.

Aug. 25: In the wake of Costa Rica's decision last week, El Salvador also decides to move its embassy from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv, ending the presence of foreign embassies in the city.

Aug. 31: Radio 2 reports a 45% decrease in apartment sales in Jerusalem in the first half of 2006 compared with the same period in 2005.

Sept. 4: The Israeli Min. of Housing and Construction issues tenders to construct 690 new housing units, incl. 348 units in Ma'ale Adumim.

Sept. 5: *Al-Quds* reports that the Ras Al-Amud police station will soon be relocated to a new building being constructed on a hill top in the area known as E1, opposite of Ma'ale Adumim.

- A Palestinian stabs and injures an Israeli worker in the Atarot industrial area.

Sept. 6: During a news conference in East Jerusalem, Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Sheikh Ekrima Sabri and Atallah Hanna, spokesman of the Greek Orthodox Church, call for an end to Israeli arrests of Hamas leaders. ►



Sept. 10: Rejecting seven petitions against the route of the separation barrier, the Israeli High Court of Justice rules that the fence can be erected in northwest Jerusalem, close to the villages of Biddu, Beit Lakia, Beit Suriq, Beit Anan and the Israeli communities of Har Adar, Ma'ale Hahamisha, Mevasseret Zion, Givon and Givat Ze'ev. Justices Aharon Barak, Dorit Beinisch and

Eliezer Rivlin. The revised route expropriates 1,200 dunams of Palestinian land, but the court says that the state was guided by purely security considerations.

Sept. 11: Israel's High Court of Justice dismisses seven petitions opposing the route of the separation barrier in northwest Jerusalem, which will include 1,200 dunams of Palestinian land.

Sept. 14: According to 2005 figures of the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, some 313,000 Jews have left Jerusalem over the last 25 years, 105,000 more than those who moved there during the same period. In 2005 alone, some 16,200 left, while only 10,300 moved to the city.

Sept. 21: Israeli bulldozers partially demolish without prior notification the house of Isma'il Shqeirah in Al-Sawahreh Ash-Sharqiyya for being built unlicensed and being located close to the separation barrier.

Sept. 22: After Friday prayers at Al-Aqsa Mosque, Palestinians demonstrate against Pope Benedict's recent remark about Islam. ▶



Sept. 26: Environmental groups protest against the Safdie Plan, which calls for residential construction of some 20,000 housing units on hills to the west of Jerusalem, presenting data which they claim proves that the city has enough land reserves for residential construction without expanding and that there is no reason to build new neighborhoods.

Oct. 2: The WJM police sets up roadblocks in several Arab neighborhoods of East Jerusalem to prevent vehicular traffic on Yom Kippur, hampering mobility from one Arab neighborhood to another. WJM City council member Saar Netanel denounces those restrictions, saying "The damage done to the residents of East Jerusalem is great. During Yom Kippur they had difficulty getting to work, to mosques and returning home," and adding "There is no rational reason to compel East Jerusalem residents to mark Yom Kippur. In order to preserve the sanctity of the day, there is no need and reason to stop traffic in East Jerusalem. To prevent the entry of Arabs' vehicles into Jewish neighborhoods, the police could have set up the barriers at the entrance to the Jewish neighborhoods."

Oct. 6: Israeli forces allow only Palestinian men aged 40 and over to attend Ramadan prayers in Jerusalem, causing scuffles with soldiers at the checkpoints as hundreds of Muslims try to enter the city for Friday prayers. ▶



Oct. 8: *Ha'aretz* reports that over 4,000 tourists from 80 countries will arrive in Israel this week for the annual Christian celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles organized by the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ).

Oct. 9: MK Uri Ariel (National Union-NRP) visits Al-Aqsa compound, as tens of thousands of Jews take part in the *birkat hakohanim* (priestly blessing) ceremonies for Sukkot at the adjacent Western Wall.

Oct. 16: A final decision on the controversial Safdie plan to expand Jerusalem westward on 24,200 dunams of undeveloped land is delayed by the National Planning and Building Council due to the objection of environmentalists and numerous MKs who say that the project will irrevocably damage the Jerusalem landscape.

Oct. 18: The Israeli High Court of Justice urges the state to reconsider its denying entry to Sawsan Salameh, 29, of Anata, who has been accepted to the PhD program in Chemistry at Hebrew University, thereby challenging the military's blanket ban on such cases.

Oct. 19: A group of Israeli settlers took over agricultural lands owned by Shukreya Abdul Habi in the Nabi Samwil area.

Oct. 22: *Al-Quds* reports that six Palestinian families from Shu'fat RC received military warnings for the demolition of their houses that were allegedly built on lands belonging to Ateret Cohanim member Elyakim Rubinstein, giving them six months to evacuate their homes or demolish them themselves.

Oct. 27: *Yerushalaim* reports on a plan by the DM to construct a tunnel between Biddu and Ramallah for Palestinian use only, while settlers from Givat Ze'ev would continue to use Road 436 to access Jerusalem.

Oct. 30: The Minimal Legislative Committee approves a bill proposed by MK Yuri Stern (Yisrael Beiteinu) in coordination with the Israel Union for Environmental Defense and intends to block the plan to expand the city of Jerusalem westward, which was designed by architect Moshe Safdie.

Oct. 31: MK Abbas Zkoor (United Arab List-Ta'al), a representative of the Islamic movement, calls on the Jerusalem mufti to take a stand against holding the WorldPride Gay Parade in Jerusalem, scheduled for 10 Nov., saying, "Everyone is free to do as they wish in their own home, but holding such a parade in a holy area crosses all the lines in the sand."

Nov. 5: Israel resumes construction of the separation barrier north of Jerusalem and closes the main entrance of Dahiet Al-Barid with huge blocks. Once completed, it will completely isolate Ar-Ram and Dahiet Al-Barid from Jerusalem. ▶



Nov. 7: *Ha'aretz* reports that the Justice Min.'s Police Investigations Dept. has recently indicted three border policemen on suspicion of severely abusing a Palestinian worker, Abed Tareq Ahrub, 19, who was in Jerusalem without a permit, in Dec. 2005.

Nov. 9: Israeli forces demolish, without pre-notification, the house of Najati 'Abdel Fattah Al-Ja'bari from Ras Shehadeh in Anata claiming the land the house was built on belongs to a Jew.

- Hundreds of Palestinians protest the events in Gaza with shopowners closing businesses. WJM police use stun grenades to disperse the protesters and beat schoolchildren.

Nov. 10: *Yerushalaim* reports a decrease in demolition orders for illegal housing construction in East Jerusalem from Jan.-Oct. 2006, but an increase in demolition orders in West Jerusalem: 56 demolition orders were issued for East Jerusalem in 2006, compared to 76 in 2005, and 31 in West Jerusalem in 2006, compared to 13 in 2004.

Nov. 12: *Al-Quds* reports that Israeli authorities issued a new military order confiscating some 1,248 dunams of lands belonging to the Latif, Abu Haniyeh, l'layan and Helwe families residents of 'Anata for the construction of the separation barrier. ▶



Nov. 13: *Yediot Aharonot* reports on efforts by the PA to regain possession of documents on land ownership in Jerusalem seized five years prior by Israel from the Orient House.

- Anata Village Council reports on military orders confiscating 1,328 dunams of its land intended for expansion of the Almon settlement near Ma'ale Adumim.

Nov. 14: Israeli forces demolish a house in Beit Hanina for being built without license.

Nov. 23: WJM Mayor Uri Lupolianski decides to freeze the controversial Safdie Plan for the city's westward development, and plans to ask the National Planning and Construction Council to adopt his position on the matter, i.e., a series of alternative development programs for various Jerusalem neighborhoods, incl. Ramat Rachel, Arnona HaHadasha, Homat Shmuel, Gilo and Givat Hamatos. ►



Uri Lupolianski

Nov. 25: Israeli forces demolish the house of Zeidan Ra'fat Ash-Shweiki in Beit Hanina for being built without license.

Nov. 26: Israel's High Court of Justice rules in favor of the route of the separation barrier as it is currently planned at Bir Nabala, north of Jerusalem.

Nov. 27: The Israeli Supreme Court has ruled that the construction of the separation barrier around Jerusalem was legal as it was built for security reasons only, and not for political reasons nor to mark the borders of the state of Israel.

- Israeli authorities prevent Palestinians from repairing the southern and eastern sides of the wall of the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Nov. 29: Min. without Portfolio Ya'akov Edery (Kadima) tells a session of the Knesset plenum that the govt. has no plans to change the status of nine Palestinian villages located within the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem but outside of the separation fence, despite the fact that it does not provide these communities with vital services and that residents of the towns must cross through roadblocks on a daily basis. ▲



Ya'akov Edery

Dec. 5: Israeli bulldozers demolish the house of Ghadir Khalil Abu Ghalyeh in At-Tur.

- *Al-Quds* reports that due construction of the separation barrier in Al-Izzariyya caused a wall of the neighborhoods grave yard to collapse.

Dec. 6: Israeli bulldozers demolish two apartments belonging to Mohammed 'Ashour Ar-Razem in the Old City for being built without a license, rendering some 60 homeless. ►



Dec. 12: Israeli forces demolish the house of Ahmad Musa Dari in Al-Issawiyya under the pretext of being built without license. The house was already once demolished some three years ago.

Dec. 13: The Israeli High Court rejects the appeals by residents of Ar-Ram and Dahiet Al-Barid to stop construction of the separation barrier in the area.

Dec. 14: A WJM engineer warns that the makeshift wooden bridge which was built above the collapsed original ramp leading up to the Al-Aqsa Compound's Mughrabi Gate was unsafe and in danger of falling down. ▼



Dec. 19: Israeli forces demolish one storey of a building belonging to Mohammed 'Ali Sulaiman in Beit Hanina.

Dec. 20: Israeli forces demolish the house of Ahmad Abdel Qader Jabarin and that of his son Hatem in Beit Hanina under the pretext of being unlicensed.

Dec. 23: *Al-Quds* reports that the Israeli DM Amir Peretz has endorsed the original route of the separation barrier around Ma'ale Adumim which will involve the confiscation of 64,000 dunums of land of East Jerusalem.

Dec. 27: Israeli forces demolish the house of Taysir Al-Joulani in Shu'fat RC for being built without a license.

Dec. 30: *Al-Quds* reports that the WJM has installed a camera at the French Hill to monitor "illegal" movements of Palestinians in Jerusalem.

PALESTINE

Jan. 1: In Gaza, Italian hostage Alessandro Bernardini, an aide in the European parliament who was traveling on a minibus with a delegation that included two EU lawmakers, is briefly kidnapped by Palestinian gunmen near Khan Younis. In a separate incident of growing unrest, the drinking hall of the UN Beach Club in Gaza City is blown up by masked gunmen. ▲



- Top Fateh officials – incl. Ahmed Qrei'a and Nabil Sha'ath - call on Pres. Abbas to delay the PLC elections if Gaza chaos is not stopped and Israel bars voting in East Jerusalem, while Hamas opposes any change in the date of the elections.

- A PCPSR poll shows that Fateh has retained a big lead over Hamas with 43% to 25% and the pool of undecided voters has grown.

- Israeli troops kill two Palestinians - brothers Hamza and Muataz Hamadona - and wound a third when it fires missiles at them in the buffer zone in the northern Gaza Strip, just hours after a cease-fire with Hamas expired. Hamas vows to retaliate the killing.

- In Nablus, dozens of people attend a protest against the CEC, demanding that the PA cancel the upcoming PLC elections on 25 Jan..

- In Gaza, Ramallah and elsewhere, Palestinians march in rallies marking the 41st anniversary of the foundation of Fateh.

- In Tulat, east of Qalqilya, Palestinian farmers are prevented from plowing their land by settlers from the adjacent settlements of Ma'ale Shomron.

Jan. 2: In an Israeli missile strike on a car in the northern Gaza Strip, two members of Islamic Jihad - Said Abu Ghadian and Akram Qadas - are killed while a third is injured, as are two bystanders. Israeli planes also strike seven roads in northern Gaza, allegedly used by militants to travel to areas where they launch rockets against Israel.

- Pres. Abbas says the upcoming PLC elections would be delayed if Israel bars Jerusalem Arabs from voting. Fateh Central Committee member Abbas Zaki adds that "Jerusalem for us is a major issue. We can't accept excluding it from our national elections." Hamas, meanwhile, publishes an official statement demanding that "the excuse of the security situation and anarchy in the PA not be used to postpone the elections."

- Some 200 Palestinian police take briefly over several govt. buildings in Rafah.

- Dozens of EU observers to the PLC elections begin deploying in Palestinian areas headed European Parliament deputy Veronique De Keyser.

- Israeli troops remove 26 settlers who returned to the evacuated settlement of Sa-Nur near Jenin.

- Residents of Ghajar, near the border with Lebanon, reject the idea of moving villagers from its northern, Lebanese part into Israeli territory as was recommended by the army, due to the lack of a border fence and the danger of Hizbullah attempts to launch attacks from there.

Jan. 3: *Ha'aretz* reports that illegal permits were issued for the Modi'in Illit settlement neighborhood of Matiyahu East - erected on land belonging to the Palestinian village of Bil'in - while buildings were being constructed or even completed, despite recent instructions from the settlement's planning and construction committee to stop the work.

- In Hebron, settlers clash with Israeli forces trying to distribute eviction notices to settlers who had moved into Palestinian stores in the city's market in 2001. Settlers also set fire to two abandoned Palestinian houses near Al-Ibrahimi Mosque.

- Shin Bet chief Yuval Diskin tells the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that "There will be serious trouble for Israel" if Hamas wins the PLC elections on 25 Jan., or achieves significant electoral gains, as

they will try to gain control of ministries and other centers of power so as to influence legislation.

- Six Qassam rockets land inside Israel, incl. one hitting a factory in the Sderot industrial area and two landing south of Ashkelon.

Jan. 4: Pres. Abbas says he would delay the upcoming elections if Israel bars Jerusalem Arabs from voting.

- After PM Sharon suffers a significant stroke with massive bleeding in his brain, his authority is transferred to Dep. PM Ehud Olmert. ►

- The Palestinian CEC sends a resignation letter to Pres. Abbas, charging that PM Qrei'a is interfering in the process by pressing for postponement, partly because Hamas is poised to score significant gains.

- Israeli DM Mofaz tells *Israel Army Radio* that Israel was ready to open talks with Hamas if it won the PLC elections and agreed to disarm.

- Palestinian gunmen - mostly from the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, allegedly angered by the PA's detention of one of their members, Alaa Al-Hams - shoot and kill two Egyptian security troops and wound 30 after breaking through the Gaza border crossing, using two bulldozers and destroying part of the border wall.

- The Israeli army dismantles three out of eight new settlement outposts set up by Jewish right-wing activists near the settlements of Paduel, Efrat and Bat Ayin.

- Turkish FM Abdullah Gul signs an agreement with the PA to open and operate the Erez Industrial Zone in the northern Gaza Strip under the management of Turkey's Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges.

- Israeli forces demolish a house in Al-Walaja, Bethlehem, for being built without a permit.

Jan. 5: *Ha'aretz* reports that the DM has terminated the lease with the Hebron municipality that enabled Palestinian merchants to work in the city's wholesale market; the move implies that that the merchants will not be able to return to their shops even if the army does evict the settlers that have moved there in 2001, as it has been ordered.

Jan. 6: At a press conference in Rafah, armed Palestinian factions - Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Popular Resistance Committees, Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades and Ahmed Abu Rish Brigades - issue a joint statement for an end to the security chaos in the Gaza Strip, saying "We condemn the death of the two Egyptian border guards and the kidnapping of the foreigners by people who are breaking the national consensus" and pledging to establish "a communal force to ensure the security of the motherland and its citizens if the Palestinian Authority does not fulfill its duties."

- Some 120 olive trees belonging to the Amur family from Yatta village are found cut down in the southern Hebron Hills, most probably perpetrated by settlers.

Jan. 8: Palestinian factions, incl. Hamas, sign a 25-clause accord to serve as a code of conduct in the period leading up to the PLC elections. *Inter alia*, the pact bans electioneering in mosques and churches, stipulates that a special PA-appointed elections court is the highest authority on polling results, forbids election funding from foreign countries, and dictates cooperation with the CEC.

- DM Mofaz increases the number of security forces patrolling areas in the West Bank after over 2,000 olive trees belonging to Palestinians have been destroyed.

- *Ha'aretz* reports that the number of West Bank settlers rose by 6,370 or 2.6% in the last six months of 2005 to a total of 253,748. The national Israeli growth rate is only half as big.

Jan. 9: Pres. Abbas tells reporters at his Gaza HQ that he "received American guarantees that the legislative election and the election campaign



would be held in East Jerusalem following the same measures which were implemented during the 1996 legislative elections.”

- Israel's DM Mofaz announces that Israel had agreed in principle to allow Palestinians to vote in Jerusalem.

- Israel's Public Security Min. Gideon Ezra tells *Israel Radio* that Israel would allow candidates for the elections to campaign in East Jerusalem as long as they do not belong to militant groups.

- The Israeli High Court of Justice rejects the appeals filed by Israelis from the municipality of Maccabim-Reut and Palestinians from the villages of Beit Sira and Shuqba against the planned route of the separation barrier in the Modi'in area, and lifts the temporary injunctions issued against the construction of the fence in that area.

Jan. 10: Hamas launches its Al-Aqsa TV station in Gaza to be on a trial period for 3-6 months.

- Hamas publishes its official platform for the upcoming PLC elections, calling for the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital but not specifying that it should be confined to the WBGs, favoring armed struggle but without calling for the destruction of Israel, calling the refugees' "right of return" to what is now Israel, as "an inalienable right about which no political concessions should be made," and stating that Palestine is "part of the Arab and Islamic territory, and an absolute Palestinian right that no legal or military means can alter."

Jan. 11: A Birzeit University poll suggests that in the upcoming elections Fateh would win 35% support compared to 31% for Hamas and 6% for Mustafa Barghouti 'Independent Palestine.'

- Some 300 settlers protesting against the demolition of seven concrete foundations and one home at the Sde Boaz outpost Neve Daniel settlement in the Gush Etzion clash with Israeli forces.

Jan. 12: Fateh gunmen, demanding PA security jobs, open fire at the house of PA Interior Min. Nasser Yousef and the Palestinian Cabinet building in Ramallah.

- In Jenin, a Palestinian blows himself up and Israeli troops kill another - Mo'ataz Khalil and Ali Abu Hazne from the village of Atil near Tulkarem - in a shoot-out during an arrest raid targeting Islamic Jihad militants.

- The Israeli PMO reports that acting PM Olmert told Pres. Bush on the phone about possible results of the upcoming PLC elections, saying there "can be no progress with an administration in which there are terrorist organizations as members."

Jan. 13: Acting PM Olmert meets with US envoys Elliott Abrams and David Welch to discuss the PLC elections and the possible implications of Hamas' participation.

- In a meeting on the upcoming PLC elections with Pres. Abbas in Ramallah, US Asst. Sec. of State for Near Eastern Affairs David Welch stresses that "Groups and individuals who refuse to renounce terror and violence, who refuse to recognize Israel's right to exist and who refuse to disarm have no place in the political process."

- After settlers file an appeal with the High Court of Justice, evacuation of the Amona outpost near Ofra settlement is delayed.

- *Ha'aretz* reports that according to US diplomatic sources, US aid to the PA would be reviewed and possibly reduced if it gave Hamas a role in the govt. after the PLC elections.

Jan. 14: Sheikh Mohammed Abu Ter, No. 2 on Hamas' list of candidates for the PLC elections, tells *Ha'aretz* that "We'll negotiate [with Israel] better than the others, who negotiated for 10 years and achieved nothing."

- Pres. Abbas says that Hamas' possible participation in the govt. was "not an American issue ... If Hamas wants to participate in the Palestinian Authority, we have no objection to that ... If Hamas wants to participate in the Government, it has to abide by this basis ... upon which we returned to Palestine in 1994, based on the Oslo accords." Hamas' top candidate Ismail Haniyeh says he "does not rule out Hamas' participating in the Government or forming a Government itself if it gets a majority in parliament."

- Some 150-200 settlers riot in Hebron in protest of eviction orders issued

for eight Jewish families squatting in Palestinian shops in the market. Among others, a Palestinian home is torched.

Jan. 15: Israeli soldiers shoot and kill a Palestinian woman Nawal Dweikat and her son Fawzi, 24, and injure her husband as well as another son in an exchange of fire in Rujib village near Nablus.

- As rioting in Hebron enters a third day with some 150 Israeli settlers trying to occupy a Palestinian house clashing with soldiers, Israeli forces vow to institute a "zero tolerance" policy toward settler violence, and threaten to declare the Jewish settlement in the city a closed military area.

Jan. 16: At a press conference with FM Nasser Al-Qudwa in Ramallah, Spain's FM Miguel Angel Moratinos says Europe would have to re-evaluate its links with the Palestinians in the event of a Hamas victory in the PLC elections, adding, "We will respect the result of these democratic Palestinian elections in which we believe all political groups should participate."

- Armed factions in Gaza reject a proposal to collect their own weapons just before the PLC elections and put them into a storage area in order to reduce the risk of violence is rejected.

- Israeli forces raid Jewish settlements in Hebron in a search for suspects involved in the recent riots. In an effort to quell settler violence against evacuation plans Central Command Maj. Gen. Yair Naveh declares the Jewish areas in Hebron a closed military zone.

Jan. 17: In Gaza, Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar says that Hamas intends to join the govt. that will be formed after the upcoming elections.

- In Tulkarem, Israeli troops kill Thabet Ayyadeh, a leader of Hamas' military wing, during an exchange of fire that ensued in the attempt to arrest him.

- Acting PM Ehud Olmert tells reporters that he would be willing to begin final status negotiations with Pres. Abbas if Abbas dismantles the Palestinian "terrorist" organizations.

- After separate meetings with EU Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner and Spain's FM Miguel Angel Moratinos, Israeli Acting PM Olmert says that Israel would not negotiate with the PA if Hamas was elected to parliament and urges Europe not to distinguish between Hamas' military and political wings, adding that Europe could play an important role in pressing the PA to disband terrorist organizations.

- Visiting EU Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner says the EU had suspended €35 million donated to the Palestinians through the World Bank in Nov. 2005, due to their lack of budgetary discipline: "There has to be a credible Finance Ministry, but there also has to be a budget and the budget should also remain within the limits of what the budget has foreseen."

- Israeli Pres. Moshe Katsav tells *Israel Army Radio*, "If Hamas recognizes Israel's right to exist, and ceases terrorism and is elected by the Palestinians to their parliament, under these conditions I think it would be possible to conduct political negotiations with them."

- Acting Israeli PM Olmert orders security forces to evacuate settlers squatting in Hebron's Old City and the Amona settlement outpost.

Jan. 18: Some 60,000 PA security forces begin three days of voting. ►

- Talking to reporters in Ramallah, Pres. Abbas says that he'd rather resign than let extremists block his peace agenda, but expressed hope that Hamas will moderate its views if it shares power. Stopping short of promising a full-fledged crackdown, he adds that after the election there would be no room for militias.

- At a Hamas rally in Gaza, Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar rules out negotiations with Israel after the elections, saying Hamas "is not going



to acknowledge the ownership of any inch of Israel on this holy land," and "We are not looking to Israel as a partner." He further warns that if not all Palestinian prisoners are released unconditionally, "There is no option left except kidnapping soldiers and exchanging them for the detainees and prisoners."

- At a joint news conference in Gaza City Fateh's Samir Mashharawi and Hamas' Sa'id Siam announce their factions' agreement to prohibit carrying arms on election day.

- Commencing her term in office, Israel's newly-appointed FM Tzipi Livni says, "This will be a critical period regarding the question of our ability to come to an arrangement with the Palestinians," and criticizes the upcoming PLC elections as undemocratic because of Hamas' participation.

- The Israel army continues its arrest campaign of Palestinian militants in the West Bank – mainly Hamas activists - in an obvious attempt to weaken their organizations before the PLC elections.

Jan. 19: Israeli troops shoot dead a Palestinian teenager near Hebron who allegedly tried to throw a fire bomb at an army patrol.

- A Palestinian suicide bomber - Sami Abdel Hafiz Antar, 22, from Nablus - blows himself up in a Shwarma restaurant in Tel Aviv, wounding 20 people. In reponse, the Israeli DM tightens security around Nablus and increased raids on Islamic Jihad activists. PA Pres. Abbas condemns the bombing, saying it was an attempt to sabotage the upcoming PLC elections, which are boycotted by Islamic Jihad.

Jan. 20: The Israeli Labor Party issues the main points of its election platform, calling for a political solution based on two states for two peoples, annexing settlement blocs and dismantling isolated settlements, hinting at possible unilateral measures in the West Bank, calling for the immediate implementation of the Sasson Report (removal of illegal outposts), not addressing the refugee issue, and stating with regard to Jerusalem: "Jerusalem, including all its Jewish neighborhoods, will be the eternal capital of the State of Israel and the Jewish holy sites will remain in Israel's hands."

- PM Sharon's spokesman Ra'anana Gissin says Israel would "consider or reconsider our position regarding Hamas" if it renounced violence and disarmed after the elections.

- Asked what would happen if Hamas disarmed and renounced its call for Israel's destruction, Vice-PM Peres tells *Israel Radio*, "We are not fighting against a name. We are fighting against a situation [...] If the situation changes, then what difference does a name make?"

- A *Ma'ariv* poll shows that 51% of Israelis would approve a unilateral pullout from land occupied since 1967 because they believed Palestinian leaders were incapable of negotiating a deal with Israel.

- Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh says the Oslo Accords were dead and that Hamas was participating in the PLC elections for the sake of resistance.

- In Bil'in, PLC candidates join some 5,000 other demonstrators protesting against Israel's separation barrier.

Jan. 21: Israeli forces shoot and kill Mu'men Wishah, 18, and wound two others, claiming they were crawling near the northern border of the Gaza Strip.

- At a security conference in Herzliya, Israeli DM Mofaz says Israel would have to take further unilateral action in the West Bank if it concluded that the Palestinians were not a serious peace partner, incl. reinforcing major settlement blocks, retaining all of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, and demilitarizing areas under military control.

Jan. 22: Jailed Fateh leader Marwan Barghouti tells *Al-Jazeera* and *Al-Arabiya Satellite* TV that he hoped the PLC elections would produce a "national salvation government", involving all factions participating in the elections. He further calls on Israel to honor the election results. ►



Marwan Barghouti

- An Israeli missile fired at a car in Gaza City kills Popular Resistance Committees member Mahmoud Al-A'al, and wounds six others.

- In an interview with *Al-Arabiya*, Pres. Abbas rejects US pressure to exclude Hamas, saying, "It has to take part and to be part of the political institution and later part of the political decisions."

- Addressing the Herzliya Conference, Labor's Amir Peretz presents his political program and vision for Israel's security: direct negotiations with the Palestinians aimed at reaching a peace agreement by 2010 or, in the case of a diplomatic freeze due to a possible Hamas election victory unilateral steps to separate from the Palestinians in the West Bank. With regard to the peace process he adds: "We were not wise enough to make courageous decisions at the right time, and so we are now dealing with a complex reality. ... who will give an accounting for the long years of bloody conflict under the illusion of the greater land of Israel?"

- Speaking at the Herzliya Conference, Likud chair Netanyahu that under a govt. run by him, Israel's final borders would include East Jerusalem, the Jordan Valley and other parts of the West Bank, but that he was prepared to make territorial concessions as part of an interim or final status agreement with the Palestinians as well as take immediate steps to reduce friction with the Palestinian population, such as reducing movement restrictions.

Jan. 23: In line with Atty.-Gen. Menachem Mazuz's Feb. 2005 decision rescinding a govt. plan to apply the Absentee Property Law to property in East Jerusalem owned by Palestinians who lived elsewhere in the West Bank, the Tel Aviv District Court issues a ruling stating that the Law could not be applied to West Bank lands abandoned by Palestinians during the War of 1967.

- Near Ramallah, Israeli soldiers shoot dead a Palestinian boy, 13, who was building a stone barrier across the road.

- Islamic Jihad calls on supporters to boycott the PLC elections, saying in a statement, "We appeal to our fighters and our followers not to participate in these elections in any way ... The pursuit of jihad is the best and only way to combat the forces of evil."

- *AP* quotes Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar as saying that negotiation with Israel was "not a taboo" and the group would be willing to talk to Israel through a third party, similar to past negotiations between Israel and Hizbullah.

- As campaigning for the PLC elections officially ends, polls suggest the outcome of the elections as too close to call.

- A Dahaf Institute poll presented at the Herzliya Conference shows that 77% of the Israeli public are pessimistic about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with 48% thinking there will be no change in the conflict in the next 20 years, and only one in five expecting a peace agreement by 2025. Some 29% of the respondents believed that the conflict would worsen, 22% that it be resolved.

Jan. 24: Hundreds of people march in Nablus in protest of the killing of Abu Ahmed Hassouna, 44, a Fateh leader, who was shot by Fateh gunmen after he told them to stop shooting at campaign posters on his house.

- Addressing the Herzliya Conference, acting PM Olmert says, "We will not be able to continue ruling over the territories in which the majority of the Palestinian population lives. We must create a clear boundary as soon as possible, one which will reflect the demographic reality on the ground. Israel will maintain control over the security zones, the Jewish settlement blocks, and ... first and foremost a united Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty... The existence of two nations, one Jewish and one Palestinian, is the full solution to all the national aspirations and problems of each of the peoples, including the issue of refugees who will be absorbed solely in a Palestinian State. [Some] have asked whether... the present Government has already committed to another disengagement if future contacts with the Palestinians are not successful. We would prefer an agreement."

- Speaking at the Herzliya Conference, former US Pres. Jimmy Carter, leading a team of international observers for the PLC elections, says

that if Hamas wants to win international recognition after the elections, it will have to become more moderate and that he hopes that if Hamas joins the Palestinian government, it will change its positions and accept the two-state solution, recognize Israel's right to exist and act to prevent violence against innocent civilians. Addressing Israel, he calls for further withdrawal from West Bank settlements for the sake of a "Palestinian state living in peace and dignity," and added that Israel must not adopt unilateral action as a fixed policy. Later Carter meets with Pres. Abbas in Ramallah.

- The main armed Palestinian factions issue a joint statement which called for all Palestinians to take part in the vote.

Jan. 25: Amid tight security with over 13,000 PA police deployed, Palestinians cast ballots in their second PLC elections, watched by some 20,000 local and 950 international observers. At a press conference in Ramallah, CEC head Amar Dweik says some 1,035,000 Palestinians had voted (77.69% of the electorate) with a turnout in Gaza of 81.65% and in the West Bank, incl. East Jerusalem, of 77.3%. First results indicate that Hamas is poised to form the next Palestinian govt. after winning 76 seats in the 132-member parliament compared to 43 won by Fateh. ▼▶



- Pres. Abbas tells reporters he was ready to resume peace talks with Israel, even if Hamas joined the govt., while PM Qrei'a says, "If Hamas wins, they will win and we will stand behind them. This is democracy and we accept the results of the elections."

- Top Hamas PLC candidate Ismail Haniyeh says Hamas does not intend to disarm after the elections, while Mahmoud Zahar says Hamas would not change a "single word" in its covenant.

Jan. 26: Acknowledging the Hamas victory, PM Qrei'a and his Cabinet resign even before the final results are officially announced. First clashes between Fateh loyalists and Hamas supporters erupt in Ramallah, when the latter briefly raise their flag over the PLC building. ▲



- Re-elected PLC member Saeb Erekat (Fateh-Jericho) says his party does not want to join a Hamas govt. but "be a loyal opposition and rebuild the party," while the Fateh Central Committee also decides in a meeting that Fateh will not join the next govt.. Hanan Ashrawi, re-elected to the PLC (Third Way list), expresses concern over the Hamas victory fearing it would lead the Palestinians into international isolation. She adds that Fateh's corruption, Israel's tough measures and international indifference to the Palestinians' plight are the main reasons for Hamas' strong showing.

- Near the Israeli side of the border fence Israeli troops shoot dead a Palestinian girl, Aya Al-Astal, 10, from Khan Younis RC, saying they had spotted a Palestinian carrying a large bag who failed to heed their calls to stop.

- International observers for the elections praise the elections as well administered, with Veronique De Keyser, head of the EU monitoring team, summing them up as "fair and free under severe restrictions" imposed by Israel, and former Pres. Carter saying they were "completely honest, completely fair, completely safe and without violence."

- In a televised speech, Pres. Abbas says he was still committed to negotiate with Israel and suggests that - in light of the election outcome - future negotiations with Israel would be conducted through the PLO.

- Hamas' Ismail Haniyeh calls on the US Admin. "to respect ... the will of the Palestinian people and the result of the ballot. Hamas is not going to work alone, but with the other groups who represent the Palestinian people."

- At a crisis meeting over the outcome of the PLC elections, convened by Israel's Acting PM Olmert, a statement is issued saying "The State of Israel will not negotiate with a Palestinian administration if its members include an armed terrorist organization that calls for the destruction of the State of Israel."

Jan. 27: Pres. Abbas says he would ask Hamas - which won most votes in the PLC elections - to form the next government.

- Thousands of Fateh supporters march across the Gaza Strip, expressing their anger at the Hamas election victory, burning cars, exchanging fire with Hamas members, demanding the resignation of corrupt officials and insisting that Fateh form no coalition with Hamas. ▼



- In an interview, newly elected Hamas PLC member Mahmoud Zahar says: "Why we are going to recognize Israel? Why? Is Israel ready to recognize the right of return for Palestinian people? Is Israel ready to recognize an independent (Palestinian) state, including Jerusalem? ... We (will) not recognize anybody on the expense of our national interest," adding, however, that if Israel was willing to make large concessions a Hamas govt. could change its mind regarding peace talks with Israel.

Jan. 28: Pres. Abbas tells the Palestinian security services that they are subordinate to the Presidential Office and not the incoming Hamas-led govt., and must report to him personally as the "supreme commander of the security forces."

- Jailed Fateh leader Marwan Barghouti says in a statement that Fateh must be "exemplary in showing responsibility ... transferring power according to law and order."

- Hamas official Ghazi Ahmed Hamad tells reporters that "Hamas is in contact with Fateh and [PA Pres. Abbas]. If they refuse to join in a Hamas Government, we will try to form a Government of technocrats," adding that the priority was still to "form a coalition government with Fateh and

all the political groups. That will enable stable conditions to be established and will give hope to people.”

- Fateh activists and security forces briefly take over the PLC buildings in Ramallah and Gaza City, pledging loyalty to Pres.



Abbas while calling for the resignation of the Fateh Central Committee, which they blame for Fateh's election defeat. ◀▲

- Palestinian farmers destroy some 40 tons of tomatoes, peppers and



strawberries grown in a former Israeli settlement to protest Israel's closure of the Al-Muntar (Karni) crossing in Gaza Strip. During the two-week closure, at least 100 tons of products have been already spoiled. ▶

- Israel's DM Mofaz tells *Channel 2 TV* that Israel will kill Hamas militants if they resume attacks against Israel.

Jan. 29: The CEC announces the final results of the PLC elections showing that Hamas won 74 seats and Fateh 45. A total of 440,409 people have voted for Hamas, 410,554 for Fateh, 42,101 for the PFLP, and 28,973 for Al-Badil, while some 51,551 ballots, out of an overall total of 1,042,424, had either been spoiled or left blank.

- After talks with Pres. Abbas, PLC members from Fateh confirm that their faction would not join Hamas in a coalition govt. but prefer to sit in opposition.

- Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades call for the resignation of the Fateh Central Committee and an emergency replacement body after its election defeat to Hamas.

- Israel's Acting PM Olmert decides to postpone the monthly transfer of tax revenues that Israel collects on behalf of the PA (some NIS 200 million), due to Hamas' election victory, saying, "We have no intention of enabling fund transfers that will be used for terrorism."

- Former Shin Bet chief Avi Dichter says that Israel should hunt down wanted Hamas leaders even if they become ministers in the newly elected government, adding that he doubted Pres. Abbas would remain in power, except as a "puppet leader".

- Speaking at a press conference after meeting with Acting PM Olmert in Jerusalem, German Chancellor Angela Merkel says, "Germany would not hold talks with Hamas until it recognizes Israel's right to exist," adding that the EU would not fund the PA involving Hamas.

- Rejecting threats of an aid suspension as "blackmail," Hamas' Mahmoud Zahar tells *CNN's Late Edition* that his movement would seek funding from Arab and Muslim countries. Asked if a Hamas-led govt. would accept Israel's right to exist, he says: "The question should be answered first by Israel, because they are not accepting us, except as minority, not the owner of the land."

Jan. 30: Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar tells *CNN* that a long-term truce (*hudna*) with Israel is possible if Israel retreats to its pre-1967 borders, releases Palestinian prisoners, and allow for a geographic link between Gaza and the West Bank.

- Settlers who illegally commandeered Palestinian shops in Hebron's wholesale market complete their evacuation of the site in accordance with a deal made with the state under which they would voluntarily leave and be permitted to return legally later on.

- Some 30 armed policemen storm the PLC building in Gaza City, demanding that the incoming Cabinet bring to justice Hamas members accused of killing policeman Rajeh Abu Lahya a few months ago and calling for the resignation of the Fateh Central Committee.

- Masked gunmen from the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades briefly take over an EU office in Gaza to protest the publication in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* of cartoons deemed insulting to the Prophet Muhammad and demand an apology from Denmark and Norway, where another paper republished the cartoons. ▶



- Pres. Abbas meets with German Chancellor Angela Merkel to discuss the outcome of the PLC elections. - In a message to the Quartet, Hamas' Ismail Haniyeh states: "We call for dialogue without preliminary conditions and in a spirit of neutrality ... We call on you to continue moral and financial support, and to direct all aid to the Palestinian treasury so it can be used in keeping with the priorities of the Palestinian people. We assure you that all the revenues will be spent on salaries, daily life and infrastructure."

Jan. 31: Israeli forces kill the West Bank military commander of Islamic Jihad, Nidal Abu Sadi, and another activist in an exchange of fire near Arrabe in the Jenin area.

- DM Shaul Mofaz says Hamas' election victory gives Israel an incentive to decide in favor of a unilateral withdrawal from the West Bank.

- EU Amb. to Israel, Ramiro Cibrian-Uzal, lists three conditions the EU has set for Hamas to follow to ensure that aid be given to the Palestinians: commitment to non-violence of all future government members, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous understandings and agreements, including the Road Map.

- Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri tells reporters in Gaza that "the Quartet should have demanded an end to [Israeli] occupation and aggression" rather than demanding "that the victim should recognize the occupation and stand handcuffed in the face of the aggression."

- Thousands of Palestinians follow a call by Islamic Jihad and demonstrate in Gaza City to denounce caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed that had recently appeared in Danish and Norwegian publications.

- Speaking at the opening of the Kadima Party's election campaign, acting PM Olmert outlining the party's goals, saying, "The first [is] defining the final borders of the State of Israel as a State with a clear and solid Jewish majority."

Feb. 1: Israel halts the monthly tax payments to the PA - the main source of funding for the PA budget and the payment of salaries - one week after the election victory of Hamas. PA Economy Min. Mazen Sinokrot decries the move as "illegal" and "collective punishment," while Ismail Haniyeh calls it "an attack on Palestinian rights."

- After the Israeli High Court rejects a final appeal by the settlers, Israeli forces complete the evacuation of the Amona outpost, facing clashes with thousands of settlers resisting the demolition of nine houses. At least 200 people are wounded.

- *Ha'aretz* reports that the DM has given NIS 2.4 million to 28 Palestinians who were tortured by Israeli forces and the Shin Bet (some of them with resulting permanent disabilities) as part of an out-of-court settlement where-by the plaintiffs agreed to turn down suits brought to the Israeli courts.

Feb. 2: Israeli troops raid Nablus and arrest over 50 Palestinians.

- Some 50 Palestinians protest outside the EU office in Gaza City, demanding that the govt.s of Germany, France, Norway and Denmark must apologize for the cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed published in various newspapers.

Feb. 3: Four Israelis are injured by Palestinian Qassam rockets fired from Gaza into southern Israel. Islamic Jihad claims responsibility.

- In several WBGs cities Palestinians demonstrate against the cartoons of Prophet Mohammed. In Gaza City, a bomb is thrown at the French Cultural Centre.

- AP reports that according to a new study by the Israeli Research Institute for Economic and Social Affairs, Israel has spent over US\$14 billion on settlements over the past four decades.

Feb. 4: Pres. Abbas meets with Hamas leaders, incl. Ismail Haniyeh and Mahmoud Zahar, to begin consultations on forming the new PA Cabinet.

- Protests over the publication of cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed continue with attacks by Palestinians against the EU HQ and the German Cultural Centre in Gaza City.

- A Hamas statement rejects Pres. Abbas' plan to transfer control of the PA security forces to the PA Presidency.

- The Israeli High Court has ordered the state to explain within three weeks why the route of the separation barrier will not be moved westward to the settlement of Modi'in Illit instead of through the farming land of Bil'in village, whose residents petitioned the court.

- Settlers from Hebron attack a group of 15 Palestinian children and the Israeli troops protecting them on their way to school.

Feb. 5: The Yesha Council organizes a protest of tens of thousands in Jerusalem, performing scenes from the Amona evacuation and displaying the slogan "Olmert is bad for the Jews. Olmert wants a civil war."

- In Gaza City, Israeli helicopters fire three missiles at a building - Al-Shams Sport Club - the suspected be used by Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, killing three members - Nasir Marshoud, Hani Al-Qayid, and Yassin Barghout - and wounding at least seven other people. A fourth member, Rami Ash-Sheikh Khalil, dies three days alter from injuries.

- Israeli missiles hit two cars in Gaza City, killing two senior Islamic Jihad activists - Jihad Sawafiri and Adnan Bustan - and injuring several others. Islamic Jihad vows to retaliate.

- In a knife attack aboard a minibus in Petah Tikva, a Palestinian man from As-Sawiya stabs an Israeli woman to death and wounds five other people.

- In Nablus, some 30 Palestinian gunmen deface the entrance to the French Cultural Centre in a protest against caricatures of Prophet Mohammed published in some European newspapers.

- Israeli Acting PM Olmert authorizes the transfer of NIS 250 million in withheld tax revenues to the PA, but saying that future transfers would be examined on a monthly basis.

Feb. 6: An Israeli missile attack at a car in northern Gaza leaves Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades members Hassan Asfour and Rami Hanuna dead and five bystanders wounded.

- Hundreds of Palestinian students protest outside the EU HQ in Gaza City against the publication of cartoons of Prophet Mohammed.

- Touring West Bank settlements, Israeli DM Mofaz says that his Kadima party would carry out further unilateral withdrawals from Palestinian land if it wins next month's elections and that Israel's final borders would be drawn in the next two years.

- The Governor of the Israeli Central Bank, Stanley Fischer, says that formation of a Hamas govt. would not necessarily mean a return to violence, as Hamas has largely honored a ceasefire over the past year, and that that economic relations - entry of Palestinian workers and trade as well as financial transfers to the PA - should continue as long as the security situation permitted. ►



Stanley Fischer

- The Peace Now annual report counts 102 outposts, incl. 33 with permanent housing and states that none had been evacuated in 2005. The number of settlements decreased to 121, the settler population increased to 253,748.

Feb. 7: Touring the separation fence around Jerusalem and Gush Etzion, Acting PM Olmert pledges that "we will make an enormous effort this year to finish the fence as quickly as possible."

- Israeli forces kill the West Bank commander of the Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds Brigades, Ahmed Ghadad, in a gun battle during an arrest operation in Nablus.

- In Gaza City, Israeli forces firing missiles at a car kill Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades members Mohammed Abu Sharia and Suheil Abu Baker.

- In his first media interview since taking power last month, Israeli Acting PM Olmert says that Kadima intends to hold on to the three major West Bank settlement blocks Ariel, Gush Etzion and Maale Adumim as well as on smaller settlements on the border with Jordan and a "reunified Jerusalem".

- *Yediot Aharonot* reports on the unprecedented decision by the DM to grant thousands of shekels in compensation to the families of two Palestinian victims murdered by Israelis on the basis of their ethnicity.

- Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar tells the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, "In six months the EU will talk to us; the world need not be afraid of Hamas".

- Asked if Hamas could form a govt. by itself, Ismail Haniyeh tells *Reuters* in Cairo: "It can, but it wants to strengthen participation" and hoped it would convince others to join the PA Cabinet.

Feb. 8: Israeli troops kill two members of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades - Mohammed Al-Hur and Idris Al-Sharif - as they allegedly approach the security fence near the Al-Muntar (Karni) crossing.

- TIPH evacuates its offices in Hebron following an attack by Palestinian students protesting Denmark's and Norway's publication of caricatures insulting Prophet Mohammed.

- A report by the PA Agriculture Min. estimates the financial losses in the Palestinian agricultural sector between 28 Sept. 2000 and 31 Dec. 2005 at approx. US\$ 1 billion.

Feb. 9: In Gaza, Israeli troops kill two Palestinians near the Erez crossing, saying they had planned an attack at the checkpoint, which was then closed until further notice. Later in the day, Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades claims responsibility for the planned attack. In another incident, Israeli troops also fire at two other Palestinians approaching the fence near the checkpoint, killing one of them.

- *Ha'aretz* reports that Israeli army Chief of Staff Dan Halutz has issued new directives for investigating IDF killings of Palestinian civilians, intended to improve the military advocate general's supervision and increase the effectiveness of the inquiries. The move comes following the High Court's examination of the issue in response to a B'Tselem petition to open an inquiry into the death of every Palestinian killed by the army.

- Gunmen believed to be members of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades abduct Egypt's military attaché to the PA, Hussam Al-Musali, just outside the Egyptian Mission in Gaza City.

- *Ha'aretz* reports that the evacuation and demolition of dwellings in the settlement outpost of Amona cost \$1.5 million.

- Settlers uproot 15 trees belonging to Palestinian farmers from Yatta, near Ma'on settlement.

Feb. 10: Israeli officials react outraged at Russian Pres. Putin's intention to invite Hamas members to Moscow for talks. FM Livni says: "Hamas is a terror organization, and that is how it should be treated," while Transportation Min. Meir Sheerit accuses Putin of "stabbing Israel in the back."

Feb. 11: Kidnapped Egyptian diplomat Hussam Al-Musali is released by his captors in the Gaza Strip after almost two days.

Feb. 12: The head of the Fateh faction in the newly elected PLC, Azzam Al-Ahmed, says that Fateh would never join a Cabinet with a strategy contradictory to its own. ►

- At the weekly cabinet meeting, acting PM Ehud Olmert says the PA will become a Hamas entity as soon as the new PLC is sworn in, regardless of the govt.'s makeup, since "the majority is a Hamas



Azzam Al-Ahmed



majority, then this government rests on the support of Hamas.”

- During clashes with Israeli forces uprooting olive trees in Beit Sira, near Ramallah, to make way for the separation barrier, 11 Palestinians are injured by tear gas and rubber bullets.

- German FM Frank-Walter Steinmeier arrives in Israel for his first visit to the Middle East since taking office.

Feb. 13: At its final session the outgoing PLC approved an amendment to the Constitutional Court Law substantially expanding the powers of Pres. Abbas in what Hamas said was a last-minute bid to rein it in before it takes over parliament and forms the new govt..The law allows Abbas to appoint judges without legal approval and to dissolve parliament any time he wishes.

- The PLC decides to appoint all incoming PLC members as PNC members.

- In meetings with Israeli leaders - German FM Steinmeier says that Germany backs Israel’s demand that Hamas be shunned by the international community unless the group renounced violence and recognized Israel.

- Israeli troops shoot dead a female Bedouin shepherd Nayfa Abu Musad near the Gaza-Israel Kissufim crossing, claiming she had been approaching the fence in a “no-go” zone.

- Following a recent decision by the Israeli Atty-Gen., MK Azmi Bishara (Balad) is interrogated about his latest trip to Lebanon where he gave a speech to the Arab book fair in Beirut. MK Taleb As-Sana (United Arab List) is also questioned about his recent trip to Syria.

- Hamas’ Izz Eddin Al-Qassam have reportedly finished registering and collecting weapons used by its activists in the northern Gaza Strip, a process started after the PLC elections in Jan. in an attempt to show the West that Hamas is succeeding in enforcing internal discipline.

- *Ha’aretz* reports that despite the Israeli disengagement, in 2004 settlements in the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan continued to receive the most govt. funding for infrastructure and development. The Interior Min. supplied settlements with \$430 per settler, twice the amount granted to Israelis living in Israel and two and a half times as much as allocated to Arab citizens of Israel.

- B’Tselem reports that Israel has completed security measures - a system of permits and checkpoints -prohibiting some 2 million West Bank Palestinians to enter an area comprising the Jordan Valley, the Dead Sea shoreline and the eastern slopes of the West Bank mountains in what is seen a step aimed to sever the Jordan Valley from the West Bank and effectively annexing it.

- Israeli Acting PM Olmert tells a special Knesset session that the next parliament must determine the country’s permanent borders.

Feb. 14: During a High Court of Justice hearing on family unification, Israeli Supreme Court Justice Mishael Cheshin calls the PA an “enemy government ... that wants to destroy the state,” and that family unification endangers Israel unnecessarily: “No one is withholding from them the right to establish a family, but the guy from Umm al-Fahm should go live with his wife in Jenin” since “we’re talking about life and death, and the right to life takes precedence.”

- Israel’s new head of Military Intelligence, Maj-Gen. Amos Yadlin, tells the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that it is Iran’s goal to eliminate the state of Israel.

- In talks with Palestinian officials in Ramallah, German FM Steinmeier says “The German position does not differ from the European position,” stressing that, for the time being, the EU had decided to guarantee aid to the Palestinians until a new PA Cabinet emerged, but said that “for the time after, no decisions have been taken”.

- In a joint appeal, 31 international aid organizations, incl. Oxfam and Médecins du Monde call on governments not to stop the flow of funds to the OPT, saying that the local Palestinian population remained desperately in need of outside support.

Feb. 15: A Hamas statement names Ismail Haniyeh as new would-be PM, Abdul Aziz Dweik as new PLC speaker, and Mahmoud Zahar as the head of the Hamas faction in the PLC. Israeli DM Mofaz says that his govt. would cut all contacts with the PA if anyone affiliated to Hamas filled those two posts.

- Pres. Abbas’ security adviser Jibril Rajoub says, “Hamas is not required to recognize Israel as a condition for [inter-Palestinian] dialogue.... It is tactically wrong for Hamas to recognize Israel now.”

- Pres. Abbas returns the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) from the Information Min. to PLO control Nabil Sha’ath.

- In Qabatiya near Jenin, Israeli soldiers shoot dead a retarded 15-year-old Palestinian boy, Mujahed Al-Simadi, mistaking his toy gun for a real one.

- During a debate by Israeli FM Tzipi Livni and senior officials it was decided that Israel will try to delegitimize the new Hamas govt by insisting that international aid be given to humanitarian organizations and not the PA.

- Jonathan Mclvor, head of the EUCOPPS Mission, opens a new police academy in Jericho.▼



- The Dalai Lama arrives in Israel for a visit aimed at bringing human beings closer, although neither Israeli nor Palestinian officials had agreed to meet with him. Asked about whether Israel should talk to Hamas he says “I think we should wait and see,” he added, appealing to Hamas to turn away from violence and to approach the situation “more realistically.”▶



Feb. 16: At a meeting with PM Abbas in Ramallah, EU foreign and security policy chief Javier Solana reiterates that the EU rules out contacts with Hamas, at least until the shape of the new govt. becomes clear.

- The Israeli defense establishment presents a proposal to DM Mofaz to reduce Israel’s ties with the PA after the Hamas govt. takes office by freezing transfers of tax revenues, banning entry of Gazan workers into Israel and the movement of Palestinians between Gaza and the West Bank, freezing plans to upgrade the crossing points between the WBGS and Israel as well as to build a port and airport in Gaza, and preventing transfers of military equipment to the PA from foreign countries. In addition, further reductions in ties would be proposed every week. The plan is also presented the next day to PM Olmert, who approves them to be implemented as of 19 Feb., the day after the inauguration of the new PLC.

- A team headed by the PM’s special adviser, Dov Weissglas, also presents its recommendations on how to respond to Hamas’ electoral victory, proposing that Israel issue an ultimatum to Pres. Abbas to disarm the ‘terrorist’ organizations and have the new PA govt. abjure violence, recognize Israel, and accept the road map as well as all signed Israeli-Palestinian agreements.

- Newly recruited PA policemen demonstrate in front of the Finance Min. building in Gaza City, demanding unpaid salaries.

- At Ashdod Port, Israeli customs authorities seize 31 shipping containers with goods worth hundreds of thousands of dollars on the grounds that they belonged to an “illegal association” in the PA. Two months ago, the

imporer - Fayez Abu Amar Co. of Khan Younis - had been declared an illegal association for assisting Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

- Israeli DM officials announce that construction of the separation barrier in the Judean Desert will start in the coming weeks, beginning east of the Hebron Hills.

- Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu tells businessmen at a conference in Jerusalem that Hamas will not be tamed by power and remains committed to its goal of destroying Israel.

Feb. 17: Palestinians clash with Israeli troops during a protest against the separation barrier in Bil'in.

- *Ha'aretz* reports that a military order signed by West Bank commander Maj.-Gen. Yair Naveh on 15 Dec. 2005 has taken effect last week; it bars Palestinians with permits to enter Israel from entering via the roads that Israelis use to enter the country from the territories. The order also forbids Israelis to transport Palestinians with valid entry permits via these roads. Instead, Palestinians must enter via one of the 11 crossing points earmarked for them.

- Clashes erupt in Azzoun, near Qalqilya, after villagers accuse Jewish settlers of scrawling graffiti defaming the Prophet Mohammed on a mosque.

- Sheikh Taysir Tamimi attends a demonstration in front of Abraham's Tomb in Hebron against the depiction of Prophet Mohammed in Western publications. ▶



Feb. 18: Hamas takes over as the dominant party in the PLC and names Ismail Haniyeh as PM; after the swearing-in and election of Abdul Aziz Dweik as PLC Speaker, Pres. Abbas gives a speech at the new PLC's inaugural session, demanding that the govt. honor all agreements signed by the PA and saying he would continue working towards a negotiated peace agreement while urging the international community and Israel not to "punish" voters for electing the radical Islamists. ▼▶



- Outside the PLC building in Gaza City, PA security officers clash with protesting comrades who demanded that their salaries for the last three months be paid.

- Palestinian women hold pictures of imprisoned relatives during a demonstration outside the PA HQ in Ramallah.

Feb. 19: Hamas formally asks Pres. Abbas to approve the nomination of Ismail Haniyeh as PM.

- At a cabinet meeting, acting Israeli PM Olmert rules out any contact with the Hamas-led govt. and announces a series of economic sanctions against Hamas, but says Israel would continue to allow humanitarian aid to reach the Palestinians. In a first step, the Cabinet approves an immediate freeze on the transfer of revenues, saying it has become a terrorist authority.'

- During an arrest raid in Balata RC near Nablus, Palestinians clash with Israeli troops, who capture Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades leader Ahmed Al-

Kayzi and demolish the two-storey house in which he had been holed up. Two Palestinians - Ibrahim Sheikh Ali and Mohammed Natour - are killed and at least 12 others wounded during the clashes.

- An Israeli air strike kills two Palestinians from the PRC - Bilal An-Najar and Osama Baris of Rafah - allegedly preparing to place a bomb near the Gaza-Israel border fence.

- Residents of Sderot demonstrate outside the Israeli PMO in Jerusalem calling on the Israeli govt. to stop Palestinian from launching Qassam rockets toward their town.

- *Ma'ariv* reports Eli Yishai, head of the Shas Party, as stating that preserving all the West Bank settlements is not realistic.

- In response to Israel's decision to treat the PA as "enemy", PM Ismail Haniyeh says Palestinians have "alternatives in the Arab and Islamic world" to replace any funds withheld by Israel or Western nations, adding that these are "steps that are not new in terms of the Israeli occupation, which punish the Palestinians using the pretext of the Hamas election victory."

- Settlers from Susiya settlement uproot 20 olive groves that had been planted by Israeli peace activists on Palestinian-owned land.

Feb. 20: In Gaza, Pres. Abbas formally asks Ismail Haniyeh to assemble a Cabinet within the next five weeks.

- Pres. Abbas says Fateh had still not decided to remain outside the govt. and would engage with whoever was tasked with forming the govt. in a dialogue that would include all of the topics on the agenda.

- Hamas begins coalition talks to form new govt. with DFLP and PFLP leaders; Islamic Jihad turns down an invitation to join the govt.

- New PLC Speaker Abdul Aziz Dweik says in a statement that "All the decisions that were taken by the previous PLC since 25 January are now frozen and we will review these decisions in accordance with the Basic Law."

- In Nablus, Israeli troops kill Islamic Jihad commander Ahmed Abu Shariah.

- In Hebron, Palestinians burn a Danish national flag during a protest against cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed.

- *DPA* quotes PM-designate Haniyeh as saying that he regretted that Israel had labeled Hamas a terrorist group and that "it should have responded differently to the democracy expressed by the Palestinian people".

- Following reports over suspected bird flu cases in north Gaza, Palestinian police medics examine chickens and the Health Min. urges residents to report any instances of large numbers of dead birds.

- Shin Bet head Yuval Diskin says Hamas poses a long-term existential threat to Israel.

Feb. 21: Pres. Abbas officially appoints Ismail Haniyeh as PM and asks him to form the new govt. and to pursue his peace agenda. However, Hamas calls talks with Israel would a waste of time. ▶



- Fateh and Hamas supporters clash for the first time in the PLC, when newly elected speaker, Dr. Aziz Dweik of Hamas, tries to force PLC Sec.-Gen. Ibrahim Khreisheh, who was appointed by the previous Fateh-led PLC just before its dissolution, to abandon his office, demanding a Hamas candidate - Mahmoud Ramhi

- in this post. Dweik further announces a freeze on a series of decisions made by the outgoing PLC, most of which were aimed at preserving Fateh's power.

- Saeb Erekat calls the move unconstitutional and unacceptable and criticizes Hamas for not nominating a Christian as one of the two Dep. PLC Speakers as it had been the case for the last 10 years.

- During an ongoing operation in Balata RC Israeli troops shoot and wound three Palestinians and blew up an alleged bomb-making factory. ▶

- Israel's acting PM Olmert says he was not ruling out the possibility that Israel would hold peace talks with the Palestinians, despite Hamas' election victory.

- *Yediot Ahronot* reports that Israeli DM Mofaz has warned Pres. Abbas that the release of PFLP leader Ahmed Sa'adat, imprisoned in Jericho for masterminding the 2001 assassination of ultranationalist Israeli Cabinet Min. Rehavam Zeevi, would draw a 'harsh Israeli response.'

- An Israeli bulldozer demolishes a Palestinian house in the H2 part of Hebron due to lack of permits.

- A new joint report by B'Tselem and Bimkom - Planners for Planning Rights, entitled "Under the Guise of Security: Routing the Separation Barrier to Enable Israeli Settlement Expansion in the West Bank," concludes that the main consideration behind many parts of the separation barrier's route was to include settlements within the fence and future settlement expansion. According to the report the fence runs east of 60 settlements, 12 of them within the WJM boundaries.

- Israeli forces demolish three deserted outposts that settler youths had built in Dec. 2005: one outside Bet El settlement, one near Shilo, and one outside Kokhav HaShachar in the western Jordan Valley.

Feb. 22: Fateh holds initial talks with Hamas in Gaza to try to find common ground for a governing coalition. The head of the Fateh faction in the new PLC, Azzam Al-Ahmed, says Fateh is not principally against joining a Hamas govt. but it depends on whether both can agree on domestic and foreign affairs, incl. Pres. Abbas vision of negotiating peace with Israel.

- Pres. Abbas holds talks with UN Middle East envoy Alvaro de Soto in Gaza City.

- Dozens of Fateh supporters march to the PLC building in Ramallah, protesting against the new Hamas Admin..

- Israeli troops kill five Palestinians in Nablus. In response to Israel's three-day military operation in Nablus, Hamas distributes a flyer in the city saying it is sticking to the "option of resistance to the occupation." In Gaza, Hamas spokesman, Sami Abu Zuhri, says the operation was "intended to embarrass Hamas, and sabotage efforts to reach a national consensus."

- Israel has barred all PLC members from traveling between the West Bank and Gaza by canceling their VIP travel privileges.

- Israeli Cabinet Min. Meir Sheerit tells *AP* that he hopes the Hamas leaders will follow the example of the Likud, which softened its ideology and led the country to its first peace agreement with an Arab nation three decades ago.

- Israeli bulldozers demolish a building, a US-funded public park, including a children's playground and swimming pool near Kiryat Arba settlement in Hebron. The Israeli army, using a bulldozer.

- In Bardaleh, Palestinians protest movement restrictions imposed by the construction of the separation barrier.

- New Israeli CBS figures suggest that immigration to Israel during 2003-05 was at its lowest since 1989

- During a closed-door briefing at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, GOC Central Command Yair Naveh seriously upsets the Jordanian regime by saying that "Given that Jordan is 80 percent Palestinian, we might - heaven forbid - reach a situation in which Abdullah is the last Hashemite king," and warning about a Muslim axis that could pass from Tehran to Gaza and "might in the future pass through Jordan affect the regime there."



Feb. 23: After talks with Hamas on the formation of a new govt. in Gaza City, Third Way leader Salam Fayyad says "There is an urgent need to try to achieve a general understanding, if not a consensus, on the political and security agenda of the coming government," not indicating whether his group would join the future govt..

- Outgoing PM Ahmad Qre'a meets with PLC Speaker Aziz Dweik in Ramallah.

- Demonstrators at the construction site of the separation barrier in Beit Sira clash with Israeli troops.

- At Balata RC, thousands of Palestinians attend the funeral for five Palestinians killed by the army a day earlier. ▶

- Hamas holds a massive rally in Gaza City to protest the Israeli operation in Nablus.



Feb. 24: *Kol Ha'Zeman* reports that the ILA is working on a plan to expand Pisgat Ze'ev settlement, which currently has 40,000 residents, by adding 1,100 new housing units.

- Former Shin Bet head Avi Dichter says Palestinian PM designate Ismail Haniyeh would be a legitimate assassination target in the event of a Hamas attack.

- On the northern Gaza border, Israeli shoot dead two Palestinians allegedly planting bombs in two separate incidents, incl. Zayed Dukhan, son of Hamas co-founder Abdel Fattah Dukhan. The PRC claim responsibility for one of the attempted bombings.

- Pres. Abbas calls for international pressure to rein in Israel after its Acting PM vowed to press on with a campaign of attacks against militant groups.

- During a protest against the caricatures of Prophet Mohammed in the UN compound at Deheisheh RC, demonstrators burn a doll with the picture of Danish PM Anders Fogh Rasmussen's on it.

- Israeli forces clash with Palestinian demonstrators during a protest against the separation barrier in Beit Sira.

Feb. 25: During a meeting with Pres. Abbas in Ramallah, Palestinian officials tell US Asst. Sec. of State David Welch that the US should not cut off aid to the Palestinians, even after a Hamas govt. takes over. Welch says the US "has long been a supporter of the Palestinian people through a substantial contribution of our foreign assistance funds.... We continue to be devoted to the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people and it shall remain so."

- Arab-Israeli Elias Shakour from the Galilee village of Biram, formally becomes a Bishop of the local Greek Catholic Church. In his inaugural speech, he pledges to work for a better future for all Israeli citizens and urges the Israeli govt. to grant equality and justice to Israeli Arabs and to advance the MEPP.

Feb. 26: PNC head Salim Za'noun attends the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union conference on the Jordanian shore of the Dead Sea.

- In an interview printed in the *Washington Post*, PM-designate Ismail Haniyeh is quoted as saying, "If Israel withdraws to the 1967 borders, then we will establish a peace in stages" and "If Israel declares that it will give the Palestinian people a state and give them back all their rights, then we are ready to recognize them." Haniyeh, however, denies he had suggested recognition, saying there was only a possibility of achieving a long-term truce.

Feb. 27: Israeli FM Tzipi Livni tells Israeli media: "Since the elections to the Palestinian Council, Hamas holds a majority in the parliament and will form the next Palestinian Government. The ball is in the Palestinian court, and those who must put it in play are the members of the future Hamas Government. Abu Mazen [Pres. Abbas], in this context, is irrelevant." Playing down those remarks, acting PM Olmert says he hopes Pres. Abbas would stay in office.

Feb. 28: Hamas dismisses a report by the London-based *Al Hayat* news-

paper that it had received \$250 million Iranian donation.

- A UN OCHA report cautions that the freeze of transfers to the PA would bring the Palestinian govt. to the brink of collapse, by limiting its ability to provide basic services such as health, education, utilities, sanitation and policing, and thus "risk a rise in criminality, kidnapping and protection rackets."

- Russian envoy Alexander Kalugin meets with Pres. Abbas at his office in Ramallah.

- In an interview with *Al-Jazeera TV*, Pres. Abbas has reportedly said "We'll grant Hamas authority over the Palestinians' national security because we need to have one body controlling the situation to ensure security. I don't intend to deprive Hamas of what I demanded in the past from Yasser Arafat," adding, however, that the General Intelligence, headed by Tawfik A-Tirawi, will remain subject to him.

- Israeli bulldozers cut numerous olive trees to clear land for the construction of the separation barrier during a demonstration in Beit Sira, near Ramallah. ▶



March 1: Senior Islamic Jihad commander Khaled Dahdouh is killed in Gaza in a car explosion caused, according to witnesses, by an Israeli air strike. The Israeli army denies involvement. ▼▶



- A settler from Migdalim settlement near Nablus is shot dead at a nearby gas station. Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades claim responsibility, citing revenge for the killing of local Fateh activist Mahmoud Shteiwi by Israeli troops a week ago. An Israeli motorist is wounded in a separate attack near Nabi Elias village, close to Qalqilya.

- In a campaign rally near Tel Aviv, Acting PM Olmert warns against considering all Palestinians Israel's enemies after Hamas' election victory and urges Pres. Abbas to require the new govt. to uphold agreements with Israel signed by previous regimes.

- Yossi Zur, whose son Asaf was killed by a Hamas suicide bomber in Haifa in 2003, has reportedly collected close to 30,000 signatures to day for his petition for the withdrawal of the Palestinian movie "Paradise Now" at the Oscars, scheduled for March 5th.

- National Infrastructure Min. Bar-On suggests to the Knesset plenum that Israel might agree to supply electricity and water to the PA in exchange for natural gas from the PA's offshore fields.

March 2: Palestinian gunmen fire outside the PLC in Ramallah to demand a greater role in Fateh's decision-making.

- Pres. Abbas tells the London-based *Al-Hayat* newspaper that there are signs that Al-Qaeda has infiltrated the WBGS and he urges the world to give the incoming Hamas govt. a chance.

- After two shooting attacks by Palestinians, Acting PM Olmert warns that Israel will strike with an "iron fist against any attempt to resume terrorist activity."

- In a joint press conference meeting at Allenby Bridge, Labor Party Chairman Peretz and Pres. Abbas say that Israel and the Palestinians must continue negotiating despite Hamas' rise to power and avoid further radicalization. ▶



- At the Al-Muntar (Karni) crossing, Palestinian workers destroy vegetables during a protest against Israel's ongoing closing of the main cargo crossing between Israel and in the Gaza Strip.

March 3: Israeli troops shot dead Amer Bassiouny, 15, and wound another person during a raid on Ein Beit Al-Ma' RC near Nablus.

- Israel's acting PM Ehud Olmert says that the international community must maintain a united front against Hamas.

- Israeli forces clash with Palestinian demonstrators during protests against the construction of Israel's separation barrier in Bilin and in Beit Sira, near Ramallah.

March 4: Pres. Abbas tells a meeting of the Fateh Revolutionary Council that participation in a Hamas-led govt. is contingent on Hamas joining the peace process.

March 5: *Ha'aretz* reports that Acting PM Olmert is planning to enlist international support for a unilateral Israeli withdrawal from parts of the West Bank if he wins the elections.

- Gunmen from the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades storm and occupy the Min. of Education building in Gaza's Nuseirat RC, demanding that Fateh pay them their salaries and threatening to turn to Hamas. ▶



- Acting PM Olmert tells Russian Pres. Putin over the phone that Russia's talks with Hamas leaders have harmed world efforts to isolate them as a violent Islamic group.

- A World Bank report moans that the Rafah crossing agreement to facilitate the movement of goods into and out of Gaza and help rehabilitate Gaza's economy following the disengagement, has still not been implemented.

March 6: Newly appointed PLC speaker Aziz Dweik opens the first PLC session – held simultaneously in Ramallah and Gaza City, with legislators hooked up by video conference – which turn chaotic, when Fateh members walk out after Hamas repeals a series of measures passed by the outgoing PLC. ▼



- An Israeli air strike in Gaza City kills two members of Islamic Jihad, incl. the target of the attack Munir Sukar and Ashraf Shaluf, as well as three boys standing nearby. ►



- Israeli defense chiefs draw up a plan to reduce contacts with the Palestinians, further isolate Gaza and dismantle more West Bank settlements.

- A World Bank report charges that the Al-Muntar (Karni) crossing into Gaza represents "a significant non-tariff barrier to trade," and that the Israeli-Palestinian agreement on Gaza crossings has not been implemented.

- Pres. Abbas meets with EU envoy Mark Otte in Ramallah to discuss the latest developments in the WBGS.

- An explosion in Gaza's Bureij RC kills two teenage Palestinian brothers in what witnesses say appeared to be an accident.

- During a military operation in Nablus clashes erupt between Palestinians and Israeli troops.

March 7: PLC members attend the second session of the PLC in Ramallah and Gaza City as Hamas and Fateh resume talks on forming a coalition govt..

- US Assistant Sec. of State David Welch tells Palestinian leaders the US will continue sending humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people even after a Hamas govt. is formed.

- Israeli DM Mofaz warns that Hamas' designated PM Ismail Haniyeh will not be immune from assassination if the radical Islamists carry out attacks.

- In Gaza, dairy supplies have virtually disappeared, fruits are hard to find, and grain supplies for bread are dwindling after a week of Israel's security closure of the main cargo crossing.

- Acting PM Olmert says Israel "will not invest in construction or infrastructure development beyond the Green Line in the coming years" if Kadima wins the upcoming election.

- During a meeting with US CG Jacob Walles in Ramallah, Pres. Abbas reiterates his opposition to the creation of a Palestinian state with temporary borders and unilateral Israeli withdrawals from the West Bank.

- A USAID report estimates agricultural losses in Gaza due to the closure of Al-Muntar (Karni) crossing at over \$450,000 per day.

March 8: Pres. Mahmoud Abbas meets with Slovenian Pres. Janez Drnovsek in Ramallah. The two agree to open a Slovenian Representative Office in the OPT and a Palestinian diplomatic office in Slovenia. ►



- PLC Hamas faction speaker Salah Bardawil tells reporters that "Hamas can't recognize a State that occupies our lands and keeps turning it into cantons and plans to confiscate it."

- EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana arrives in Ramallah.

- As International Women's Day is observed in the WBGS, Palestinian and Israeli women take part in a joint march along the separation barrier at the Qalandia checkpoint.

- US actress Sharon Stone arrives on a five-day visit to the region sponsored by the Peres Center for Peace. ►



- Pres. Abbas calls on the world not to punish the Palestinian people for electing Hamas and to continue providing them with aid.

- Israeli troops replant 700 of 1,200 olive trees that were uprooted for the construction of the separation barrier in Beit Sira, Ramallah.

March 9: The Al-Muntar (Karni) crossing, the only export terminal for goods leaving the Gaza Strip to Israel, is reopened after a more than two-week closure. ►



- In a new round of coalition talks held between the head of Hamas' parliamentary faction Mahmoud Zahar and his Fateh counterpart Azzam Al-Ahmad in Gaza – the two sides are unable to reach an agreement that would enable Fateh to join the govt., mainly due to Hamas' refusal to recognize past agreements with Israel, UN resolutions and Arab summit rulings.

- Acting Israeli PM Olmert tells *The Jerusalem Post* that within four years, he intends to "get to Israel's permanent borders, whereby we will completely separate from the majority of the Palestinian population and preserve a large and stable Jewish majority in Israel." He adds that he would ensure Israel holds on to Ariel, Ma'ale Adumim, the Jerusalem envelope and Gush Etzion; establish the Jordan Valley as a security border; and provide the army with freedom of action in the West Bank, similar to the post-disengagement situation in the Gaza Strip.

- In an interview with *Ha'aretz*, Acting Israeli PM Olmert says he would open an "internal dialogue" with the Yesha settler council if he wins the elections, in an effort to reach an agreement about Israel's withdrawal line in the West Bank. The plan was to offer the settlers a deal: convergence into the large settlement blocs and the expansion of those blocs, and evacuation of those settlements beyond whatever border is set.

March 10: Protests against the separation barrier continue in Beit Sira and Bil'in.

- Israeli DM Mofaz orders a lockdown of the WBGS over the Jewish festival of Purim, which runs through March 15.

March 11: Dozens of Fateh gunmen storm a power plant near Nusseirat in central Gaza, demanding that they be paid their salaries.

- Pres. Abbas meets with Quartet envoy James Wolfensohn in Ramallah.

- Pres. Abbas tells Hamas its response to his call to follow his peace agenda is too vague.

- Labor Chairman Amir Peretz declares that if elected, his party would pass a law that would pay settlers who voluntarily leave the West Bank in a bid to reduce the number of settlers prior to any evacuation plan.

March 12: Hamas' proposed platform submitted to Pres. Abbas two days ago is published today. It says that armed resistance was a legal right and a method of achieving Palestinian rights. Regarding past agreements with Israel it states: "The cabinet would deal with the reality resulting from previous accords reached between the PA and the [occupying] State.... It is the right of the new Cabinet to reconsider these accords on the basis of respecting international law and to implement them in order to protect the rights and interests of our Palestinian people." It further reads that Hamas would "consider a mechanism for negotiations" if Israel recognized the Palestinian people's national rights and withdrew from the OPT.

- Hamas supporters attend a rally after winning the student council elections at the Islamic University in Gaza.

- Hamas officials resume talks with other Palestinian factions on forming a coalition govt. after Fateh rejects a first draft program.

- Israeli TV reports that Israel is prepared to assassinate four Palestinians, including the PFLP's Ahmad Sa'adat, accused in the 2001 murder of Israeli Tourism Min. Zeevi, if they are released from jail.

- Palestinians and Israeli activists demonstrate in Hebron against the Jewish settlement in the town, and mark the 12th anniversary of the Hebron massacre by Baruch Goldstein at the Tomb of the Patriarchs.

March 13: Leaders from Palestinian factions attend a meeting with Hamas leaders in Gaza City, but make no progress in bringing the Fateh into a coalition govt..

- Masked settlers from Susiya attack Palestinians and injure three, incl. a 65-year-old woman, planting trees with the help of Israeli activists in a Palestinian field near the settlement.

- The Center for the Defense of the Individual petitions the High Court of Justice, demanding that restrictions on Palestinians wishing to travel between the Gaza Strip and West Bank be lifted or lessened, saying "Denying Palestinian residents' freedom of movement between ...the Gaza Strip and West Bank - has reached a new low after the state of Israel stopped honoring the freedom of movement between the two areas."

March 14: After US and British monitors withdraw, Israeli forces seize six Palestinians - incl. PFLP leader Ahmed Sa'adat and four PFLP men, wanted by Israel for the 2001 murder of cabinet Min. Rehavam Ze'evi as well as Fuad Shubeiki, wanted for his role in smuggling arms and financing the Karine A arms ship -, who surrender to Israeli troops following a 9-hour siege of the Jericho jail. The raid came after the announcement that they would be freed by Hamas. Two Palestinian policemen are killed and 250 Palestinians arrested. ►



- In response to the Jericho prison raid armed PFLP gunmen kidnap 10 journalists and aid workers and vandalize offices linked to the US and Britain. Riots break out throughout the WBGs.

- *Ha'aretz* reports the Civil Admin. as confirming the existence of a list with the names of 2,000 Palestinians banned from returning to the Jordan Valley in an effort to keep them from claiming their land.

- Acting PM Olmert makes a campaign stop at Ariel, declaring that if he is elected settlements deep in the West Bank will be annexed but adding "Ariel is Israel, and we will see to the security arrangements so that Ariel continues to prosper as an integral part of Israel."



March 15: Palestinians throughout the WBGs attend demonstrations and observe strikes in protest against Israel's raid of the Jericho jail. Visiting the prison after cutting short his trip to Europe, Pres. Abbas calls the raid an "unforgivable crime" and an insult to the Palestinian people. ◀

- DM Shaul Mofaz extends a complete closure on the WBGs and keeps security forces on high alert for fear of Palestinian retaliation for the Jericho raid.

- The Israeli army issues a military order seizing seven dunums of land from the village of Ar-Ramadin to expand the settlement of Eshkolot.

- The Israeli army seizes 766 dunums of land in Battir, Husan, Qubu, Surif, Wadi Fukin, and Al-Walaja, for the construction of the separation barrier.

- Israeli settlers fire on Awarta village near Nablus, wounding two Palestinians.

- The Israeli DCO in Hebron begins issuing magnetic cards for Palestinians.

- Palestinians release the last four foreigners seized a day earlier to protest the Israeli raid on the Jericho prison, incl. a South Korean journalist, two French citizens and a Canadian.

March 16: Hamas announces it will form a govt. by itself after failing to reach an agreement with other parties.

- The PLO Exec. Committee, headed by Pres. Abbas, denounces the Israeli attack on the Jericho prison and the capture of PFLP Sec.-Gen. Ahmed Sa'adat and Maj.-Gen. Fuad Shubaki.

- During a gun battle in Jenin, an Israeli soldier is killed and five Palestinians arrested.

March 17: In Yamoun, near Jenin, undercover soldiers kill a Palestinian girl Akaber Zayed, 10, and injure her aunt when they fire at the taxi in which the two were riding during an arrest raid.

- Two Palestinians are killed and three injured in an explosion in northern Gaza, when a Qassam rocket they were trying to launch into Israel exploded prematurely.

- Israeli forces clash with Palestinian and Israeli demonstrators during a protest against the separation barrier in Bili'n. A similar protest take place at Beit Sira. ▼



March 18: Hamas' designated PM Ismail Haniyeh announces the formation of his Cabinet. The govt. excludes other Palestinian factions as Hamas will keep the key portfolios including the FM and the Interior Min. and give lower-level positions to technocrats.

- Pres. Abbas says he "will not place obstacles before the Hamas govt." but warns them that their refusal to moderate their positions could "get them into trouble."

- South of Hebron, Israel's veterinary services begin the culling of two flocks of turkeys suspected of having the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu. ►



March 19: In Gaza, designated PM Ismail Haniyeh presents his 24-member cabinet to Pres. Abbas; key portfolios are left to Hamas with Mahmoud Zahar appointed FM and Said Siyam interior Min. Abbas says he will not reject the cabinet but submit it to the PLO Exec. Committee and if it approves to the PLC. Fateh officials later say Abbas would not try to block approval of the govt., but would issue a letter detailing his reservations about its policies. ►



List of the cabinet members presented by PM Ismail Haniyeh to Pres. Abbas: Ismail Haniyeh: PM and Min. of Sport; Nasser Eddin Al-Shaab: Dep. PM and Min. of Higher Education; Mahmoud Zahar: FM; Said Siyam: Interior and Civil Affairs; Omar Abdel Razeq: Finance; Ziad Zazza: Public Affairs; Bassem Naim: Housing; Na'ef Rajoub: Religious Affairs; Mariam Saleh: Women; Tannous Abu Ita: Tourism; Fakr Turkman: Welfare; Samir Abu Isa: Planning; Ala Al-Araj: Economy; Abdel Rahman Weidan: Transportation; Jamal Houdari: Communication; Ahmed Halbi: Justice; Mohammed Agha: Agriculture; Yusef Regka: Information; Abdullah Abu Subah: Culture; Wafi Kavhe: Regional Affairs; Aisa Jabari: Local Authorities; Khaled Abu Arafeh:

Jerusalem Affairs; Mohammed Barghouthi: Labor; and Atef Odwan: Min. of State.

- With Palestinians facing extreme shortages of grain, dairy products and other essential goods, US officials summon Israeli, Palestinian, Quartet and Egyptian negotiators to an emergency meeting to resolve a standoff over Gaza's main cargo crossing at Karni.

March 20: In Gaza, three men are injured in a gun battle between PA police officers and over 30 Fateh gunmen demanding payment of their salaries.

- The Karni cargo crossing between Israel and Gaza reopens briefly, but is shut down again 30-40 minutes later due to new warnings of planned attacks on the terminal.

- In Nablus, a Palestinian suspected of collaborating with Israel is shot dead by gunmen.

March 21: Pres. Abbas meets with the EU envoy Marc Otte in Ramallah after warnings that future aid is at risk unless the incoming Hamas govt. commits to peace. Earlier the day, the EU had handed the UN a check worth US\$78 million in urgent aid for destitute Palestinians in the WBGS.

- Azzam Abu Aladas and Balal Hafnawi from Balata RC become the first West Bank Palestinians suspected of heading an Al-Qaeda terror cell.

- The Israeli army issues a military order to seize 81.6 dunums of Palestinian land in Beitunia for construction of the separation barrier.

- The PA declares a state of emergency due the spread of the fatal H5N1 bird flu virus which struck last week.

Palestinian demonstration at Karni

- The Al-Muntar (Karni) crossing is reopened by Israeli for the second time in as many days amid warnings by Palestinian officials and international aid agencies of an impending humanitarian crisis. ▶

- The ultra-Orthodox Jewish group Neturei Karta, which opposes Zionism and Israel's right to exist, meets with Hamas members in Ramallah at a PLC session. ▶

- Israeli forces destroy a Palestinian house in Walaja near Bethlehem.



March 22: The PLO Exec. Committee meets in Ramallah, rejects Hamas' governing platform and demands that Hamas recognize Israel, the institutions of the PLO, and agreements between Israel and the PA. Hamas declares the demands to be non-binding, with Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri saying the PLO Exec. Committee had no right to interfere in the formation of a govt.

- During a search for three wanted men Israeli soldiers shoot dead Islamic Jihad activist Ramadan Mattir in Aqabat Jaber RC, near Jericho.

- Hundreds of Palestinians attend a protest in front of the PLC in Gaza marking the second anniversary of the assassination of Ahmed Yassin by the Israeli army.

- Initial tests conducted on dead chickens from the Gaza Strip indicate that the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu has spread to Gaza, the first outbreak of the disease in the Palestinian territories.

March 23: An Israeli air force missile kills two Islamic Jihad members preparing to launch rockets from Gaza into Israel.

- Incoming PA Interior Min. Said Siyam says he will never order the arrest of a Palestinian for resisting the occupation, and that Hamas will try to coordinate militants' operations.

- Pres. Abbas tells *Ha'aretz* that a final status peace deal could be reached within a year through talks to be spearheaded by US Pres. Bush after the Israeli elections. He adds that a solution must be based on the 1967

borders but could include territorial exchanges and that Hamas would not stop him from negotiating with Israel.

- Israeli Chief of Staff Dan Halutz says a Hamas-led govt. will not necessarily lead to more terror attacks as the movement "will want to prove that their image is unjustified, and they will try to restrain themselves."

- The PA Agriculture Min. confirms an outbreak of the bird flu virus at a second farm in Rafah in the Gaza Strip. A total of 80,000 birds are to be culled both in Rafah and Gaza City, where the virus was first detected.

March 24: Clashes between Israeli troops and Palestinian and international activists continue during protests against the separation barrier in Bil'in. Similar protests take place in Beit Sira.

March 25: PA Economy Min. Mazen Sinoqrot says the PA will need at least \$130 million a month to cover its budget if the West cuts off aid when Hamas takes office.

- Pres. Abbas suggests he is prepared to bring down Hamas' incoming govt. if its anti-Israel policies harm Palestinian interests.

- Designated PM Haniyeh says at the top of Hamas' priorities were ending corruption and carrying out internal reforms and not confrontation with Israel, adding: "We want rights and dignity for the Palestinian people, and to put an end to this decades-long complicated situation." He further states that acting PM Olmert's intention to carry out unilateral withdrawals from parts of the West Bank is unacceptable, and that he does not consider the borders they set to be those of the Palestinian state.

March 26: Israeli troops kill a teenager, Hamad Hamdan, 16, as he is crawling towards the security fence near the Bureij RC.

- Israel announces that Qalandia checkpoint would be turned to international passage.

- Several Palestinians and an American volunteer file complaints with the police, accusing settlers of violence toward Palestinians in the Hebron area, after at least three people were wounded in separate incidents.

- PM-designate Haniyeh says Hamas wants to end the crisis with Israel, saying, "We don't seek a whirlpool of blood in this region. We want rights and dignity for this [Palestinian] people, and to put an end to this decades-long complicated situation." He adds that "The problem is with Olmert, with Kadima. He said he will not have any contacts with the Palestinian govt. ... The problem is not with us."

March 27: PM-designate Haniyeh presents his cabinet and political program to the PLC and declares that his govt. will work towards just peace and security. He adds that it "will defend the right to oppose occupation, settlements and the racist fence and continue to fight for the establishment of a sustainable, independent Palestinian state with complete sovereignty, the capital of which shall be Jerusalem, and will reject partial solutions, temporary borders or dictated terms." ▲



- Islamic Jihad activist Issam Abu Aiyda, 25, is killed and two others wounded by Israeli troops while firing rocket-propelled grenades into Israel from the northern Gaza Strip.

- During a pre-trial hearing at Ofer military court, Ahmed Sa'adat, seized from a Jericho prison by Israel two weeks ago, refuses to recognize the military tribunal's authority to prosecute him. The judge, in turn, refuses to hear his bail application.

- Palestinian municipal employees who have not been paid in nearly two months, demonstrate in Gaza City, burning barricades and demanding their salaries.

- Hamas' designated Dep. PM Nasser Eddin Al-Sha'er tells *Ha'aretz* the new govt. "does not reject coordination and cooperation to resolve routine problems with anyone, including Israel" although it will not concede on their commitment to "principles acceptable to the entire Palestinian people."

- Israeli Chief of Staff Dan Halutz warns to be cautious about Haniyeh's moderate statements, saying "we wait for facts - and not remarks."

- In an interview with *The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*, PLC Speaker Abdel-Aziz Dweik says that Hamas would recognize Israel only if it withdrew from all of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, adding that in that case, he would want the govt. to "go to the people and ask them their opinion in a referendum."

March 28: The PLC approves with a vote of 71:36 and two abstaining the cabinet of PM-designate Ismail Haniyeh in a video conference session held simultaneously in Ramallah and Gaza City. PM-designate Haniyeh criticizes the US for its cold response to Hamas' call for dialogue with the West, saying "Regrettably, the US administration is always hasty in making its decisions and reaffirms its bias towards Israel and against the Palestinian people" and urging the Americans "to be more rational and less erratic and not to issue preconceived statements and judgments on a Palestinian Government elected through the ballot box."



- Exit polls suggest Kadima has won the elections and will probably form the next coalition. ▶

- *Ha'aretz* reports that the PA, the Israeli army and Palestinian local councils are working all but not coordinated on upgrading 34 West Bank roads in response to transportation problems created by army barriers and the diversion of Palestinian vehicles to secondary roads.

- Palestinians fire a Katyusha rocket from the Gaza Strip into Israel for the first time, a much longer-range projectile than the Qassam.

- Two Palestinian brothers, Naef and Salem Al-Atrash, 12 and 13, are killed and their cousin is wounded when a previously unexploded shell goes off while herding sheep in an army artillery range in the Negev.

- During a raid on Yamoun, Jenin, Israeli forces shoot dead a 21-year-old Palestinian, Samer Farhat.

March 29: The 24-member Cabinet of PM Haniyeh is sworn in by Pres. Abbas at a video conference ceremony in both Gaza and Ramallah due to the travel ban imposed between the WBGS territories. Afterwards Haniyeh says that the Hamas govt. is prepared to give negotiations



between Pres. Abbas and Israel a chance, stating "The problem is not the Palestinian side or its consent to negotiations, but that Israel does not honor commitments it already undertook in negotiations. ... If what Abu Mazen presents to the people as a result of negotiations serves its interest, then we too will redefine our position." ▲

- In a speech to mark his Party's victory, Israeli Acting PM Ehud Olmert says, "In the coming period, we will move to set the final borders of the State of Israel, a Jewish State with a Jewish majority... We will try to achieve this in an agreement with the Palestinians... It is time for the Palestinians to change their ethos, to accept compromise as soon as possible. If they manage to do this soon, we will sit and work out a plan. If not, Israel will take control of its own fate, and in consensus among our people and with the agreement of the world and US Pres. George Bush, we will act."

- Resistance groups in Gaza announce they will continue their armed struggle against Israel. Islamic Jihad announces it now has Russian-made Grad missiles and that it intends to increase its launches into Israel.

- In a joint statement, the heads of 12 Churches in the Holy Land urge the incoming Israeli govt. not to pursue its pledge to fix Israel's borders unilaterally, but to "demonstrate courage and wisdom by resuming the

peace process with the Palestinians." They also we urge the Palestinians to "send a clear message of peace to the Israeli citizens."

March 30: Three Israelis are killed when a Palestinian suicide bomber - Mahmoud Masharka, 24, from Burj near Hebron - blows himself up at the entrance to Kedumim settlement. A new offshoot of Fateh's Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades from the Balata RC in nearby Nablus - Kateb Al-Shahid Khamuda - claims responsibility. The army imposes a tight closure on the Nablus, Tulkarem and Jenin area.

- Thousands of Israeli Arab citizens mark Land Day, the annual protest of the expropriation of Arab-owned lands by Israel.

- US envoys David Welch and Elliott Abrams arrive for talks with Israel and the PA.

- DM Shaul Mofaz orders army and Shin Bet officers to step up targeted assassinations of Islamic Jihad activists responsible for the firing of Qassam and Katyusha rockets from the Gaza Strip.

- The Quartet reiterates its demand that the new Hamas-led PA govt. meet the conditions set down by the international community.

- PM Olmert meets with US officials David Welch and Elliot Abrams, who invite him to Washington for a May visit. They agree that there will be no contact with Hamas members in the PA or funding for their govt. until Hamas renounces violence, recognizes Israel and commits to uphold previous agreements signed between Israel and the PA.

- A group of settlers assault and injure a 16-year-old Palestinian shepherd from Beit Furik, Nablus, and kill 15 of his sheep. Settlers also attack three Palestinians and damage their vehicles near Beit Dajan, Nablus.

- Hamas-supported PRC leader Abu Yousef Al-Quqa is killed by a car bomb in Gaza City. The subsequent funeral - attended by PM Haniyeh and interior Min. Said Siyam - turns into an anti-Fateh and anti-Preventive Security demonstration openly accusing Rashid Abu Shbak, Mohammed Dahlan and Samir Mashrawi, along with the head of the General Intelligence, Tareq Abu Rajab, of perpetrating the killing, sparking the first outbreak of factional fighting between Hamas and various Fateh-affiliated groups.

March 31: In response to the assassination of PRC leader Abu Yousef Al-Quqa a day earlier PRC and Hamas supporters engage in gunbattles against Fateh/PA security forces in Gaza City, which leaves three people killed, including, a policeman, a PRC activist and a teen caught in the cross-fire, and at least 26 injured.

- Interior Min. Siyam announces the appointment of a spokesman for his office, Khaled Abu Halal, a former Fateh military leader, who has been cooperating in recent years with Hamas. In response, Abu Halal is ejected from Fateh.

April 1: Hamas fields its allied groups in Gaza against Fateh's Preventive Security Service, while PM Haniyeh appeals for calm and says the govt. will prevent armed activists from taking to the streets. Hundreds of Fateh activists march and shoot into the air in defiance.

- Settlers from Kiryat Arba uproot 60 olive trees planted two days earlier in Hebron's Wadi Al-Hussein area of Hebron.

April 2: A Palestinian boy, Mohammed Zayad, 13, is shot dead and two other children are wounded when Israeli troops who enter Qalandia RC shoot at stone-throwing Palestinians.

- PM Haniyeh criticizes the US announcement that American diplomats are forbidden to make contact with officials in any PA govt. agency controlled by Hamas, saying "This government was elected in a free and honest election, and according to the democratic principles the American administration is calling for."

- *Xinhua* quotes FM Zahar as saying that Hamas' goal of destroying Israel will be realized because "there is no place for Israel on this land," although he concedes the possibility of a two-state solution. Zahar also calls on the international community to accept the Palestinians' choice of Hamas in the January elections.

- Salfit Municipality declares a state of emergency after settlers from

Ariel dumped sewage contaminating the sole water well supplying surrounding villages.

April 3: *Ha'aretz* reports that Arab-owned banks holding PA funds are encouraging the PA to withdraw its money, fearing sanctions against them for holding terrorist funds.

- Hamas formally lifts a ban on Palestinian policemen growing beards.
- Senior Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades activist Raed Abayat is killed in Beit Sahour in an exchange of fire with Israeli troops, who came to arrest him.
- PA officials announce that Hamas plans to rebuild the police force in an effort to restore law and order to the Palestinian street.

- UN aid organizations warn that the Gaza Strip is on the verge of a humanitarian disaster due to a lack of money and food. An UNRWA report warns of a lack of basic food supplies due to the frequent closures of the Al-Muntar (Karni) crossing, saying the number of hungry people has significantly increased since financial aid has been halted. World Bank statistics show that if there is no dramatic change, 75% of Palestinians will be below the poverty line within two years (compared to the current rate of 56%, from 22% in 2000).

- Fateh and its allies win the student council elections at Hebron Polytechnic University, taking control of the council from Hamas for the first time in 15 years.

- In Gaza, Palestinians demonstrate for the release of prisoners being held in Israeli jails.

April 4: In a series of Israeli army attacks throughout the Gaza Strip in response to Qassam rocket fire, one Palestinian is killed and eight wounded, incl. a mother and her 6-month-old baby. Israeli missiles into the compound of the PA HQ in Gaza City destroy a bridge and wound two Palestinians. Pres. Abbas denounces the air strike, calling for international intervention.

- Chinese representative to the PA Yang Wei Guo meets with FM Zahar in Gaza City, the first foreign diplomat to meet with a member of the Hamas leadership since it was sworn into office. Zahar announces his intent to visit China, and is told he would be welcome. ▶



- Bank Hapoalim announces it is severing ties with Palestinian banks to avoid possible legal action in Israel and the US for dealing with terrorists.

- Israeli military sources say Qalandia checkpoint would be turned into an international-type border crossing and be renamed "Aterot Crossing."

- Citing Jordanian security officials, *Al-Hayat* reports "a definite presence" of Al-Qaeda operatives in Gaza who intend to carry out attacks on "sensitive" targets.

- Pres. Abbas meets with Canadian representative to the PA Ron Wilson in Ramallah, after Canada announces the suspension of any assistance to the new Hamas-led PA.

- *Yediot Aharonot* reports that according to Israeli CBS figures, housing sales in West Bank settlements decreased by 4.2% in Jan. 2006 compared to one year earlier.

April 5: In a first admission that Hamas will have difficulty running the WBGS without massive foreign aid, PM Haniyeh tells the first meeting of his cabinet that the PA gov't. is broke and may not be able to pay tens of thousands of public workers this month. In a symbolic step, he adds that the cabinet members would not be paid until the financial crisis was solved.

- Pres. Abbas urges the international community to intervene to stop the Israeli escalation in and siege of the Gaza Strip.

- The PA Presidency assumes security control over the Gaza Strip's border crossings, while the Hamas-led gov't. says control of borders would remain in the hands of the PA gov't.

- *Ha'aretz* reports that Egypt has recommended to PM Haniyeh that Hamas cease terrorist attacks to persuade the Israeli public of the sincerity of its intentions in seeking an agreement with Israel.

- Israeli gov't. officials announce that all ties with the PA that are not essential for preventing an immediate humanitarian disaster will be cut off, rejecting the argument of aid organizations that the Gaza is facing a humanitarian crisis. They only acknowledge temporary supply problems due to the closure of the Al-Muntar (Karni) crossing and claim the PA is engaging in "atrocious propaganda" to muster international aid.

- A screening of "Paradise Now," which is about Palestinian suicide bombers, is cancelled in Acre due to "sensitivity considerations" as it is feared that the film could disrupt the delicate Jewish-Arab coexistence in the city.

- UN health officials say that another 250,000 birds in the Gaza Strip would be killed in the coming days in a bid to halt the spread of the deadly H5N1 bird flu virus.

April 6: *Ha'aretz* reports that the FM Zahar has indicated for the first time in writing that Hamas may be willing to accept a two-state settlement in a letter to UN Sec-Gen. Kofi Annan, in which he also urges Annan "to work with the Quartet to initiate serious and constructive dialogue with the PA and its new cabinet."

- During a PLO Exec. Committee in Ramallah, the Hamas gov't. is directly criticized for the first time, in particular FM Zahar's failure to coordinate with the Office of the Pres. in contacting UN Sec-Gen. Annan and Hamas' "vague positions and its failure to take into account the Palestinian consensus."

- Pres. Abbas appoints Rashid Abu Shbak, former head of the PA's domestic intelligence, to head three of the PA security forces, which nominally fall under the control of PA Min. of the Interior Said Siyam, though final authority lies with the National Security Council headed by Pres. Abbas.

- Hamas announces that the ministers serving on its behalf in the new gov't. have resigned their membership "to enable new leaders to fill their places in the ranks of the movement."

- The Israeli army has reportedly stepped up artillery fire along the Gaza Strip in response to continued Qassam attacks, now firing an average of 300 shells a day.

- Israeli DM Shaul Mofaz announces that the complete closure of the territories will continue until further notice, stressing that every effort must be made to prevent attacks ahead of Passover.

- *Ha'aretz* reports that Hamas has been sending go-betweens to Israel with offers of an unofficial truce ("quiet in return for quiet"), but that Israeli officials define the initiative as a "trick."

- Peace Now files a petition against the DM, the army and four regional councils for failing to carry out evacuation orders issued two years ago for the six outposts of Givat Assaf, Givat HaRoeh, Ma'ale Rehavam, Mitzpe Lachish, Mitzpe Yitzhar, and Ramat Gilad.

- Hebron settlers move into a building near the Avraham Avinu neighborhood, claiming it was purchased from a Palestinian family. Palestinians challenge the validity of the documents presented.

April 7: Hamas condemns the decisions by the US and the EU to cut or halt aid payments, saying they are "punishing the Palestinian people for practicing their democratic choice." During a Friday sermon at the Grand Mosque in Khan Younis RC, PM Haniyeh accuses the US and EU of "blackmail" and says that the Hamas-led gov't. will not change its position after aid is stopped.

- Four PRC activists and a five-year-old boy are killed in an Israeli air strike on a PRC training base and a car in the Gaza Strip. ▶

- During an Israeli arrest raid in Nablus, soldiers kill a Palestinian



man, Wafa Yaish, 22, from Ein Beit Al-Ma' RC, while sitting in his car with four relatives who are wounded.

- FM Zahar tell *The Times* that Hamas was ready to discuss a two-state solution, a position that would imply recognition of the Jewish state for the first time. He adds, however, that "we may need to ask the general attitudes of our people. This is the land of the people. It is not the land of the Government. So how can we convince the people that they are going to denounce or renounce or accept these agreements? We have no final answer now. Let us wait, let us discuss and evaluate."

- Israeli missiles hit a security compound and a Fateh office early in Gaza City.

- Pres. Abbas meets with Interior Min. Said Siyam, PM Haniyeh and FM Zahar at his office in Gaza City.

- Jewish settlers opposed to acting PM Olmert's plans for withdrawal from some West Bank land move to expand an enclave in Hebron, breaking into a house they claim they bought from Palestinians, who deny the sale. ►



- Israeli forces clash with Palestinian demonstrators during a protest against the construction of the separation barrier in Bilin. A similar protest takes place in Beit Sira.

April 8: An Israeli missile strike on a training camp in Rafah RC kills five alleged Hamas supporters and a 7-year-old boy; 14 other people are wounded.

- Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades members Sami Abu Shariya and Mahmoud Ajour are killed when Israeli missiles hit their car in Gaza City.

- In a series of Israeli raids on Gaza targets, incl. a strike on the PA HQ, one Palestinian is killed and nine others are wounded.

- PLC Speaker Aziz Dweik attends a protest in Hebron calling for the release of Palestinians jailed in Israel.

- In Gaza City, PM Haniyeh meets Aleksy Gorem, head of the Russian representative office in the PA.

- Settlers from Sussiya, south of Yatta, Hebron, plant for the second consecutive day, olive trees on 16 dunums of seized Palestinian land.

April 9: A Palestinian taxi driver is killed and at least 16 people are wounded in an Israeli artillery attack on PA security posts in in Beit Hanoun.

- Policeman and wanted Fateh activist Jaber Akhras is shot dead by an Israeli underground unit when leaving his house in a village near Bethlehem.

- Israel formally severs all direct contact – incl. security coordination - with the Hamas-led PA and Acting PM Olmert announces that his govt. will boycott foreign diplomats who meet with members of the new govt., saying that Israel views the PA as "one authority, and not as having two heads," but will refrain from a "personal disqualification" of Pres. Abbas. ▲



- After a cabinet meeting, which *inter alia* discussed the PA's inability to pay the salaries of its 140,000 staff, the PA govt. calls on the international community to reconsider its position on freezing financial aid and urges the US and Europe to condemn Israel for shelling Gaza, instead of punishing the Palestinians by halting aid.

- PM Haniyeh calls on all factions to stay away from training camps in Gaza for fear of Israeli attacks, which have claimed the life of at least 11 Palestinians in the past 3 days.

- The Israeli Police goes on high alert ahead of the Passover holiday.

- FM Zahar calls on the EU not to cut donations and economic aid to the PA and urges "to respect the democratic choice of the Palestinian people

and not to be subjected to the Israeli Government stance that seeks to keep siege imposed on our people", adding "Cutting off aid would never serve the strategic ties and relationship of Europe in the region. We believe that such ties should be based on exchange of benefits and respect of people's choices".

April 10: A Palestinian girl Hadil Ghabin, 12, is killed when a shell fired by Israeli artillery hit her house in Beit Lahia, while 13 others, incl. five children, are wounded.

- Hamas says it considers Israel's severing of contacts with the PA 'a declaration of war' and Pres. Abbas accuses Israel of breaking international law.

- In the wake of the Israeli decision to rule out contacts with the Hamas-led PA, the army dismantles the DCO outside Jericho, which was the operating joint last security coordination facility in the West Bank.

- FM Zahar tells reporters that the EU decision to cut aid "would never serve settlement and calm in the region, and it goes in harmony with the Israeli pressure practiced on the Palestinian people."

- Pres. Abbas appoints his presidential guards to coordinate security at the Rafah crossing, following a recent ruling in which he removed security authority for the crossing points from the Hamas-run Cabinet.

- About 3,000 Hamas supporters stage a protest against aid cut to the PA govt. in Gaza.

- Israel's Atty. Gen. Mazuz instructs the police to open an investigation into the Herut Party, suspected of inciting racism in its election campaign after it ran ads on public buses that showed a picture of an Arab woman with the slogan "The demography will poison us."

- Hundreds of Palestinians attend a rally in Jenin to mark the fourth anniversary of the assault by the Israeli army during "Operation Defensive Shield."

- During a meeting with US CG Jacob Walles in Ramallah, Pres. Abbas urges the US to stop isolating the PA following the swearing-in of the Hamas-led govt..

- The ICRC warns that a freeze on aid to the Hamas govt. would worsen the plight of ordinary Palestinians, fuel further violence, and the could not be covered by aid organizations.

April 11: Despite the killing of civilians and bystanders, Israeli DM Mofaz stands by the new policy of firing artillery shells at rocket launchers operating from populated areas in Gaza, saying "If there is no quiet on the Israeli side, there will be no quiet on the Palestinian side".

- During a cabinet meeting, PM Haniyeh says an Israeli offensive in northern Gaza is an attempt to 'tighten the siege' on his new govt. and vows it will not cave in to Israeli and international pressure. ►



At a meeting, the Israeli Cabinet takes the following decisions regarding the PA:

A. The PA is a terrorist authority that is hostile to Israel;

B. The State of Israel, and all of its official representatives, will not hold ties with the PA and its elements;

C. The PA is one authority; therefore, neither the PA Chairman nor his office will be treated any differently. However, there will be no personal disavowal of the PA Chairman;

D. Foreign officials who are visiting the region and who meet with Hamas elements will not be received, during the same visit, for meetings with Israeli officials;

E. Israel will coordinate with the international community regarding humanitarian assistance for the needs of the Palestinian population, not via the PA establishment;

F. Subject to security considerations, the Gaza Strip crossings will be open in order to allow the entry of humanitarian assistance into the Gaza Strip."

- In Ramallah, Palestinian protesters demonstrate against the cutting of aid to the Hamas-led govt.

- PLC Aziz Dweik meets with EU MPs in Ramallah and tells them the EU must reconsider its decision to suspend financial aid to the PA.

April 12: Near the Gaza border, an Israeli air strike kills two Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades members - Ibrahim Masoud and Mohammed Al-Amudi from Jabalia RC – allegedly on their way to carry out an attack.

- Israeli forces fire a missile at a Fateh office in Gaza City, causing damage but no injuries.

- Israeli soldiers occupy a number of houses in the H2 area of Hebron to enhance security for settlers celebrating Passover.

- The PA launches a fundraising drive on websites and Arab satellite TV stations. The appeal is sponsored by the Arab League.

April 13: Gunmen from the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades briefly take over the Council of Ministers building in Ramallah, protesting the refusal of the new Hamas govt. to meet their demands for perks and promotions.

- Israeli forces enter PA territory in the Gaza Strip openly for the first time since the Aug. 2005 disengagement to examine the place in which two Palestinians were killed a day earlier.

- The new Hamas govt. launches a fundraising drive on websites, Arab satellite TV stations, and among ordinary people.

- In a statement issued in a flyer, Hamas indirectly accuses Pres. Abbas of draining PA funds for personal gain, and declares itself "surprised at the participation of Palestinian elements in the campaign against our people".

April 14: As thousands of Palestinians join Hamas-organized rallies throughout the WBGS to show their support for the govt., PM Haniyeh vows during a Friday sermon in Jabalia RC that attempts to isolate his govt. will fail as cabinet members begin an overseas tour to raise funds for the PA. He further criticizes Pres. Abbas accusing the "presidential institution" of trying to deny the elected govt. its powers and present it as lacking the ability to govern. ▼



- Palestinian, Israeli and foreign activists protest against the separation barrier in Bilin.

- Betar Illit settlement discharges sewage onto lands belonging to Wadi Fukin and Nahhalin villages.

April 15: In Gaza, dozens of masked Fateh security men storm a govt. building in Khan Younis RC, demanding the payment of overdue salaries.

- Israeli military radio says Israel could ask the US to free former US Defense Dept. official Jonathan Pollard jailed for spying for Israel in return for freeing jailed Fateh leader Marwan Barghouthi.

- PM Haniyeh says the suspension of Western aid would never defeat the new govt. and the West would not succeed in isolating the govt. as it had the full support of the Palestinians.

- Jailed Fateh leader Marwan Barghouthi calls on Pres. Abbas to initiate talks with Hamas Cabinet members to find a way to resolve the crises and begin "a comprehensive and deep dialogue, because the dangers we are facing are tough."

April 16: PM Haniyeh calls an emergency meeting with rival Palestinian factions in Gaza City amid rising tensions between the groups, to try to persuade them to join a govt. "in a state of crisis" due to international pressure.

- Six human rights organizations appeal to the High Court of Justice to

cancel a new regulation which allows army artillery to fire shells at targets as close as 100 meters from Palestinian houses.

- Roger Waters of Pink Floyd, one of the prominent objectors to the separation wall, expresses his support for coexistence in Israel by transferring his June 22 concert from Tel Aviv's Hayarkon Park to Wahat As-Salam/ Neveh Shalom, where Jews and Arabs live side by side.

- US and Israeli officials disclaim media reports that Israel may free jailed Marwan Barghouthi in exchange for the Bush Admin. releasing Israeli spy Jonathan Pollard.

- Hundreds of settlers clash with Israeli soldiers and police officers in the West Bank after the settlers violate a military ban on marching near Ramallah.

- Pres. Abbas offers to hand control of Gaza's border with Egypt to the new Hamas govt.

April 17: A suicide bomber - Sami Salim Mohammed Hamed, 16, from the village of Al-Araqa near Jenin - kills nine people at a sandwich stand in Tel Aviv and wounds dozens more. Islamic Jihad and Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades both claim responsibility. Hamas calls the attack "a legitimate act of self-defense", blaming Israel for its "aggressive occupation", while Pres. Abbas describes the bombing as an act of terror that "runs contrary to our interests". After the bombing, Israeli forces conduct an arrest raid in Nablus. ▼



- Palestinians hold protests throughout the WBGS marking Prisoner's Day on behalf of the 8,000 Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails. ►

- At an inaugural session of the new parliament, PM Olmert says Israel will respond 'as necessary' to the Tel Aviv bombing.



April 18: Mamdouh Abaid, 17, is killed in Israeli artillery shelling on northern Gaza.

- Masked Fateh members protest against aid cuts by the US and EU in front of the UN compound in Gaza City.

- In Ramallah Pres. Abbas briefs visiting US Sen. Lieberman on the latest developments.

- Finance Min. Omar Abdel Razeq tells MPs that the PA has outstanding debts of \$1.3 billion and is fast running out of credit with banks.

- Conductor and pianist Daniel Barenboim visits Palestinian children for a music lesson at the Edward Said Musical Kindergarten in Ramallah.

April 19: Foreign and Justice Min. Livni recommends to revoke the residency status of the three Hamas MPs who live in East Jerusalem - Mohammed Abu Ter, Mohammed Totah and Ahmed Attoun. The decision depends on a hearing before the Interior Min., a post currently held by Olmert. The three MPs say they will fight their case in "Israeli and international" courts. ▲



Hamas MPs with Arab MPs

- The Israeli army launches several operations, tightening security in the West Bank. Arrest sweeps are expanded in the Jenin and Nablus areas, and Palestinians are almost completely barred from the Trans-Samaria Highway.

- PA security forces meet with PM Haniyeh during a visit to support the Council of the Ministers in Gaza City.

April 20: The struggle for control of the security forces intensifies with Hamas' Interior Min. Siyam's appointment of Jamal Abu Samhadana, PRC commander and one of the most wanted men in Israel, as supervisor of a new police force. ►

- In an interview with *AFP*, Pres. Abbas warns of catastrophe in the face of deep fiscal crisis and recommends that donors ship cash directly to his office to bypass the Hamas govt..

- During their meeting in Ramallah, British PM Blair's personal envoy to the Middle East, Lord Levy, delivers a letter to Pres. Abbas outlining proposals to revive the peace process and the role Britain can play in this regard.

April 21: Pres. Abbas vetoes Hamas' plans to set up a shadow security force, to be headed by PRC commander Jamal Abu Samhadana, who says he will not abandon the fight against Israel.

- Near Rafah RC, Palestinian children from "mini parliament" hold national flags and signs as they protest against the use of the beach by Palestinian militants.

- In Bil'in, Israeli forces injure seven Palestinians and two Israelis during protests against the separation barrier.

April 22: Gunmen from the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades take over the court building in Nablus demanding Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al apologize for recent comments he made about Pres. Abbas. Fateh anti-Hamas protests also take place in Ramallah, Tulkarem, Jenin, Jabalia RC and Rafah RC.

- Dep. PM Nasser Eddin Sha'ar releases a statement saying that Khaled Meshal's declarations "do not necessarily reflect the position of the Hamas govt. but rather only of the Hamas organization." The PA Interior Min. tries to calm things down by stating that the security force is not a new one but is based on the Palestinian Police and will operate under its authority.

- In Nablus, Palestinians clash with Israeli troops searching for wanted militants during an arrest operation.

- Hamas and Fateh leaders meet in Gaza in an attempt to defuse tensions after protest marches and armed clashes break out between supporters of the two at the Islamic and Al-Azhar universities in Gaza.

- Israeli border policemen clash with Palestinian activists during a protest against the separation barrier in Litwani, southern Hebron. At least five demonstrators are hit by rubber bullets during a similar protest in Bil'in.

- In Hebron, Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades militants attend a rally, marking the fourth anniversary of assassination of their commander Marwan Zalloum.

April 23: In Bethlehem, two wanted Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades members - Ahmed Musleh and Daniel Saba George Abu Hamama - are killed by undercover troops ambushing the car they are driving in, thousands attend their funerals. ►



- Pres. Abbas cancels anti-Hamas shows of force planned by Fateh's Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades and security personnel in the WBGs in a bid to end tensions between the two groups.

- Hours after Hamas and Fateh publish a joint announcement of plans to calm things down a shootout between gunmen from both sides breaks out in the Health Min. in Gaza City.

- In a verdict issued in a civil lawsuit, the Jerusalem District Court rules that since the PA fulfills the criteria to be legally considered a sovereign



Jamal Abu Samhadana

state, 'Area A' territories are not obligated to adhere to Israeli law.

April 24: A Palestinian teenager is killed in Gaza by a shell from an Israeli tank.

- Israeli troops shoot and kill Abdel Wahab Abu Ariban, claiming he was armed and approached the Israel-Gaza border.

- In interviews with anti-Syrian newspapers in Jordan and Lebanon and *CNN-Turk*, Pres. Abbas says he has that "The constitution gives me clear and definite authority to remove a government from power" but would he not use it at this time and warns Hamas it has little choice but to negotiate with Israel, calling Khaled Masha'al a "civil war monger" for trying to ignite internal Palestinian warfare under Syrian influence.

- Trying to defuse the tense situation, PM Haniyeh states that "there is no crisis between the office of the presidency and the government, and any political dispute will be resolved by political means."

- Pres. Abbas condemns the bombings attacks in Dahab and also PA Spokesman Ghazi Hamad says "We condemn this awful crime that targeted innocent tourists and Egyptians citizens in the desert of Sinai ... Our government strongly condemns this criminal act which flouts our religion, shakes Palestinian national security and works against Arab interests."

- Pres. Abbas receives the Pres. of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Abishuly Nazarbayev, who invited him to the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, to be held in June.

April 25: As factional tensions rise Pres. Abbas vows to prevent civil war between Palestinians, calling it "a red line that no-one wants to cross."

- Finance Min. Omar Abdul Razeq acknowledges for the first time that foreign Arab banks are afraid to transfer money to the Hamas-led govt. for fear of US retribution.

- Hamas issues an official announcement denying Jordanian accusations that it sent activists to Jordan to carry out a terror attack and accusing Jordan of participating in "a local and regional propaganda campaign to isolate the elected Palestinian government and force it to change its positions in accordance with the Zionist and American conditions."

April 26: Six members of Palestinian security forces are wounded by PRC members apparently trying to ram a car-bomb into the Israel-Gaza border crossing at Karni.

- Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades member Amr Husheyah is killed in clashes with Israeli troops during a sweep for militants in Al-Yamoun village near Jenin.

- Two suicide bombers strike near the main base of the multinational peacekeeping force near the Gaza border in Sinai, killing themselves but causing no other casualties.

- Atty. Gen. Menachem Mazuz decides that former PFLP head Ahmed Sa'adat, seized in a Jericho prison on 14 March, will not be tried in Israel for his part in the 2001 assassination of Israeli Tourism Min. Ze'evi, but will face a military tribunal for separate security-related offenses. Four other PFLP men will face the assassination charges.

- An ICRC press release bemoans the number of civilian casualties in recent attacks and urges both Israel and the Palestinians to respect international law and spare and protect civilians.

April 27: Two Islamic Jihad members - Wael Nassar and Ahmad Abu Najam - are killed by an Israeli missile strike on their car in the Gaza Strip. ►

- FM Zahar tells *Al-Jazeera* that there is no reason other parties cannot broker negotiations between the Hamas-led PA govt. and Israel.

- The Jerusalem' Magistrates Court extends by 11 days the remand of the four Palestinians suspected of being involved in the assassi-



nation of Israeli Cabinet Min. Rehavam Zeevi - Majid Ar-Rimawi, Basel Al-Asmar, Hamdi Quran, and Ahd Abu Almeb. ►
- PM Olmert's Kadima party signs a coalition deal with the Labor Party on forming a govt. which will aim at fixing Israel's final borders.



- Palestinians, Israelis, and Italians participate in the annual 10-km Peace Marathon from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, which this year is dedicated to the memory of the late Pope John Paul II. ►

- A report by the coexistence organization Sikui concludes that Arabs are not represented adequately in Israel's ministries, constituting only 5.5% of civil servants, 1.5% of local authority employees and less than 1% of govt. corporation staff.



April 28: Palestinian demonstrators clash with Israeli troops during a protest against the separation barrier in Bil'in.

- WFP spokesperson Christiane Berthiaume says the "highly infrequent entry of food" into the OPT and the "halting of funds to the Hamas-led PA" had caused food shortages and increased the "the number of people in need of food aid."

April 29: A public opinion poll by Birzeit University's Development Studies Program finds Hamas enjoys less popularity than a month before, but still leads Fateh with 38% to 30% support.

- Settlers from Maon in the southern Hebron Hills throw stones and eggs at a military vehicle accompanying Palestinian children home from school.

- Elections for the student council at the Al-Quds University are held in the West Bank.

April 30: PM Haniyeh says he expects the funding crisis that has crippled his govt. and prevented salaries being paid for more than a month to be over "very, very soon".

- The Israeli Cabinet unanimously approves a new route for the separation barrier to put thousands of Palestinians on the "Palestinian" side of the enclosure, cutting deep "fingers" into the West Bank to encompass Ariel and Gush Etzion while excluding Palestinian land.

- Fateh supporters celebrate the results of the student's elections at Al-Quds Open University. ►

- Palestinians protest against the withdrawal of funding for the PA by the US and the EU in front of the UN HQ in Gaza City.

-The Israeli army has given settlers 10 days to leave a house in Hebron after the legality of its purchase from Palestinians is disputed.



May 1: During an arrest operation in Tulkarem, Israeli soldiers kill Eitaf Zalat, 42, housewife, and wound two of her daughters when they enter her house and open fire to force the surrender of an Islamic Jihad member suspected of hiding inside. The army later apologized for the killing, saying an investigation would be launched.

- Pres. Abbas says he would not seek a second term as Pres. when his current mandate expires in 2009.

- PLC Dep. Speaker Ahmed Bahar calls upon Palestinian factions to join the Hamas-led Cabinet and form a coalition govt..

- The US Treasury Dept. Under-Sec. for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, Stuart Levey, arrives in Israel to coordinate efforts by the US to isolate Hamas.

May 2: Two security officers are killed and another three injured in an explosion in a Palestinian security base in the northern Gaza Strip.

- During a cabinet meeting PM Haniyeh accuses the US of blocking aid to the Palestinians and appeals for the first time to activists not to launch attacks against border crossings, saying: "I stress the need to protect the vital needs of the Palestinian people, including the crossings, the gateways to the outside world, and avoid creating any disruptions... so that our private sector, the ministries and the Government can continue to be able to bring in the needs of our people."

- FM Mahmoud Zahar says that during the upcoming OIC FM meeting he would ask Muslims around the world to donate \$1 each to the Palestinian people.

May 3: Fateh activists announce the formation of a 2,000-strong militia, with spokesman Al-Mua'tasem Billah saying: "We formed the new force as a challenge to the force Hamas has formed and which we regard as illegal."

- Over 2,500 people, incl. Arab mayors and MKs take part in the ninth annual march marking the 1948 Nakba on the site of the abandoned village of Umm Az-Zinat near Mount Carmel.

- PM Haniyeh says that "The Palestinian Government urges Arab and Islamic nations and all honest people to express solidarity with our people by voicing their refusal of the American policy of starving and blockade against the Palestinian people," adding, "Supporting Palestinians could be achieved by organizing mass protests and rallies in the occupied Palestine or outside it, next Friday".

- PMA Governor George Abed says a request by the PA Finance Min. for a loan of \$100 million from the PMA was "under examination," hinting, however, that it would be turned down, underlining.

May 4: In a speech during the swearing-in of the new Israeli cabinet, PM Olmert reiterates his intention to retain the major settlement blocs but saying that future borders "will be significantly different from the territory currently held by Israel" and stressing that anyone who believes in "complete equality of civil rights between Jews and Arabs must understand that a division of the land, with the goal of ensuring a Jewish majority, is Zionism's lifeline." In response, Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri says that "Olmert's clinging to the settlement blocs is a real declaration of war, and we will deal with it via all possible means."

- Israeli troops shoot and kill Palestinian taxi driver Zakhariah Daraghmeh at the Ba'adan checkpoint, east of Nablus, as he moves forward into a forbidden zone to pick up passengers.

- Israeli forces evacuate three settler families from the Al-Nazar family home in the Avraham Avinu neighborhood in Hebron, a measure that was approved a month ago by DM Shaul Mofaz.

- Yisrael Beiteinu Party Chairman Avigdor Lieberman says MKs who meet with Hamas leaders "are cooperating with the enemy" and must stand trial and possible execution as traitors. Fellow MKs denounce his comments as racist.

May 5: In Gaza, an Israeli air strike kills on a Popular Resistance Committees training camp kills five of their operatives, incl. four members of the extended Darghmush clan.

- During an undercover operation in Nablus, Israeli forces shoot dead PFLP activist Mohammed Kutub, 19.

May 6: Pres. Abbas meets with PM Haniyeh in Gaza City to discuss security disputes and ways to end the international financial boycott.

- In Beit Lahia, Gaza, an Israeli shell kills 60-year-old Musa Suwarka and wounds three others.

- Dozens of settlers from Maon settlement and the Havat Maon outpost assault Palestinian children on their way to and from school.

- Hamas cabinet minister Atef Adwan thanks Sweden for granting him a visa to attend a conference in Malmo, southern Sweden, saying "This

good behavior sends a political message to our people - there is someone who loves justice."

May 7: In Hebron, Israeli police evacuate dozens of Jewish squatters who took over a Palestinian home belonging to the Nazar family.

- In response to a petition by Peace Now, which called for the demolition of outposts, the commander of Israel's 'Civil Administration' in the West Bank, Brig.-Gen. Kamil Abu Rukun begins a four-month operation to map all illegal settler construction. In response, Peace Now Sec.-Gen. Yariv Oppenheimer says that "there is no need for new mapping of the area. The facts regarding all the outposts are known to all and were published in the Talia Sasson report more than a year ago. The new defense minister, Amir Peretz, must give the High Court of Justice a new date for the overall evacuation of the outposts ... Any response that lacks a final date implies an attempt to prolong and cloud the issue."

- During the evacuation of Bet Shapira settlement 21 police and settlers are injured and 25 settlers are arrested.

- Near Ramin, Tulkarem, settlers uproot 30 olive trees and 25 fig trees and in Samu'a, near Hebron, settlers uproot 70 olive trees.

- Israeli DM Amir Peretz lifts a months-long closure of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, granting 13,000 workers and 4,750 salesmen entry to Israel.

May 8: At a press conference after meeting with Pres. Abbas in Gaza City, PM Haniyeh appeals for an end to the new wave of internecine fighting, which has left three dead and 11 wounded.

- In a letter to the Quartet, Pres. Abbas calls for a resumption of financial aid and reiterates his willingness to enter into immediate negotiations with Israel.

- Israel's Vice-PM Shimon Peres tells Reuters that he believed PM Olmert would meet Pres. Abbas soon and that Israel must make every effort to negotiate peace with him even though Hamas is in power and unlikely to recognize the Jewish state.

- In Gaza City, a rally demanding the release of a Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails is held.

- A new World Bank report warns that the PA may cease to function if govt. employees continue to go without salaries for much longer.

- In response to appeals from the PA, Israeli Arabs - through the Higher Arab Monitoring Committee - transfer 250 tons of food and medical supplies to Palestinians via the Jalama checkpoint, outside Jenin.

- Israeli Justice Min. Haim Ramon urges the govt. not to advance a law compensating settlers who evacuate their homes voluntarily until after the separation barrier is completed.

- Israeli Vice-PM Shimon Peres says that Iranian Pres. Mahmoud Ahmedi-nejad, who has called for Israel to be wiped off the map, should bear in mind that his own country could also be destroyed, and urges the UNSC to take action.

May 9: At least 15 Palestinians, incl. five schoolchildren, are wounded during renewed Fateh-Hamas clashes in Gaza City and Khan Younis.

- During an emergency meeting of Hamas and Fateh representatives in Gaza City, both sides jointly outlaw the carrying of arms by militants.

- A survey by the Israel Democracy Institute says 62% of Israelis believe the govt. should encourage Arab Israeli citizens to emigrate and 29% say fateful decisions about the country's future should require the approval of a Jewish majority.

- A report by the Peres Center for Peace states that "the closure of the Al-Muntar (Karni) crossing point is leading to economic and humanitarian collapse in the Gaza Strip," as well as financial ruin to Israeli firms involved with suppliers from the Strip "and to the collapse of economic relations between the two sides." It adds that currently only five trucks a day are leaving Gaza through Karni, while the November 2005 Agreement had stipulated the rate of 150 trucks a day.

May 10: Hamas welcomes the Quartet's decision to resume aid payments but expressed anger at the continued political boycott of its govt..

- Pres. Abbas outlaws the carrying of arms by militants, issuing a joint

statement with PM Haniyeh to announce the measure.

- Israeli FM Livni welcomes the Quartet's decision to channel aid directly to the Palestinians to relieve economic pressure on the Hamas-led govt.

- The Israeli govt. warns that it will move ahead with a plan to delineate borders on its own terms if the Palestinians do not prove they are willing to become negotiating partners by the end of the year.

- In Nablus, Hamas supporters protest against the cut in foreign aid to the Palestinian territories.

- Palestinian teachers hold a strike to protest against the non-payment of their salaries by the Hamas-led govt..

- The Israeli company that provides fuel to the Palestinian areas says it is cutting off supplies due to growing debts.

- In Ramallah, Palestinian demonstrate for the release of Palestinians jailed in Israel.

- Arab MKs express outrage over what they see as discrimination in the distribution of Knesset positions, as no representatives of Arab parties will chair any committees or belong to the Knesset Presidium.

- Over 30 writers and intellectuals - incl. authors David Grossman, Amos Oz, and Meir Shalev - have sent a letter asking PM Olmert to protect Palestinian children of Umm Tuba from daily attacks by settlers from nearby Maon.

May 11: A document drafted in Hadarim Prison by Fateh leader Marwan Barghouti and senior Hamas official and PLC member Sheikh Abdel Halek Natsheh, implies Hamas' acceptance of a potential agreement with Israel based on the 1967 borders, and calls on all factions to form a national unity govt. intent of improving the condition of the Palestinian people. The first section reads: "The Palestinian people, in the homeland and in the Diaspora, aspire to liberate its land and realize its self-determination, including the establishment of an independent state on all the land occupied in 1967, and to assure the right of return for refugees and the liberation of all prisoners and detainees."

- At a quarry close to Hawara, near Nablus, five settlers from the illegal Bracha B outpost attempt to burn down a trailer with the Palestinian guard inside and beat him when he escapes the flames. leading Israeli army officers to recommend that the outpost be dismantled.

- In Jenin, five Palestinians are wounded in a gunfight with Israeli troops during an arrest raid.

- In Gaza, Palestinians protest against the aid cut to the Hamas-led govt.

- Outside the PLC in Ramallah, Palestinians protest against the internal fighting and the financial situation.

- Dozens of petrol tankers block the approach to the PLC building in Gaza in protest against the growing fuel shortage. ▶



May 12: During an Israeli overnight raid in Nablus, Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades member Raed Etbila is killed.

- Israeli state prosecutors charge four PFLP militants seized in the 14 March raid on a Jericho jail with the 2001 killing of Tourism Min. Rehavam Zeevi in Jerusalem, while PFLP leader Ahmad Sa'adat and Fuad Shubeki, a former senior PA financial official, will stand trial in an army court on charges of smuggling weapons and other security offenses.

- During pro-Hamas rallies in Nablus and Tulkarem, Palestinians collect money and jewelry to support the Hamas-led govt.. At a similar rally in Gaza City, PM Haniyeh says his govt. wanted neither war nor disorder in the Middle East, but reiterated he would not bow before international demands.

- Pres. Abbas authorizes the release of funds to pay debts owed to an Israeli fuel company which cut off supplies to the WBSG due to nonpayment.

- Two Palestinians, an Australian and a Dane are hurt as Palestinian and international activists clash with Israeli forces during a protest against the separation barrier in Bil'in.



May 13: PM Haniyeh responds publicly for the first time to the “national reconciliation” proposal that would implicitly recognize Israel, drafted by Fateh and Hamas prisoners in Israeli jails, saying it contains “worthy principles to which agreement is possible”. FM Zahar praises the authors, but says the prisoners do not have all the relevant information.

May 14: During a gunbattle in Jenin, Israeli troops shoot dead PA intelligence officer Ali Omar Jabarin and wound four of his colleagues. In nearby Qabatiyeh, troops kill at least six other Palestinians during a day-long raid, incl. the head of Islamic Jihad’s military wing in the northern West Bank, Elias Al-Askar.

- Palestinians mark the 58th anniversary of the Nakba in rallies across the WBGS.

- Israel’s High Court narrowly votes with 6-5 to uphold the ban on family unification for Palestinians married to Arab-Israelis, thus denying them Israeli citizenship or residency. With its decision, the High Court rejects several petitions requesting that the amendment to the Citizenship Law, which has been in effect since 2002, be overturned. In response, MK Mohammed Barakeh (Hadash party) says the ruling “gives racism a shady alibi,” and MK Ahmed Tibi (United Arab List-Ta’al) states “The High Court of Justice and the Citizenship Law have erected a separation barrier inside the Arab family on the basis of ethnic background and the separation of husband from wife and parents from children,” adding that “The decision proves that a Jewish and democratic state is a logical error and that these two values are inherently contradictory.” MK Ran Cohen (Meretz) also blasts the decision, saying “It is unbelievable that Israeli and Jewish judges have accepted a law rooted in racism.”

- *Ha’aretz* quotes Israeli army statistics stating that over 5,100 shells have been fired at Qassam rocket “launch areas” in Gaza since March 31.

- An Israeli naval vessel intercepts a Palestinian boat off the coast of Gaza and arrests its Palestinian crew, confiscating military-grade explosives and mines. ▶



- PM Haniyeh calls on

the international community to deal directly with the Hamas-led gov., saying Palestinians cannot afford to wait weeks for a new aid mechanism that bypasses Hamas, adding, “I say once more, and I will continue to say: This gov. will not make political concessions that are harmful to Palestinian rights.”

May 15: Rallies in commemoration of the 58th anniversary of the Nakba continue throughout the WBGS. ▼▶



- Islamic Jihad denies accusations that its was planning to assassinate Pres. Abbas as reported in *Ha’aretz* a day earlier, claiming the report was baseless and designed to spread confusion among Palestinians.

- In an address on the anniversary of the Nakba, Pres. Abbas calls on Israel to cease all military operations in the territories, to abandon plans for unilateral steps in the West Bank, and to return to the negotiating table. He also calls on Hamas to stop the firing of Qassam rockets and to adopt rational decisions, saying “The gov. must recognize agreements that have already been signed with the Palestine Liberation Organiza-

tion and accept the international and Arab decisions relating to the Palestinian issue.”

- *Ha’aretz* reports that the US Admin. – mainly through US Security Coordinator General Keith Dayton - is working behind the scenes to bolster the security forces under the control of Pres. Abbas, to preserve his status in the PA, and to promote the creation of a new Palestinian body that will manage the border crossings in the Gaza Strip.

May 16: Israel’s new DM Amir Peretz vows that the Jewish state would make every effort for a peace deal with the Palestinians before undertaking any unilateral steps to set its border in the West Bank.

- The two Israeli banks authorized to deal with Palestinian businesses - Discount Bank and Hapoalim - announce they are severing ties with Palestinian banks out of worries of risks from anti-terrorism laws in the light of Hamas’ rise to power, dealing a significant blow to Palestinian economy.

- A Katyusha rocket strikes Moshav Netiv Ha’asara near Ashkelon, killing dozens of chickens and damaging a water pipe. Islamic Jihad spokesman Abu Hamza claims responsibility for the rocket.

- *Ha’aretz* reports that Israeli industrial exports to Arab countries grew by 34.5% in the first quarter of 2006, to \$57 million, compared to 2005. Sales of communications and other equipment to US forces in Iraq alone increased by 46% to \$320,000 in the quarter. While exports to Jordan were down 6%, exports to Egypt were up 148.5%.

- *Ha’aretz* reports that according to figures by the DM out of a total planned length of 790 km only 336 km of the separation barrier are considered operational, while another 102 km are under construction, 67 km are still at the paperwork level, and 285 km still wait for court approval.

- The PCBS reports that the GDP declined by 7.0% in the first quarter of 2006, compared to the fourth quarter of 2005.

May 17: During an arrest raid in Nablus, Israeli troops kill two Islamic Jihad members - Othman Sadaqa and Mustafa Abdul Ghani - and wound a third before destroying part of the building they had used as hideout.

- In defiance of a veto by Pres. Abbas, the Hamas gov. deploys a new 3,000-strong security force in the Gaza Strip following the killing of two Hamas activists by Fateh members. Interior Min. Said Siyam announces “the beginning of the work of the executive unit that was formed recently to protect the security of the citizens and their property.” Fateh supporters demonstrate in Gaza City against the new security force, which Presidency Sec.-Gen. Al-Tayyeb Abdul Rahim calls “an illegal force that will create duplication and confusion in the Palestinian street.”

- During meetings with PM Olmert and FM Livni in Jerusalem, French FM Douste-Blazy says that France is opposed to “unilateral decisions” regarding the future borders between Israel and the Palestinian areas.

- In Ramallah, PA employees demonstrate outside gov. offices, demanding payment of their salaries. ▶



- MK Ahmed Tibi (United Arab List) is appointed deputy Knesset speaker representing the Arab parties.

- The Al-Muntar (Karni) crossing into the Gaza Strip is opened to merchandise for the first time in months.

May 18: Thousands of armed men from both Hamas and Fateh stage separate rallies in the Gaza Strip in shows of force as tensions run high following Hamas’ deployment of a 3,000-strong army. ▶



- Nine Israelis, descendants of Jews who lived in Hebron before deadly riots in 1929, visit the town and speak to Palestinian families who knew their families.

- Following a terror warning Israel closes the Al-Muntar (Karni) crossing on the Gaza border for outgoing merchandise.

- Israel's FM summons the Chinese Ambassador to Israel, Chen Young Long, to deliver a protest against Beijing's invitation to Mahmoud Zahar to attend a conference on Chinese-Arab relations there.

May 19: During a rally in Gaza, Palestinians collect money and gold to support the Hamas-led govt. and PM Haniyeh vows not to disband the new security force but rather to increase its size.

- Palestinian security forces confiscate some \$817,000 - donated by people he met during a tour of Arab nations - from Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri, as he returns from Qatar to Gaza. Pres. Abbas orders a criminal investigation of the incident.

May 20: The head of the Palestinian intelligence services, Tareq Abu Rajab, is seriously injured and his bodyguard killed in an assassination attempt at the Intelligence HQ in Gaza City. The next day, a group calling itself Al-Qaeda in Palestine claims responsibility.

- In Gaza City, Islamic Jihad senior operative Mohammed Dadouh is killed in a missile attack on his car along with a Palestinian woman, Naima Aman, her five-year old son Muhannad and her mother-in-law Hana. Five other Palestinians are injured, incl. Najma's daughter Mariya, 3, and her other son Mu'men, 2. ▲



- In Ramallah, Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades activists shoot in the air outside the PLC during a demonstration against the situation in the Gaza Strip.

May 21: During an Israeli army raid in Balata RC Aisheh Abu Musallam, 48, is killed as she looks out of her window.

- In Gaza, Palestinian security foil an assassination attempt against the head of the Palestinian security services, Rashid Abu Shbak, discovering a large roadside bomb on a road used only by him.

- PLFP leader Ahmed Sa'adat, seized from a PA prison in Jericho in March, is charged with several security offences before an Israeli military court.

- Settlers from the Maon Farm outpost attack children from Umm Tuba village as they walk to school pushing them into thorn bushes. Israeli troops escorting the children do nothing about it.

- The Israeli govt. approves the transfer of NIS 50 million in medicines and medical supplies to Palestinian medical centers.

- Palestinian journalists protest outside the *Al-Jazeera* offices in Ramallah against the torching of three of the broadcaster's vehicles.

May 22: During clashes between Hamas forces and Fateh-dominated security forces near the PLC in Gaza City, Khaled Radaida, an aide to the Jordanian Amb. in Gaza is killed and 11 bystanders are wounded.

- PM Ismail Haniyeh tells *Ha'aretz* that the Hamas govt. is prepared to agree to an extended ceasefire if Israel withdraws to the 1967 lines. Refusing to discuss the Hamas Charter rejecting the existence of Israel, he says: "Leave Hamas aside now - I am speaking to you as the leader of the Palestinian govt., the govt. of all the Palestinians, and not as the leader of a movement."

- In Hebron, a rally in support of Hamas is held.

May 23: During an operation in Ramallah, Israeli troops capture Sheikh Ibrahim Hamed, head of Hamas' military wing in the West Bank, who has been wanted since 1998.

- Israeli army Chief of Staff Dan Halutz tells the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that he does not recommend conquering Gaza in response to increased Qassam rocket attacks.

- In Gaza City, Palestinian security forces attend a special ceremony before moving the body of a Jordanian diplomat's driver Khaled Ar-Radayda to Jordan.

- Israeli soldiers cause the death of a Palestinian at a checkpoint near Jerusalem, as they beat and assault Shehadeh Muheissen, 51, who was approaching a hospital in Jerusalem with a critical heart condition.

May 24: Following an undercover operation in Ramallah to apprehend wanted head of Islamic Jihad's military wing in Qalqilya, Mahmoud Shubaki, Israeli soldiers kill four residents and wound over 30 others in clashes with stonethrowers.

- Preventive Security Commander in central Gaza, Nabil Hodhod, is killed by a car bomb in Gaza City.

- In Gaza City, some 1,500 activists of Fateh's Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades attend a march, organized by Khaled Abu Halal, spokesman for Hamas Interior Min. Said Siyam and former activist of the Brigades, to show their "loyalty" to the Hamas govt..

- Vice-PM Shimon Peres retracts his proposal to establish joint industrial zones with the PA near Israel's border with Gaza, saying such areas would be open targets of terror and should be relocated to the Gaza-Egypt border.

May 25: At a "Palestinian national dialogue" conference on ending the recent violence in Ramallah, Pres. Abbas says "How can we resort to internal struggle while we are committed in our battle against the siege, the wall and settlements? All the Palestinians, from Hamas to the Communists, all of us agree we want a Palestinian State on the 1967 borders (...) If you don't reach an agreement within 10 days, I'm going to present the document [the political platform agreed upon by imprisoned senior Fateh and Hamas leaders] to a referendum in 40 days." The 18-point plan drafted by Palestinian prisoners calls for conciliation between the rival factions, for Israel's withdrawal to the pre-1967 borders, and the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. PM Haniyeh says: "Today's meeting is aimed to boost our national unity (...) There will never be a civil war on the Palestinian territories," while PLC Speaker Abdel Aziz Dweik tells the participants that "Returning to the people is one of the most important principles in democracy," adding that the Prisoners' Document was a good basis for dialogue.

- Israel has reportedly authorized the transfer of a shipment of arms and ammunition for the equipping of Pres. Abbas Pres.ial Guard, which Abbas intends to expand from its current number of 1,500-2,000 men to a 10,000-strong force to counter the various militias under Hamas and Fateh control.

May 26: In Beit Lahia, three Palestinian youths, aged 15-18 years, are killed and seven others wounded, when an unexploded Israeli shell detonates.

- In Gaza, Hamas issues a statement saying that "there is no legal or constitutional basis for a referendum" and accusing Pres. Abbas with "trying to determine the final results of the dialog before it is held."

May 27: Hamas rejects a 10-day deadline set by Pres. Abbas for the acceptance of the "Prisoners' Document" (or National Reconciliation Document), although PM Haniyeh says that large segments of it could serve as the basis for dialog between Hamas and Fateh.

May 28: Launching talks between Palestinian factions, Pres. Abbas says he hoped critical disagreements would soon be resolved and makes his plan to call a referendum recognizing Israel's right to exist unnecessary.

- Hamas is given a boost as the PFLP expresses its willingness to join its govt. amid seething tensions between the main rival factions.

- *Ha'aretz* reports that according to DM figures, 486 km of the separation barrier will be completed by the beginning of 2007, constituting 93% of the total 523 km route (excl. some 300 km that are awaiting legal rulings).

May 29: Israeli shelling into northern Gaza kills three Palestinian men inside their home. In a separate assault, a Palestinian farmer is killed near the area.

- Near the fence separating Gaza from Israel, Israeli soldiers kill armed PRC operative Abdel Muati Shukri.

- Israeli leaders and academics slam a vote by the British National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) in favor of a motion recommending that its members boycott Israeli academics and institutions that do not publicly declare their opposition to Israeli policy in the territories.

- Israeli police briefly detain and later release Hilwa, the 17-year old daughter of PM Ismail Haniyeh after she tried to visit her fiancé at Eshel prison in Beer Sheva with forged documents, pretending she was his 15-year-old sister.

May 30: In Beit Lahia, three Islamic Jihad members allegedly preparing to fire a rocket into Israel and a police officer are killed and four others injured when Israel launches its first ground military operation inside Gaza since last year's disengagement.

- During an Israeli raid into the Balata RC, Nablus, wanted Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades member Hani Saqa, 17, is killed and another man wounded.

- In Anabta, near Tulkarem, Israeli troops shoot dead Usama Nimri of the PA security forces in an olive grove and wound three bystanders.

- In Qabatia, Islamic Jihad member Tareq Zakarneh is killed by Israeli troops and three other militants are wounded.

- Palestinian public employees protest outside the Cabinet building in Ramallah, demanding their salaries, which are three months overdue. ►



- On the first day of a police campaign against land violations a bulldozer destroys a house built on govt. land in the former settlement of Rafiah Yam in the southern Gaza Strip.

May 31: According to a UN report prepared for the ILO's International Labour Conference, poverty and unemployment in the PA continues to worsen with four out of 10 Palestinians living under the official poverty line of less than \$2.10 a day, the number of poor people having risen to 1.6 million and unemployment having reached 23.5% in 2005.

- Israel's DM Amir Peretz visits the house of his neighbor, Moti Ashkenazi, in Sderot after it was hit by a rocket fired by Palestinians from Gaza. Islamic Jihad claims responsibility.

- Near Hebron, Israeli authorities demolish a Palestinian house due to lack of permits.

- A day after Israeli commandos killed three of its operatives, Islamic Jihad's military wing issues a statement saying it would continue firing rockets.

- PA Finance Min. Omar Abdul Razeq proposes to the PLC firing 11,500 govt. employees and selling off govt. investment assets in order to avert financial collapse.

- At a press conference in Jerusalem, UN envoy Alvaro de Soto says the Palestinian "Prisoners' Document", though containing a *de facto* recognition of Israel, was unlikely to satisfy international demands of the Hamas-led govt., adding "I see [the proposal] very much as an inter-Palestinian search for consensus ... I don't see it yet as an attempt by the Palestinian Government to address the three principles articulated by the Quartet."

- *Voice of Palestine* radio quotes spokesman Ghazi Hamad as saying that the Hamas-led govt. had decided to offer Israel a long-term truce if Israel withdrew to the 1967 borders, stating: "We seek solution and political vision and Israel seeks security for its people, so this makes the Israelis suggest the truce."

June 1: In Gaza City, over 10,000 security personnel protest outside the PLC against the Hamas govt., and demanding their outstanding salaries for the last three months. A similar demonstration takes place in Nablus, while in Bethlehem all PA workers and public transportation drivers are on strike. ►



- At a press conference in Jenin, Islamic Jihad gunmen from the Al-Quds Brigades announce they are supporting the "Prisoner Document" calling for a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

- In Nablus, Israeli forces enter the Anglican Hospital arrest the area leader of the armed wing of the PFLP, Jawad Ka'abe, who had been injured two days earlier in an exchange of fire with the army.

- *Yediot Aharonot* reports that Israel's High Court of Justice has ordered settlers who had moved into Bet Shapira in Hebron to evacuate the building since their purchasing documents were allegedly fraudulent. The court requests that nobody resides there until a civilian court has settled the matter.

- FM Zahhar tells *AP* that the Arab Peace Initiative was "an impractical initiative" and reiterates his opposition to a referendum on the National Reconciliation Document, calling it a waste of money.

- PM Olmert tells *Yediot Aharonot* that he opposes a phased implementation of his "realignment plan", saying: "I am against stages. This process will be difficult and painful.... I think working in stages will lead to upheavals among the population and I am against that".

- *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* reports that Pres. Abbas and Head of the PLO Political Dept. Farouk Qaddoumi have agreed to subordinate the PLO diplomatic missions abroad to Qaddoumi's Dept..

June 2: Israeli troops kill two Egyptian policemen in the Negev who had crossed the border and opened fire at them. A third policeman had escaped back to Egypt.

- Israel begins laying the foundations for the Maskiot settlement in the Jordan Valley.

- Eight demonstrators and one Israeli soldier are injured during a demonstration against the separation barrier in Bil'in.

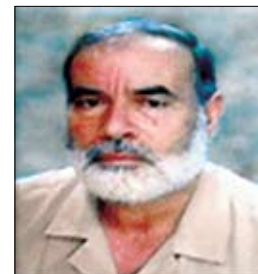
June 3: In a show of force against Hamas, Fateh deploys a new 2,500-men strong armed special force in the northern West Bank.

- In Nablus, Palestinian policemen hold a rally calling on the Hamas-led govt. to pay overdue salaries.

- Israeli forces clash with Palestinian and international peace activists during a demonstration against the separation barrier at Atara checkpoint near Ramallah.

- In Ramallah, Palestinians attend demonstrations marking the 39th anniversary of the 1967 War and demanding an end to Israeli occupation. Supporters of Palestinian People's Party call for negotiations between Israel and the Hamas-led govt.

- Dep. PLC Speaker and senior Hamas member Sheikh Ahmed Bahar calls upon Palestinian factions to reject the National Reconciliation Document as "harming some Palestinian national interests" and "oppressing the Palestinian people and their cause". ►



Ahmed Bahar

June 4: The Palestinian Finance Min. deposits partial salaries - NIS 1,500 - in the accounts of the 40,000 lowest-paid public employees while the other 125,000 still have to wait.

- In a shooting at a car masked gunmen kill Hamas member Yasser Ghalban and an 8-month pregnant woman, Rima Ghalban, 20 from Khan Younis RC.

- Pres. Abbas extends the 10-day ultimatum to Hamas over the Prisoners' Document, which ends today, for two days.

June 5: In Khan Younis, Hamas gunmen seize a Fateh-controlled Palestine TV bureau, threatening journalists, destroying equipment, and accusing it of unfair coverage. In two other shootings between the rival factions five bystanders are killed.

- Near Jabalia RC, Israeli aircraft fire missiles at a car, killing two PRC operatives, Majdi Hammad and Imad Asaliya, and wounding three other people.

- Some 30 PA employees break into an Arab Bank branch in Gaza, stealing money and damaging property, after the bank refused to pay partial salaries to PA employees out of its own funds. - European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana arrives for talks Israeli and Palestinian officials.

- The Israeli army amends a military order to requisition 864.5 dunums of land belonging to the Qalqilya area villages of Azoun, Habla, and Kufr Thulth to change the separation barrier route around the Alfe Menashe settlement.

- After meeting with Pres. Abbas, EU Foreign and Security Policy chief Solana says that "The EU continues to be the most important donor to the Palestinians. More money will be given in the year 2006 than 2005."

June 6: The PLO Exec. Committee meets in Ramallah, endorses the National Reconciliation Document and authorizes Pres. Abbas to call a referendum. Abbas extends the deadline for Hamas, giving them three more days to accept the Document. ▶

- A Birzeit University poll shows that 77% of Palestinians support the 'Prisoners' Document' and that support for Hamas has dropped from 50% of respondents who said in April they would vote for Hamas if elections were held today, to 37%. Some 37% would vote Fateh.

- Israeli soldiers throw sound grenades toward olive farms in Wadi Al-Hussein in Hebron's H2 area, destroying at least 30 olive trees.

June 7: Israeli forces fire at three persons crawling toward the Gaza-Israel border fence near Kibbutz Nahal Oz, killing Anwar and Eyad Abu Sela, while the third escapes. One of the shells hits a nearby Palestinian police post, killing one policeman and wounding at least five others.

- Hamas and Fateh officials meet with Egyptian mediators in a bid to end weeks of infighting. Afterwards, Interior Min. Said Siyam order Hamas' private militia – which is to be incorporated into the official Palestinian police force - to pull back from public areas of Gaza.

- After meeting with US Asst. Sec. of State David Welch, Pres. Abbas says that the US would not intervene in a Palestinian referendum, which was the Palestinians' internal affair. Welch says the US would continue supporting Pres. Abbas to reach a two-state solution.

- UNRWA says it is adding 100,000 Gaza residents, mostly govt. employees and their families, to its food distribution program to meet an increasingly desperate situation there.

- *Ha'aretz* reports that according to a precedent-setting Haifa District Court ruling Mohammed Abu Samra, a Palestinian from Qabatia whose wife and two children were killed by Israeli army fire in May 2002 while harvesting grape leaves, can sue the state for compensation.

- Turkish Pres. Ahmet Necdet Sezer, in Israel for a two-day visit, offers his country's assistance in advancing the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.



- Israeli DM Amir Peretz orders the financing of the medical bill for a Palestinian girl, Marya 3, and her uncle Nahed who were severely injured in an Israel missile attack on the car of a wanted Islamic Jihad in Gaza two weeks ago, which killed her mother, grandmother, and 7-year-old brother.

- In Jerusalem, visiting Turkish Pres. Ahmet Necdet Sezer tells the Knesset that Israel and the Palestinians should resume negotiations within a UN framework and based on the Road Map, adding that his country was willing to aid negotiations with "support in whatever form".

- *Israel Radio* quotes Doctors for Human Rights as saying that the PA health care system was on the verge of collapse and not capable of treating dozens of children in need of heart operations and bone marrow transplants.

June 8: PRC leader Jamal Abu Samhadana is killed along with three others in an Israeli air strike on a PRC training camp in Rafah RC. At least 10 people are wounded. ▶

- Throughout Gaza, thousands attend demonstrations against the referendum threat by Pres. Abbas. In Nablus, thousands attend a Hamas demonstration against Western pressure on the govt. to agree to Pres. Abbas' ultimatum that Hamas recognize Israel or face a referendum.

- According to a new *Ha'aretz* poll conducted by the Dialog institute, only 37% of Israelis support PM Olmert's convergence plan, while some 56% oppose it.

- Turkish Pres. Ahmet Necdet Sezer meets with Pres. Abbas at the Muqata'a in Ramallah. ▶



June 9: In Gaza, seven members of the Ghalia family, incl. the father, one of his wives, and five children, are killed by an explosive device during a family picnic at the beach. Over 30 others are wounded in what Palestinian say was fire from Israeli gunboats and artillery, while the Israeli army claims they had only targeted areas used by Palestinians to fire rockets at Israel. Pres. Abbas declares a three-day mourning period and Hamas' military wing says it would no longer honor a truce with Israel. The shelling is internationally condemned. ▼



- Tens of thousands of Palestinians attend the funeral of assassinated PRC leader Jamal Abu Samhadana, vowing to avenge his death.

- Three PRC members, incl. brothers Ahmed and Khaled Zanoun, are killed in an Israeli airstrike on a car in the northern Gaza Strip.

- In an interview with *Yediot Ahronot*, PM Haniyeh offers Israel a long-term ceasefire in return for the establishment of a Palestinian State in the WBGS with Jerusalem as its capital and the return of Palestinian refugees.

- As Pres. Abbas signs a decree for a referendum on the 'Prisoners Document' next month, PM Haniyeh warns that the move could cause an historic split among the Palestinians.

- At the Friend's School in Ramallah the world's largest 'Tabouleh' salad is displayed, due to enter the Guinness Book of Records. ►



- In Litwani, south of Hebron, and at Bil'in, Palestinian activists protest against the separation barrier.

June 10: Tens of thousands of Palestinians attend the funerals of the Ghalia family members who got killed a day earlier at a Gaza beach. Israel expresses regret for the killing, but stops short of taking responsibility.

- Israeli aircraft kills two Hamas activists in response to a barrage of rockets fired at southern Israel.

- Pres. Abbas formally announces that a referendum on the 'National Reconciliation Document' would be held on July 26. Hamas PLC member Mushir Al-Masri responded by urging Palestinians to boycott the vote, calling Abbas' announcement a "declaration of a coup against the government."

- PM Haniyeh meets with representatives of different factions at his office in Gaza City.

- Israeli peace activists demonstrate opposite the house of Israeli military chief of staff Dan Halutz in Tel Aviv Saturday against an Israeli army artillery strike that killed seven people and wounded more than 30 on a Gaza beach.

- The Israeli army begins leveling 115 dunums of land belonging to Palestinians from Sanniyia, near Oranit settlement.

June 11: In an Israel airstrike at a group of Palestinians allegedly preparing to launch a rocket near Beit Hanoun, two Hamas members are killed and a third is injured.

- Abdel Khaleq Natsheh, the Hamas prisoner who helped draft the "Prisoners' Document," and Basem As-Sa'adi, a co-authoring Islamic Jihad prisoner, withdraw their names from the document, deepening Palestinian divisions ahead of a referendum on the plan. Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri reads a statement on their behalf, saying "The document now is completely a Fateh document."

- In an interview with AP Israeli FM Tzipi Livni says her country wants to sit down with Pres. Abbas but insisted it's "not realistic" to pursue a final peace deal with him as long as Hamas refuse to moderate. ►



Tzipi Livni

- Palestinian and international activists take part in a demonstration calling for an end to Israeli occupation at the Qalandia checkpoint.

- Palestinian activists free unharmed US student Benjamin Bright-Fishbein they had kidnapped the day before as he visited Nablus and hand him to the AP security forces who in turn hand him to the Israelis.

- A PCBS report says the poverty rate had reached 29.9% in 2005 (43.7% in Gaza and 22.3% in the West Bank).

- PalTel announces that it would distribute food coupons worth NIS 500 to 40,000 govt. workers who had not received salaries since Hamas came to power.

- The ILA publishes tenders for 54 housing units in Elkana settlement.

June 12: In renewed Hamas-Fateh fighting in Gaza two people are killed and 17 wounded. Hamas gunmen storm the Preventive Security HQ in Rafah.

- Hamas mobilizes in the PLC to try to block Pres. Abbas' efforts to hold a national referendum on a proposal that would implicitly recognize Israel's right to exist.

- In Ramallah, Fateh gunmen take over the PLC building to express solidar-

ity with their colleagues in Gaza and torch parts of it as well as cabinet offices. ►

- *Ha'aretz* reports that in light of the international opposition to further unilateral steps by Israel, the govt. is drafting an alternative plan that would convert PM Olmert's unilateral convergence plan into a bilateral move carried out in conjunction with Pres. Abbas. It would propose a Palestinian state with provisional borders in Gaza plus about 90% of the West Bank, whereby the West Bank border would match the route of the separation barrier and Israel would retain security control over the Jordan Valley.



- Pres. Abbas names Lt. Gen. Abdel Razeq Al-Majaideh, a former supreme commander over forces in the West Bank and Gaza, as military adviser and liaison to deal with the Hamas-run Interior Min.

- In an interview with *Ha'aretz*, EU envoy Mark Otte proposes evacuating isolated settlements in coordination with the PA, while giving the PA international guarantees that the border set by Israel will not be the final border. He further suggests putting the Jordan-West Bank border under European supervision, as was done with the Gaza-Egypt border, opening the Gaza port, and instituting a "safe passage" between Gaza and the West Bank.

- Palestinians attend a protest at the ICRC in Gaza, calling for the release of Palestinian prisoners inside Israeli jails.

- Settlers from Elon Moreh cut down 45 olive trees belonging to Palestinians from Salem village.

June 13: In Gaza City, nine Palestinians – seven of whom civilians, incl. two children and three medical personnel - are killed and dozens wounded in an Israeli air strike at a van containing Islamic Jihad operatives. Seven of those killed were civilians.

- The Israeli army investigation team examining the incident in which seven Palestinian civilians were killed on a Gaza beach four days ago concludes "beyond all doubt" that they were not hurt as a result of Israeli shelling, with the head of the investigation, Major Meir Klifi, saying it was likely the blast stemmed from a bomb placed by the Palestinians at the site or "some form of unexploded ordnance," adding "We cannot determine what hit them ... We continue to work on this and we hope we will be able to reach a conclusion soon. It is possible that it occurred as a result of something [a bomb] that someone placed, in order to prevent operations by our forces."

- During an army raid in Jenin, Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades member Mohammed Al-Wahsh is killed by Israeli troops.

- In an interview with *Ha'aretz* PM Ismail Haniyeh's political adviser Ahmed Yousef says Hamas is prepared to offer a 50-60-year cease-fire if Israel withdraws to the 1967 lines, and is leaving open the possibility of an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement in the distant future, adding though, "We do not plan to recognize Israel, since in any case it does not recognize the agreements it has signed." Yousef further says Hamas is prepared to let Pres. Abbas negotiate on behalf of the Hamas govt. but does not rule out the possibility that a future Hamas Pres. could also negotiate with Israel "as long as it serves the Palestinian interest."

- The PLC holds a special session to discuss the attacks on govt. buildings a day earlier.

- The ILA announces plans to construct 54 new housing units in Elkana settlement.

- Settlers damage at least 45 olive trees belonging to a Palestinian farmer from Salem near the Elon Moreh settlement, next to Nablus.

- The Knesset Justice Committee approves the conditions for exceptions to the "Intifada law," clearing the way for some 2,000 Palestinians asking for Israeli compensation over damage caused during the conflict.

- PA Tourism Min. Judeh Murqos announces his resignation from the

Hamas-led govt. in protest against increased inter-Palestinian violence.

June 14: Palestinian civil servants scuffle with security and PLC members as they storm and interrupt a PLC session, attacking Hamas lawmakers and demanding long-overdue salaries.

- Pres. Abbas, Mohammed Dahlan, and PM Haniyeh participate in a dialogue meeting in Gaza City while factional fighting continues leaving a Hamas man and a security commander loyal to Pres. Abbas dead.

- FM Zahar returns to Gaza from his tour to Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, China, Pakistan, Iran and Egypt to raise money for the Hamas-led govt. with US\$20 million.

- According to information given to the Knesset Finance Committee by the Treasury's Dep. budget head, Harel Belinda, the disengagement for Gaza and the northern West Bank has cost NIS 9 billion so far.

June 15: Pres. Abbas urges rival factions to reach an agreement that would allow his people to break their international isolation since Hamas took office.

- Islamic Jihad operatives Mohammed Tanjara and Salem Abu Zubeida are killed in an Israeli air strike near the Gaza-Israel border, where they allegedly tried to plant bombs.

- Palestinian public employees vow to step up protests to demand overdue wages from the Hamas-led govt., a day after storming the PLC in a show of anger.

- In response to a petition originally filed in 2002, the Israeli High Court of Justice rules that the separation barrier east of Tzufim settlement, near Azoun and Nabi Elias villages, must be dismantled within six months, and to pay the petitioners' court costs of NIS 50,000.

- Pres. Abbas attends a ceremony awarding him an honorary doctorate at An-Najah University in Nablus.

- Hamas offers to restore a tattered cease-fire with Israel, several days after calling off the truce to protest a deadly explosion on a Gaza beach.

- PA Information Min. Yousef Rizqa returns from a tour of Arab States carrying \$4 million in cash.

June 16: Protests against the separation barrier continue in Bil'in. ▶

- Settlers set fire to 10 olive trees in Tel Rumeida, Hebron. The Palestinian fire department is denied entry to the area by Israeli troops.



June 17: Amidst and despite international criticism and doubt regarding the investigation of the Gaza beach blast eight days ago, the responsible army general defends his findings, saying Israel was not responsible for the deadly explosion.

June 18: *Ha'aretz* reports that Fateh security forces under the command of Mohammed Dahlan have recently recruited over 4,000 young Palestinians to their ranks in anticipation of a potential confrontation with Hamas.

- Following the High Court ruling to dismantle the separation barrier near Azoun village DM Peretz order a review of the barrier's route to make sure that it allows for the everyday needs of the Palestinian population.

- At a cabinet meeting, Israeli PM Olmert rejects calls for an international inquiry into a blast on a Gaza beach in which eight Palestinians were killed.

- Suleiman Abu Samhadana, Palestinian Under-Sec. for Energy and Electricity, tells reporters that Cairo had approved a project to build an electrical facility in Egypt that will allow the PA to obtain power from there rather than the more expensive Israeli electricity.

June 19: Representatives of both Hamas and Fateh convene in Gaza City to try to hammer out a deal on a reworked 'Prisoners' Document', which would eliminate the need for a referendum and ease tensions.

- A new PSR survey finds that while 75% of Palestinians say they sup-

port the Prisoners' Document, which implicitly recognizes Israel, only 47% would vote in favor of it if a referendum were held on it, while 44% would vote against, because many see the vote as a symbol of his power struggle with the Hamas govt.

- Mohammed Dahlan tells *Ha'aretz* that PM Olmert's unilateral withdrawal plan will not solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, bring neither peace nor security to Israel and the Palestinians, and will only perpetuate the bloody cycle of violence. With regard to Fateh and Pres Abbas he says: "He is my friend and the President and I'll help him. But he was wrong in the way he acted toward Fateh and Palestinian security forces. He could have infused new blood into Fateh's ranks, and that's what the public wanted him to do. Instead he promoted the old guard once again, in the security forces as well. On the eve of elections we were well aware of what was going on in Fateh. It is still a much larger organization than Hamas but in complete disarray. Abbas should have organized it and held elections for Fateh leadership - no such elections have been held since 1989. I was not surprised by Hamas' election victory."

- Visiting EU Commissioner for External Relations, Benita Ferrero-Waldner tells *Ha'aretz* that PM Olmert's was "a courageous and important step" but that "The EU's position is that any unilateral step, like the realignment, will never bring lasting peace to the region. Real peace will be achieved only through a process of negotiations." Ferrero-Waldner meets with Israeli officials and later with Pres. Abbas in Ramallah to unveil the EU's new mechanism for transferring funds to the Palestinians without maintaining contact with Hamas.

- Designated Head of the WZO's settlement division, Shlomo Gravetz, vows to operate in accordance with govt. policy despite his personal support for continuing Jewish settlement in the WBGS.

June 20: During a failed assassination attempt by the Israel Air Force in Gaza, three Palestinian children are killed, incl. a brother and sister, aged 5 and 6, and a 16-year-old boy. Another 14 Palestinians, incl. 7 children, are injured in the strike that targetted two wanted Fateh operatives.

- Jailed Hamas PLC member Sheikh Hassan Yousef tells *Ha'aretz* in an interview from Ketziot prison: "If Hamas participates in elections for PA chairman and wins, undoubtedly we'll conduct diplomatic negotiations with Israel."

- Pres. Abbas calls for an immediate halt to Qassam rocket fire on Israel, warning that Gaza could otherwise come under ground assault.

- *AP* reports that the Israeli army has authorized an additional 3,000 Palestinian merchants to enter Israel, bringing to 26,500 the total number of Palestinians permitted to enter Israel: some 10,000 merchants and 16,500 laborers).

- Israel's Civil Admin. in the West Bank formulates rules for contacts with the PA: forbidden are contacts with PA Min.s and Dir.-Gen.s as these are affiliated with Hamas, while talks with lower-ranking officials and with municipal functionaries who are not affiliated with Hamas are allowed.

- Israeli PM Olmert tells the 35th Zionist Congress: "The demographic balance between Jews and Arabs in the Land of Israel is not static... If we wish to ensure the existence and future of a Jewish and democratic Israel, we must act now, in the next few years, and shape the permanent borders of the State of Israel. I intend to seriously and thoroughly examine whether there is a possibility of doing so through negotiation and agreement with the Palestinians, since this possibility is preferable under all circumstances. However, I do not intend to wait forever. If this possibility proves to be impractical within a certain space of time, we will have to make decisions which will serve Zionist goals, and the most vital interests of the State of Israel."

June 21: A pregnant Palestinian woman and her visiting brother are killed and 13 other members of the same family wounded in an Israel air strike targetting PRC operatives near the main Khan Younis-Rafah road. This brings the number of Palestinian civilians killed in such strikes in the past month to 15. Israel army Chief of Staff Dan Halutz orders a thorough investigation.

- During an exchange of fire with Israeli troops in Ein Beit Al-Ma' RC near Nablus, Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades member Daoud Katouni, 20, is killed and two others are wounded

- PFLP leader Ahmed Sa'adat has filed a lawsuit against the British govt. for pulling wardens out of the Jericho Prison in March that was minutes later stormed by Israeli forces, seizing him and four of his alleged accomplices in the 2001 assassination of former Israeli Tourism Min. Rehavam Ze'evi. British and US monitors supervised the prison under a 2002 agreement.

June 22: In his closing speech at the Caesarea economic conference in Jerusalem, PM Olmert says that "pinpoint preventions" of terror attacks would continue despite the many Palestinian civilian casualties, adding "I am sorry with all my heart for the residents of Gaza, but the lives and well-being of Sderot's residents are more important than those of Gaza residents."

- The 35th Zionist Congress votes to obligate the Jewish Agency to include Israel's Arab communities in its development plans.

- Settlers from Yitzhar enter Einabus village, near Nablus, burning and destroying three Palestinian vehicles.

- British rock star Roger Waters performs before an estimated 50,000 Israeli fans next to the Jewish-Arab village of Neveh Shalom, telling the audience. "I believe we need this generation of Israelis to tear down the walls and make peace with their neighbors".

June 23: At a conference in Ramallah, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades and the armed wings of Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the PFLP announce that they had severed their commitment to a de facto truce in anti-Israeli attacks in order to avenge "massacres" committed by Israel.

- Israeli DM Amir Peretz says that preparations for the convergence plan must begin now in order to implement it in about a year and a half, and to this end, a law to compensate settlers who leave voluntarily should be enacted.

June 24: Fateh and Hamas officials agree on most of the central clauses of the 'Prisoners' Document,' incl. limiting "resistance" operations against Israel to the OPT.

- Egyptian mediators hold talks with Islamic Jihad and PRC members in Gaza urging them to cease firing Qassams and participate in a Fateh-Hamas accord on the 'Prisoners' Document.'

- Israeli forces enter for the first time since the disengagement the border area of Rafah to arrests two Hamas members, brothers Mustafa and Osama Ma'amar, who allegedly were planning a large attack against Israel.

June 25: In Gaza, eight members of Hamas, PRC and a previously unknown group called Jesh Al-Islam ("the Army of Islam") attack on an Israeli army outpost near Kibbutz Kerem Shalom on the Israeli side of the Gaza border, which they reach via a tunnel that they had dug over the past months. During the operation one soldier, Corporal Gilad Shalit, is kidnapped, while two others are killed and seven injured. Two of the Palestinian attackers are also killed. ▲



Gilad Shalit

- Following the attack against the army position near Kerem Shalom, the Israeli FM instructs its missions abroad to make it clear that the incident occurred "at a crossing that is used for the transfer of goods and humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian population in the Gaza Strip," and that the Israeli govt. "considers the Hamas government responsible for all future implications, including economic and humanitarian suffering in the Gaza Strip, as a result of their attack."

- The leadership of the Hamas-led govt. denounces the attack with spokesman Ghazi Hamed calling on those holding the soldier not to harm him and Dep. PM Nasser Al-Sha'er calling for his immediate release.

- Pres. Abbas calls a number of world leaders, incl. Egyptian Pres. Mubarak, Saudi King Al-Saud, King Abdullah II of Jordan, the UAE Pres. Sheikh An-Nahyan, Syrian Pres. Al-Assad, US Sec. of State Rice; the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy chief Solana, Spanish FM Moratinos, German FM Steinmeier, Norwegian FM Store, Danish FM Moller, and British Foreign Sec. Margaret Beckett to brief them about the situation in the OPT in light of Israel's threat to invade the Gaza Strip.

- A teenage settler from Itamar is kidnapped by the PRC (his body is found in Ramallah on 29 June).

- The Israeli cabinet decides a six-month extension to a temporary amendment to the Citizenship Law that limits citizenship rights for Palestinians married to Israeli citizens and residents, pending Knesset approval, arguing that "In the opinion of security officials, there has been no change in the security reality that constituted the basis for this amendment to the law, in anything related to the intention of terror organizations to take advantage of the residents of the region who have an Israeli identification card, for their involvement and assistance in carrying out terror attacks."

June 26: The High Court of Justice rules that the govt. and Israeli forces must ensure the safety of Palestinian farmers working their fields, and prevent settlers from harming their land, property or persons.

- Pres. Abbas orders his security services to launch a massive manhunt for a kidnapped Israeli soldier in Gaza.

- Israel massed special units, tanks and infantry troops along the Gaza border following the abduction of Corporal Gilad Shalit.

- A PRC spokesman, Mohammed Abdel-Al, says the captured Israeli soldier was being held in a "secure place" and that his group had taken also a settler from Itamar hostage.

- The PA Cabinet urges resistance groups to maintain a ceasefire to avoid a possible Israeli retaliatory attack on Gaza following the abduction of an Israeli soldier.

- Settlers from Yitzhar burn a grove of olive trees near Burin village.

- Settlers set fire to 10 tons of straw belonging to farmers from Qawawis.

June 27: Representatives of Palestinian factions have initialed a new version of the Prisoners' Document, calling for a national unity government and the restriction of resistance to the OPT.

- Some 100 olive trees belonging to Palestinian farmers from Beit Jala are cut down to prepare for constructing the separation barrier.

June 28: Israeli troops enter southern Gaza and planes attack three bridges and a power station, knocking out electricity in most of the strip and stepping up the pressure on the Palestinians holding the captive Israeli soldier.



Israel also launches its first ground offensive into Gaza since quitting the territory last year and drops leaflets into the northern Gaza Strip, urging residents to stay out of the area because of impending military activity. ▲

- Pres. Abbas condemns the Israeli incursion into Gaza, saying attacking civil infrastructure was a collective punishment against the Palestinian people and a crime against humanity.

- The PA Cabinet condemns Israel's offensive as "unjustified" and warns that it risks "many consequences".

- During a news conference in Gaza, PRC spokesman Mohammed Abdel-Al shows a poster with the ID card of abducted Jewish settler Eliahu Asheri, threatening to kill him if Israel doesn't stop its raid on Gaza.

- All Palestinian factions except Islamic Jihad reach an agreement on a statehood initiative - laid down in the 'Prisoners' Document' - that implicitly recognizes Israel's right to exist. ►



- Concerning the reported agreement on the Prisoners' Document, Israel's Pres. Moshe Katzav says it "is worthless to us. It is much less than Palestinian leaders like Arafat and Abu Mazen could do before".

June 29: As part of a new crack-down on Hamas, Israeli forces arrest 65 key members of Hamas' political wing in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, incl. eight Ministers, 20 PLC members, and the mayor of Qalqilya.

- Pres. Abbas' spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeineh says "The Pres. strongly condemns the Israeli aggression, raids, siege and arrests of Min.s and MPs" and " calls on the international community and the Quartet to intervene immediately to reinstate democracy."

- Dep. PLC Speaker Ahmed Bahar accuses Israel of launching an "open war" to destroy his govt..

- The body of Eliyahu Asheri, a settler from Itamar who was kidnapped by a PRC cell in Ramallah while hitchhiking near Ofra on 25 June, is found shot dead in Ramallah.

- Masked Palestinian gunmen blow a 4-m-wide hole in the border wall between Gaza and Egypt. Hundreds of Palestinian and Egyptian police try on both sides of the border to block the tide of Palestinians trying to rush through the breach. ▼



- Atty. Gen. Menachem Mazuz refuses a request by the Shin Bet and the govt. to place dozens of senior Hamas officials under administrative detention or hold them as "bargaining chips" under the Unlawful Combatants Law, saying that the arrests were carried out under ordinary criminal warrants that would require legal proceedings against the Hamas officials.

- UN special envoy Alvaro De Soto warns that Gaza's fuel supply could run out within three days, leading the sewage system to collapse because it runs on fuel-operated pumps and generators.

June 30: Israeli air strikes in Gaza City destroy the Interior Min. in what marks the first Israeli attack against a govt. structure since Hamas won elections in January. ►



- PM Haniyeh says his govt. would not give in to Israeli demands, but he was working to end the crisis over the captured soldier, and demands that Israel stop its

offensive, which was part of a premeditated plan to bring down the Hamas-led govt.

- In Nablus, Israeli troops shoot and kill Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades member Mahmoud Zukiri. ►

- Israeli planes attack PA Public Security Min. Said Siyam's office in Gaza, causing grave damage to the building but not hurting anyone.



- Pres. Abbas meets with EU Middle East Envoy Mark Otte in Gaza City.

- The PCBS reports that about 200,000 Gazan households had lost access to electricity due to the Israeli bombardment of the power plant.

July 1: Palestinian groups holding kidnapped soldier Shalit publish a new manifest demanding the release of 1,000 prisoners in return for him. Israel rejects the demand.

- International aid agencies say Israeli air strikes in Gaza have knocked out water systems and a major power transformer, cutting vital electricity supplies to hospitals and families. ►



- OCHA reports that the number of physical obstacles to Palestinian movement throughout the West Bank has grown to 526, an increase of 124 since Dec. 2005.

July 2: The Israeli army suspends its ground offensive 'Operation Summer Rains' in Gaza over the weekend, while the Air Force continues attacking targets, bombing the office of PM Ismail Haniyeh, a Public Security office, killing a Hamas member, and wounding three Islamic Jihad members. ▼



- Pres. Abbas condemns the Israel Air Force attack on PM Haniyeh's office that caused extensive damage, saying "The world must understand that this is a dirty, criminal act."

- Israeli troops shoot dead two armed Palestinians - Mohammed Mahmoud Abu Hani and Arafat Suleiman Al-Abed - near the closed Gaza airport in southern Gaza saying they were planning a suicide attack.

- PA Cabinet Sec. Mohammed Awad announces on behalf of PM Haniyeh that the duties and powers of those eight Min.s, who were arrested by Israel in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, have been transferred to Min.s in the Gaza Strip.

- Israel opens Karni cargo crossing at the border of the Gaza Strip for a few hours to allow food and medical supplies to be sent in from Israel.

July 3: Troops begin moving into Gaza after Israel massed tanks and troops across from the north, pounding the area with artillery and sending warplanes, keeping up pressure to free captured soldier Shalit.



- The PLC issues a demand that Israel releases Palestinian prisoners, as well as Cabinet Min.s and PLC members arrested last week, in exchange for the captured soldier.

- Israeli army chief Dan Halutz has rejected a 24-hour ultimatum set by the captors of Shalit who demand the release of Palestinian prisoners.

- Some 200 people demonstrate in Gaza City calling on mediators to ensure a swap with an Israeli soldier captured last week.

- Palestinians stage a protest against the separation barrier outside Beit Umar near Hebron.

- Israel's DM Amir Peretz warns Syria it will be held responsible for the fate of captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, who was seized on 25 June in Gaza, since his captors are presumed to take their marching orders from Hamas leaders based in Damascus.

July 4: The DM admits for the first time that the govt. maintains a "blacklist" of Palestinians who left the territories during the 1967 War and have since been barred from coming back "for security reasons", lest they sue for the return of their land. The blacklist began with 100 people, but swelled to over 2,000 by late 2004. Their property has been used to establish settlements and military bases.

- Three Palestinian suspects in the murder of settler Eliyahu Asheri - acting on orders from the PRC in Gaza - surrender to Israeli forces in Ramallah

- Israeli forces expand their ground operation in Gaza. Among others, the Islamic University campus in Gaza City is bombed.

- Israel vows heavy aerial bombardment of Gaza, after a Qassam rocket - flying 12 km - hits Ashkelon for the first time, damaging a school. The Izz Eddin Al-Qassam Brigades claim responsibility.

July 5: Israeli troops shoot dead wanted Fateh activist Mahmoud Shaheen, as he attempts to flee security forces in Jericho.

- The Israeli security cabinet approves an expansion of the military operation in the Gaza Strip and decides not to negotiate for the release of Palestinian prisoners being held by Israel in exchange for Shalit. It also authorizes the military to enlarge a security zone in northern Gaza in order to prevent Palestinian rocket attacks and to step up air raids against Hamas as well as targeted killings of militants who fire rockets or order such attacks.

- Jibril Rajoub tells *Ha'aretz* that Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al would "with certainty" agree to the release of Gilad Shalit and an end to Qassam attacks if Israel releases a group of prisoners of women and veteran detainees, pulls out of Gaza and ends its assassinations and bombings. He adds that such a deal would also "create the right atmosphere for further mutual agreements."

- Israel Police is reportedly taking a tough stance against the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), incl. immediate deportation of violent protestors.

- A group of settlers from the Sussiya settlement set fire to Palestinians' tents and destroy fruit trees in north and south Hebron. Armed settlers also destroy a large area of arable land and over 70 dunums of fruit trees in Beit Amer.

- UN Special Coord. Alvaro de Soto warns that the humanitarian situation in Gaza had become "dangerous" after Israel knocked out a power station that effected proper water distribution, sanitation and sewage system.

July 6: During heavy fighting in the Gaza Strip as Israel presses on with its offensive against Gaza, at least 24 Palestinians and one Israeli soldier are killed. Most of the Palestinian casualties occur during airstrikes in the Beit Lahia area.

- A failed extra-judicial assassination attempt by Israeli undercover units in Jenin RC - targeting Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades activist Zakaria Al-Zubeidi and Mahmoud As-Sa'di of the armed wing of Islamic Jihad - leaves 18 civilians injured, two of whom later die.

- Some 27 Hamas-affiliated PA Min.s and PLC members appear before Israeli military tribunals, to be remanded further in custody after being arrested last week in the West Bank.

July 7: An Israeli airstrike on Beit Lahia leaves at least three people killed. ►

- Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades activist Tamer Fathi Abdel Fattah Qandil is killed during an Israeli army operation in Askar RC near Nablus. Troops also wound at least five Palestinians who throw stones at them after the operation.

- Hamas issues a pamphlet addressing the Israeli public with its demand for the release of women and minors from Israeli jails, blaming the Israeli govt. for being unwilling to negotiate with the group.

- The Hamas-led govt. says Israel's expanded military offensive in Gaza had complicated efforts to resolve the crisis over abducted soldier Gilad Shalit.

- In Beit Ommar near Hebron, Palestinians protesting against the separation barrier clash with Israeli troops.

- At the end of a two-week stay in Gaza, Pres. Abbas holds a press conference calling on all Palestinian groups to release the abducted Israeli soldier and cease the Qassam rocket attacks. He also urges Israel to withdraw its troops and release Palestinian prisoners.

July 8: Israeli forces withdraw from most of the northern Gaza Strip after its 'Operation Summer Rains' left nearly 30 Palestinians dead, but clashes erupt near Gaza City, killing two more Palestinians, incl. a policeman.

- An Israeli missile missing its target strikes a house in Gaza's Sajayiyeh quarter, killing a mother and two children of the Hajaj family.

- Israel rejects a call by PM Haniyeh for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip to end the violent two-week standoff there, demanding the unconditional release of the abducted soldier Shalit.

- PM Haniyeh also calls on the international community to show understanding regarding the question of the Palestinian prisoners, and realize that the Palestinian people consider this to be an "open wound in every Palestinian home."

- Over 200 Palestinians who fled their homes because of an Israeli offensive in southern Gaza seek in a vacant UN school.

July 9: After rebuffing a proposed ceasefire by PM Ismail Haniyeh, Israel launches air strikes across the Gaza Strip killing at least one Palestinian bystander and injuring 11 others.

- In Ramallah, Pres. Abbas meets US CG Jacob Walles. Walles, who states that the US was concerned about the humanitarian situation in Gaza, saying "We don't want to see ordinary people suffer as a result of this crisis."

- Pres. Abbas sends two PLO envoys - Taysir Khaled of the DFLP and independent Abdullah Hourani - to Hamas' exiled leader Khaled Masha'al and Syrian authorities to discuss the capture of the Israeli soldier and the crisis in the Gaza Strip.

- Nabil Sha'ath tells *Al-Ayyam* that Egypt and Saudi Arabia are holding intensive talks with Syria and Iran in an effort to end the crisis in the Gaza Strip.

- Israeli PM Olmert says "We can carry out missions like James Bond and lose the support we have in the international community. In order to preserve this support we must act with patience and cool heads," adding, that Israel "will not negotiate with Hamas. We will not negotiate with terrorists. Such negotiations will encourage the next kidnapping."

- A JMCC poll suggests that 66.8% Palestinians support continued kidnappings of Israelis and 60% the firing of Qassam rockets as a means to pressure Israel to release Palestinian prisoners. Some 77.2% back the tunnel operation that resulted in the kidnapping of Gilad Shalit, though only 47.7% believed the affair would end positively for the Palestinians.



July 10: At least nine Palestinians are killed as Israel pounds Gaza with deadly air strikes, incl. two Islamic Jihad members in Khan Younis, a Hamas operative in Gaza City and another near Al-Muntar (Karni) crossing, and three youth in Beit Hanoun.

- The Israeli army extends the closure of 650 Palestinian shops in Hebron's H2 section and renews the closure of 21 streets to Palestinian traffic, affecting an additional 350 shops.

- PM Olmert rules out negotiations or a prisoner swap with the Hamas-led govt. to win the release of captured soldier Shalit, calling Hamas a "terrorist bloody organization."

- Outside the ICRC office in Gaza, Palestinians hold pictures of jailed relatives during a protest demanding their release. ►



- The UN warns of food and medicine shortages and bemoans the widespread power outages as well as a lack of fuel for generators, which threatens water supplies, saying Israel's military offensive in Gaza and its closure policy has worsened the plight of Palestinians.

- Atty. Talia Sasson, who prepared the official Israeli govt. report on outposts in 2005, sends a letter to Justice Min. Haim Ramon, Atty. Gen. Menachem Mazuz and author of a Justice Min. proposal Malkiel Blass, complains that the proposal discards her list of illegal outposts and replaces it with a much smaller list prepared by the DM and even enable them to receive govt. funding, thus "subvert the basic principles that underlie the outpost report." She adds that the "laundering" of certain outposts not only sends a "grave message that breaking the law pays, criminals aren't punished and 'the rule of law' is a phrase with no real meaning" but also violates the govt.'s promises to US Pres. Bush to evacuate all outposts built after March 1, 2001.

July 11: Israeli warplanes kill three Palestinian teenagers and destroy a bridge in Beit Hanoun. In a separate incident, troops kill Ahmed Shahin of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades. ►



- PM Olmert and DM Amir Peretz give green light to additional incursions into Gaza to free Corporal Shalit and stop Palestinian rocket attacks.

- Pres. Abbas accuses Israel of military escalation in Gaza, saying Israeli forces are targeting civilians and worsening Palestinian hardship.

- Pres. Abbas' office receives US\$ 50 million from the Arab League, the largest amount of international aid to reach the Palestinians since Hamas won elections.

- Six Israeli human rights groups appeal to the High Court of Justice demanding the renewal of fuel, food and equipment supplies to the Gaza Strip as well as the opening of the Israeli-controlled crossings.



Abu Selmiya family funeral

July 12: In an Israeli air strike on a house in Gaza City, where a high-level meeting of Hamas members takes place, incl. top-wanted Mohammed Deif, at least 18 are people killed, incl. nine members of the Abu Selmiya family - the parents and seven of their children. ►

- Israel responds with massive aerial attacks on targets throughout Lebanon to Hizbullah's attack near Moshav Zarit at the northern border, which ended with eight soldiers dead and two kidnapped. Later, after the cabinet unanimously agrees that the Lebanese govt. should be held responsible and approves a "severe" response to Hizbullah's attack, Israeli forces begin preparing for a widespread aerial assault on Lebanon.

- The Israeli army issues a military order declaring Hebron's Tel Rumeida neighborhood a closed area, restricting entry to Israeli civilians, Israeli forces, and persons with an army-issued permit.

- Japanese PM Junichiro Koizumi, on a two-day official visit to Israel and the Palestinian Territories, urges Israel to show restraint and not seek "an eye for an eye" after two Israeli soldiers are captured by Hizbullah.

- Pres. Abbas meets with UN envoy Alvaro de Soto at his Ramallah HQ to discuss the current situation.

- The Knesset approves in a preliminary vote a bill to revoke the parliamentary status of MKs who support or identify with terror organizations, who incite others to racism, or who oppose Israel's existence as a democratic Jewish state. MK Azmi Bishara (Balad) calls the bill populist and demagogic, while MK Ahmed Tibi (Ra'am-Ta'al) terms it "a fascist bill", adding that "It's another black day for democracy."

July 13: A bomb dropped by an Israeli warplane destroys the Palestinian FM building in Gaza and causes widespread damage in the surrounding neighborhood where at least 13 people are wounded. ►



- FM Zahar says that the only way to solve the abduction of three Israeli soldiers was the Israeli release of prisoners. He also warns that the ongoing Israeli offensive in Gaza would "be counterproductive" as "the Israeli escalation of violence will bring no peace" and "Destroying infrastructure, arresting Min.s and assassinating people will not intimidate us."

- Visiting Japanese PM Koizumi expresses Japan's support for Pres. Abbas during a meeting in Ramallah, saying that the only future for his people is coexistence with Israel. Vowing to continue aid for the Palestinians, he also pledges nearly US\$ 30 million to help keep the basic services functioning. ►



- The ICRC says it was alarmed by the deteriorating situation in the Gaza Strip and urges Israel to respect the rules of international humanitarian law as well as those detaining Cpl. Shalit to treat him well.

- For the first ever time the Jewish National Fund (JNF) approves the appointment of an Arab - Yossi Beilin's candidate Raadi Safuri, 36, a Christian Israeli-Arab from Kafr Kana - to its Board of Directors. World Likud Chairman Danny Danon calls the appointment "a disgrace to the Zionist movement" adding that the JNF's purpose was "to redeem lands from Arab hands, not to appoint Arabs to its institutions."

- The YESHA Rabbis Council issues a statement calling for the formation of an emergency unity government that will "fight the real enemy, nullify demolition and expulsion orders for settlers, and release imprisoned Land of Israel activists."

July 14: At Rafah, Palestinian activists force open a border gate between Egypt and Gaza, wounding an Egyptian officer before letting some 2,000 people who had been trapped on the Egyptian side of the border to get into Gaza. ▶



- After three days of clashes with Palestinian activists, Israeli tanks and bulldozers withdraw from central Gaza, where they had blocked travel between the strip's northern and southern part.

- Israeli tank fire on a Palestinian truck that took a wrong turn in Gaza fatally wounds a Palestinian man inside.



- Thousands of Palestinians participate in protests against Israeli attacks in Gaza and Lebanon. ▶

- US Asst. Sec. of State David Welch meets with Pres. Abbas, Saeb Erekat and others in Ramallah. Pres. Abbas urges US Sec. of State Rice to press Israel to end its military offensive in Gaza.

July 15: Israeli forces fire missile at the offices for National Economy and Internal Trade in Gaza and at the building of a Hamas member, killing at least two people and wounding many others, incl. three babies. ▶



- Palestinian factions issue a statement, calling on Arab FMs to "overcome their differences, and take a united Arab position pressuring the American administration to amend its pro-Israel position, boycott Israel and support the steadfastness and resistance of the Lebanese and Palestinian people."

- Israeli DM Amir Peretz orders Israeli forces to step up the rate of attacks against Lebanon, saying the army must continue applying pressure on Hizbullah, giving them no room to breathe, and continue expanding its bombing raids elsewhere. He also declares a state of emergency in the northern part of the country.

July 16: Israeli warplanes attack the FM building in Gaza City for the second time in a week. In air raids and a ground incursion, at least six more Palestinians are killed in northern Gaza.

- Eight people are killed and 17 wounded in a Hizbullah rocket attack on Haifa. Hizbullah rockets also hit Afula some 50 km south of the border and land on the outskirts of Nazareth.

- Israel's Atty. Gen. Mazuz declares that Israeli forces' operations in Lebanon are "military actions" and do not constitute what is legally defined as "waging war."

July 17: In the Gaza Strip, Israeli forces wrap up a two-day operation in Beit, which left at least 17 Palestinian dead.

- In Nablus, an Israeli soldier is killed and five others are wounded when an explosive device is thrown at an army patrol.

- In Gaza, thousands of Palestinians attend a demonstration to protest against Israeli attacks in Gaza and Lebanon.

- Israeli Police detains Al-Jazeera crew members three times in 24 hourson suspicions that they reported the location of rocket strikes in order to assist Hizbullah.

- In retaliation to Israel's airstrikes on Lebanon, Hizbullah fires dozens of rockets into Israel.

July 18: Five Palestinians are killed in clashes with Israeli troops in northern Gaza.

- In Gaza, gunmen storm the home of Nabil Tammous, a senior Palestinian security officer, killing his bodyguard and stoking fears of renewed violence between Hamas and Pres. Abbas' loyalists.

- On a visit to Haifa, PM Olmert says that military operations in Lebanon would continue "until it is certain that there is no threat of fire against Israel."

- A visiting UN delegation tells senior Israeli officials there is no value in a cease-fire without a broad diplomatic agreement, which would take at least weeks. UN diplomats – incl. special adviser to Sec.-Gen. Kofi Annan, Vijay Nambiar, and the former and current UN special coordinators, Terje Roed-Larsen and Alvaro De Soto - tell FM Tzipi Livni that they want to bring a real change to the strategic reality on the ground, saying "If we return to the situation that existed before the current confrontation, it will only be a matter of time before the fighting is resumed."

- A Fateh Central Committee statement demands that a peace conference be held according to the Arab Peace Initiative and the Road Map., also calling for an immediate ceasefire in and withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Lebanon.

- Egypt and Israel reopen the Rafah border crossing for the first time in three weeks, triggering a rush to the border by thousands of Palestinians who had been waiting in Egypt. ▶



July 19: In an Israeli incursion into the Maghazi RC in central Gaza, at least 12 Palestinians are killed.

- Israeli troops moved into a Gaza refugee camp and a West Bank town, pushing a campaign to rescue a teenage soldier and stop rocket fire into a fourth week

- During an operation at the prison in Nablus, where wanted militants were apparently hiding, three Palestinians are killed and a building of the Palestinian security forces is demolished.

- PM Haniyeh slams Israel for trying to "completely reshape" the Middle East through its Gaza and Lebanon offensives.

July 20: During the second day of an army operation in Gaza's Maghazi RC, Israeli aircraft kill at least three Palestinians and wounds eight others.

- In Nablus, Israeli forces clash with Palestinian activists for a second day in a row. Troops demolish a building used by the Hamas-led Interior Min. as well as offices used by a security service that falls under Hamas' jurisdiction.

- At least two soldiers are killed and 10 others wounded in a series of battles fought north of the border within Lebanon.

- A group of Israeli journalists renounce their membership in the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), after IFJ Gen. Sec. Aiden White refuses to retract his condemnation of the Israel's bombing of Hizbullah's Al-Manar TV station in Beirut.

July 21: On the third day of an army operation in Nablus, Israeli troops blow up a building of the Palestinian security forces where militants were holed up, killing four of them, as well as a civilian in an adjacent building. Also in Nablus, Israeli soldiers kill a Palestinian doctor as he tries to help wounded protesters. ▼



- Sabah Harara, her two sons Amer, Mu'men, and their cousin – the targeted Hamas member Mohammed - are killed by an Israeli tank shell exploding in their house.

- Israel masses tanks and troops on its border with Lebanon and calls up reserves, announcing plans for a ground operation to destroy Hizbullah's tunnels, hideouts and weapons stashes.

July 22: In Tel Aviv, over 2,500 people attend the first major demonstration against the war with Lebanon

- Egyptian and Israeli officials hold a meeting to coordinate ways to facilitate the entry of aid-loaded trucks into the Gaza Strip via Israel and to re-operate Kerem Shalom crossing. The meeting is attended by security and customs officers from both sides, along with representatives of international organizations and EU observers.

July 23: Pres. Abbas says Israel was prepared to end its Gaza offensive if Palestinian groups agreed to stop firing rockets. Meanwhile, diplomatic efforts to stop the Israeli offensive in Gaza continue with meetings between Pres. Abbas and FMs of Germany, France and Britain in Ramallah.

- Foreign Office Min. Kim Howells, meeting with Israeli officials in Haifa, calls on Israel to consider the political consequences of its military offensive in Lebanon, saying public recognition of the scale of destruction in Lebanon was needed. After visiting locations in Lebanon earlier, he states: "I very much hope that the Americans understand what's happening to Lebanon... The destruction of the infrastructure, the death of so many children and so many people. These have not been surgical strikes."

- In talks with German FM Frank Steinmeier, PM Olmert supports the idea of a combined force of troops from European and Arab states that would be deployed in Lebanon and charged with stripping Hizbullah of its long-range rocket arsenal.

July 24: Israeli artillery shells Beit Lahia, killing six people, incl. two children, and wounding several others.

- Palestinian Agriculture Min. Ibrahim Al-Naja, who also heads the coordinating committee of Palestinian organizations, says all factions would accept a cease-fire deal with Israel, incl. releasing Gilad Shalit, if Israel's ceased all military moves in Gaza.

- Sec. of State Rice arrives in Israel from Beirut to discuss ways to end fighting in Lebanon. She tells FM Tzipi Livni that preventing a humanitarian crisis in Lebanon is of utmost importance as is a "corridor" for getting foreigners out of Lebanon, and allowing in international aid.

July 25: Visiting Sec. of State Rice tells Pres. Abbas in Ramallah that the time has come for a new Middle East and an urgent end to the violence hanging over the region, adding that the priority is carving out a lasting resolution rather than an immediate ceasefire.

Rice also expresses her gov't's admiration for Abbas, reiterating Pres. Bush's vision of two states for two peoples. During the visit, Palestinian demonstrators supporting Hizbullah clash with PA security officers. ▲

- UN humanitarian chief Jan Egeland visits the destroyed Gaza power plant in Nusseirat RC, criticizing Israel's airstrike on the plant as unjustified. ►

- Israeli Atty. Gen. Menachem Mazuz says that Israel is still not legally at war with Lebanon, even though it is conducting large-scale ground operations on its territory.

- Palestinian sources report that Shin Bet agents have warned members of Palestinian terrorist organizations by telephone to leave their houses,



so their families will not be hurt when Israel bombs them.

- Da'a Abbas, 15, from Maghar in the Galilee, is killed when a Hizbullah rocket lands in her living room.

July 26: At least 24 Palestinians, incl. a baby and two toddlers, are killed as Israel pounds the Gaza Strip with air strikes and artillery.

- PM Ismail Haniyeh and govt. employees have received part of their unpaid wages through Pres. Abbas's office despite a US ban. Saeb Erekat calls the payments "basic needs allowances" rather than salaries, saying they averaged about \$300 and came from \$50 million in donations from the Arab League.

- At a press conference at the Ramattan News Agency in the Gaza Strip, Islamic Jihad urges Palestinian factions to carry out bombing attacks in Israel and to continue rocket attacks on Israeli settlements in response to "Israeli crimes in Palestine and Lebanon."

- Palestinian Atty.-Gen. Ahmad Al-Mughanni decides to ban the use of the blocked caller ID system for users of the Jawwal and Paltel mobile phone companies, "to prevent some groups from exploiting this system to scare civilians", after reports that Israeli intelligence officers contacted some Palestinians, ordering them to evacuate their houses about to be bombarded.

July 27: A Palestinian child, Anas Zamlat, 12, is killed by Israeli military fire in Jabalia RC while standing in front of his parents' house. At least four other Palestinians are killed, incl. an old woman, and 25 residents injured during Israeli shelling of several areas in the Gaza Strip.

- PM Haniyeh convenes representatives of all Palestinian factions for a special meeting to discuss various proposals for a mutual cease-fire and for releasing Shalit in exchange for Palestinian prisoners.

- Doctors in Gaza say they had never seen burn injuries that were concentrated so much in the lower body and causing such a high propensity of amputations. Médecins sans Frontières says its emergency doctor Regis Garrigues had also "noted the particular gravity and severity of injuries" from the latest hostilities. The Palestinian Health Min. calls for an independent inquiry.

- During a visit to Gaza EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner announces that allowances to Palestinian doctors and nurses have begun to be paid to support health services.

July 28: Dozens of Israeli tanks and armoured vehicles withdraw from areas east and north of Gaza City after a two-day operation against gunmen that killed 30 Palestinians, around half of them civilians.

- Israeli media reports that the conflict with Lebanon has so far killed at least 462 people in Lebanon and 51 Israelis. In addition, at least 150 Palestinians, half of them civilians, have been killed in Israel's month-long assault on the Gaza Strip.

- Near Qalqilya, Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades kidnap and kill a settler from Yikar.

- In Ramallah, Palestinians demonstrate against Israel's military attacks in Lebanon and Gaza Strip.

July 29: Israel rejects UN calls for a 72-hour pause in fighting to enable relief workers to evacuate elderly, young and wounded people from south Lebanon and to bring in emergency aid.

- In Nablus, an Israeli undercover unit shoots dead two Palestinians, incl. top Islamic Jihad commander, Hani Awijan.

- PM Olmert also rejects a proposal by US Sec. of State Rice that Israel agree to discuss a withdrawal from Shaba'a Farms as a gesture to strengthen the Lebanese govt..

- In Hebron, Palestinian supporters of Hizbullah demonstrate against Israel's military attacks in Lebanon and Gaza Strip. ►



July 30: In Gaza, Israeli forces level two houses in Beit Hanoun and wound at least five people.

- Thousands of Palestinians throughout the WBGs protest after an Israeli air strike kills dozens of people in the Lebanese town of Qana. Palestinian Islamic Jihad vows to avenge the Qana massacre with attacks in Israel, while Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades urge attacks on Israeli targets overseas.

- Hamas spokesman Mushir Al-Masri says the Qana bombing "has crossed all red lines" and that "We confirm that all options are open for the Palestinian and Lebanese resistance to respond to this terrorist crime."

- The bombing in Qana sparks an immediate surge in opposition to the fighting in Lebanon with spontaneous demonstrations and petitions being organized all over Israel. ACRI calls for a state commission of inquiry into "a [alleged] blatant violation of two basic principles of humanitarian law and international criminal law."

- In Gaza, Palestinian security forces have to eject some 2,000 outraged demonstrators who had stormed the UN compound in protesting the Qana attack.

- Over 600 people, incl. Israeli professors and senior Meretz officials, incl. former MKs Naomi Chazan and Mossi Raz, have signed an international petition calling for an immediate, unconditional ceasefire in Lebanon, Gaza and the West Bank.

July 31: In response to global criticism, Israel agrees to suspend air-strikes over southern Lebanon for up to 48 hours, which would allow for further civilian evacuations from the area, as well as investigation of the Qana incident.

Aug. 1: A Palestinian teenager, Aref Abu Qaida, 16, and a woman Mervat Abu Sharkh, 24, are killed and four other people wounded in an Israel Air Force strike in northern Gaza.

- The Israeli CBS reports that in the first half of 2006, 8,127 new immigrants came to Israel, the same number as in the first half of 2005. Of those, 3,474 came from the former Soviet Union, 1,851 from Ethiopia, 839 from France, 470 from the US, and 168 from Argentina.

Aug. 2: A Qassam rocket lands in Ashkelon's industrial zone.

Aug. 3: In Rafah, Israeli forces kill five Palestinian gunmen and three civilians, incl. an 8-year-old boy, as part of their ongoing operation.

- Thousands of Palestinians demonstrate in Gaza, Jenin, Hebron and elsewhere in protest against Israel's offensive in Lebanon and Gaza.

- The Israeli army drops flyers in Gaza which portray Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al as a gambler, holding three cards reading "security," "prosperity" and "future," with a message saying that he was "gambling with the future of Palestine and bringing disappointment, despair and destruction" to Palestinians.

- DM Amir Peretz orders the army to prepare for the next stage of the operation in Lebanon that would include the occupation of the territory south of the Litani River.

- In a statement, UN humanitarian agencies working in the WBGs say they "are deeply alarmed by the impact the continuing violence is having on civilians and civilian structures in Gaza, which has resulted in a sharp decline in the humanitarian situation facing 1.4 million people, more than half of them children".

Aug. 4: In a series of air strikes on Gaza, Israeli troops kill three Palestinians, incl. a 3-day-old baby, Shahd Sheikh Al-Eid, in Rafah RC, and wound at least four others.

- The UN expresses alarm that the worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza was being sidelined by Israel's ongoing offensive in Lebanon.

- Israeli Border Police search the homes of Israeli Arabs in Umm Al-Fahm without search warrants for Palestinians workers staying in Israel illegally.

Aug. 5: Israeli airstrikes on Rafah kill five Palestinians, including a mother, Huda Natour, and two of her children, Kifah, 16, and Amar, 15.

- Israeli forces detain PLC Speaker Aziz Dweik of Hamas in a raid on his

Ramallah home.

Aug. 6: The Israeli army continues its deadly incursions into the Gaza Strip with a sustained assault on Rafah, where a Palestinian boy is killed, three adults are wounded, and bulldozers raze fruit trees and houses.

- Settlers kill a Palestinian man and wound his son in a drive by shooting in Qalqilya.

- Hizbullah kills 12 Israeli soldiers while Israeli bombs kill 19 Lebanese civilians.

- Israeli forces enter Ramallah and arrest Hamas PLC member Fadel Salah.

- Israeli troops burn large areas of olive groves near Tulkarem.

- The PA Min. of Agriculture announces that the losses of the Palestinian agricultural sector during the period 26 June to 30 July had amounted to some \$27 million as a result of Israeli actions.

- Pres. Abbas denounces Israel's arrest of the PLC speaker, saying Israel was "trying to disrupt the work of the democratically elected Government and to force the Palestinians to surrender," and calls for an international conference to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Aug. 7: During an arrest raid near Jenin, Israeli forces kill wanted Islamic Jihad member Rashid Al-Omari.

- Seven people in the PM Haniyeh's West Bank are admitted to the hospital for treatment after opening a letter, sent from Tel Aviv, containing an unknown substance. Lab tests do not detect known poisons.

- PLC Speaker Abdel Aziz Dweik, arrested by Israeli forces in Ramallah two days ago, is transferred to an Israeli hospital in Jerusalem after having been beaten by Israeli interrogators.

Aug. 8: In Qalqilya, a rally calling for the release of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails is held.

- Merlin medical relief reports that hospitals in Gaza have seen a significant increase in war casualties with severe injuries and necessary amputations over the past month and were running out of medical supplies.

- Chief Negotiator Saeb Erekat says Israel's arrest of PLC Speaker Abdel Aziz Dweik would not help free the Israeli soldier captured in Gaza.

- Israeli authorities stop a Norwegian delegation, led by State Sec. of the FM Raymond Johansen, from entering the Gaza Strip on security grounds.

Aug. 9: Two Islamic Jihad members - Amjad Al-Ajami and Mohammed Ateik - are killed in an Israeli helicopter strike in Jenin.

- In an Israeli air strike in Gaza City, PRC activists Ramadan Majdalawe and Ahmed Masha'al are killed.

- During a session of the PLC, held both in Gaza City and Ramallah by video conference, PM Haniyeh says attacks against his govt. raises questions over the continued existence of the PA and urges discussion of the PA's future.

- The PLO Exec. Committee condemns the abduction of PLC Speaker Dweik, calling it an aggression against the legislative authority and the Palestinian people's sovereignty and urging Arab and European parliaments to intervene to free Dweik.

Aug. 10: In Beit Hanoun, Israeli air strikes destroyed two buildings allegedly used by Islamic Jihad and Fateh to store weapons.

- Hundreds of people pour through the Rafah border crossing from the Gaza



Strip to Egypt after it reopens briefly. ◀▲

- The PA praises UN Sec.-Gen. Annan for his remarks the previous day that the war in Lebanon should not distract attention from the ongoing Israeli campaign in Gaza.

- Israeli planes drop leaflets over Gaza portraying Hamas and Hizbullah leaders celebrating in front of the ruins of Gaza City and Beirut.

Aug. 11: During a protest in Bil'in against the separation barrier, an Israeli soldier shoots an Israeli demonstrator, Atty. Limor Goldstein, with a rubber bullet in the head from close range (though they are only allowed to be shot at a distance of at least 40 m, and only at the legs). The Israeli army then prevents his evacuation for over an hour. Jonathan Pollak of Anarchists Against the Wall says he is convinced that the use of rubber bullets was aimed at taking advantage of the situation in Lebanon to silence the West Bank protests using force.

- Some 1,200 people cross into Egypt as Rafah Terminal is opened for three hours.

Aug. 12: The IDF destroys a 150-m long tunnel apparently used for arms smuggling between Egypt and Gaza.

Aug. 13: In Jenin, Islamic Jihad gunmen publicly execute a man, Bassem Malah, 22, accused of giving information to Israeli authorities, helping them to kill two militants last week in a targeted attack.

- In Ramallah, Pres. Abbas meets EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana, who says that an international force, incl. troops from EU countries, could be deployed in southern Lebanon "very, very quickly".

- Adalah Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel calls Israel's actions in Lebanon war crimes under the precedents set by the International Court in the Hague.

- The Israeli cabinet approves UNSC ceasefire Res. 1701 by a vote of 24-0, with one abstention.

- *Ha'aretz* reports that according to figures from the Finance Min., the overall cost of the war in Lebanon amounts to about NIS 23 billion as of today (with NIS 12 billion in direct budgetary impact, NIS 7 billion in defense spending, and NIS 5 billion to cover damages).

- During a special meeting of the PLC to discuss the Nov. 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access on the operation of the Gaza Strip crossings, PA Cabinet Spokesman Ghazi Hamad criticizes the document as "dangerous", saying it allowed Israel to maintain its control over the crossing. Meanwhile, the Hamas-led Cabinet announces the formation of a committee that would "re-examine the agreements with Israel, especially those related to the crossing point, with Rafah Terminal in particular".

Aug. 14: An Israeli military strike near Beit Hanoun kills three Palestinian farmers - Othman Al-Ba'a, 55, Zuheir Kafarna, 50, and Ahmed Kafarna, 17 - who were reportedly working near the Agricultural High School.

- In Askar RC, Nablus, Palestinians clash with Israeli troops during a military operation.

- Two Grad-type missiles are fired at Ashkelon; Islamic Jihad claims responsibility.

- Palestinian gunmen ambush a car carrying a Fox News crew in Gaza City, kidnapping two of the journalists - American Steve Centanni and New Zealand cameraman Olaf Wiig. PM Haniyeh condemns the abduction.

- Israel releases PA Labor Min. Mohammed Barghouthi after six weeks of detention.

- In Ramallah, Pres. Abbas receives a WCC delegation, headed by the Pres. of the Conference of European Churches, Rev. Jean-Arnold de Clermont, to discuss on Israeli attacks on Palestinian shrines and people.

- Pres. Abbas meets the envoy of PM Blair, Lord Levy, and the British CG in Jerusalem, John Jenkins, to discuss the current events and preparations for the expected visit of Blair to the region.

Aug. 15: Gaza marks the first anniversary of the start of Israel's historic pullout amid bitterness that the "disengagement" did not bring an end to occupation and bloodshed.

- Pres. Abbas arrives in Gaza for talks to end infighting between Palestinian factions and to work with the Hamas-led Cabinet to form a national unity govt.

- DM Amir Peretz says "Every war creates an opportunity for a new political process," and adds "I'm sure that our enemies understand today that they cannot defeat us by force. Therefore, we must renew our dialogue

with the Palestinians, we must hold a dialogue with Lebanon, and we should create the conditions also for dialogue with Syria."

- During a raid of Askar RC near Nablus by Israeli troops, a Palestinian woman dies of a heart attack and at least 8 Palestinians are wounded.

- Israeli settlers, supported by soldiers, raze over 100 dunums of Palestinian land in Hebron to build additional housing units.

- During clashes with Israeli troops in Khan Younis, a Palestinian is killed.

- The Realignment Committee set up by Israel's FM Tzipi Livni to evaluate the idea of a withdrawal from parts of the West Bank presents its report, the main conclusion being that Israel had no security solution to the threat of rockets launched from the West Bank against Israel.

Aug. 16: An Israeli air strike on a house in Khan Younis RC allegedly being used to store weapons kills Hassan Sha'ath and his son Ibrahim, an Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades activists. At least ten others are wounded. ▶



- During clashes between Hamas and Fateh gunmen in Khan

Younis, a 14-year-old Palestinian boy is killed and four others are injured.

- During a meeting in Gaza, PM Ismail Haniyeh and Pres. Abbas agree to start negotiations on forming a broader national unity govt. Haniyeh says such a govt. can only be formed after the Hamas Min.s and PLC members arrested by Israel are released and expresses the hope that once finalized, it would ease the international isolation of the Hamas-led govt.

- In a welcoming ceremony at Ben-Gurion Airport, PM Olmert greets some 520 US and British immigrants, applauding their resolve to move here.

Aug. 17: Pres. Abbas says that Palestinian factions have agreed to reinstate their temporary ceasefire and halt all acts that could invite Israeli aggression, but militants quickly deny that claim.

- Israeli troops shoot dead a Palestinian near Al-Bureij RC in Gaza after he allegedly ignored warnings to back off.

- PM Olmert has reportedly announced that in view of the war in Lebanon and the significant damage caused to the residents in the north, his convergence plan was no longer at the top of his govt's agenda.

- An Israeli military court remands PLC Speaker Abdel Aziz Dweik in custody for a further five days.

- *The Jerusalem Post* quotes the Yesha Settler Council as saying that the number of West Bank settlers had increased by 3% in the first six months of the year, from 253,748 to 260,932.

Aug. 18: Israeli forces kill Islamic Jihad members Khaled and Okla Shanaita in Ubeidiya near Bethlehem while trying to arrest them.

- Three Izz Eddin Al-Qassam members - Shadi Malah, Anan Daraghmeh, and Malek Yassin, are killed in Deir Ghazalah near Jenin while preparing a bomb.

- PM Haniyeh, speaking at Friday prayers, sets out a series of conditions for the formation of a national unity coalition: that a Hamas member head the govt., that Cabinet Min.s and PLC members from Hamas who had been arrested by Israel be released and that no official implicated in corruption take part in it. Azzam Al-Ahmed, head of Fateh's bloc in the PLC, says there could be no talks on a unity govt. until there was "a common political agenda", adding "Hamas is talking about annexing other groups to their Government and not about forming a unity coalition. I say in the name of Fateh that we will not accept to be an annex to the Government; we want to be partners."

- Head of Meretz Yossi Beilin tells *El Pais* newspaper that "The role of the EU is to launch the Madrid Conference II. While the first took place after the Gulf War, the second must be organized after this Lebanese War ... Madrid cleared the way for the Oslo agreements and the agreement with Jordan, and Madrid II should obtain agreements with Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinians."

- In Bili'n, demonstrators protesting against Israel's separation barrier clash with Israeli forces.

Aug. 19: Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades activist Mohammed Bani Oudeh kills an Israeli soldier at a Jordan Valley checkpoint near Bekaot settlement before being shot and killed himself.

- Israeli troops fire at a group of Palestinians near Gaza's border with Israel, killing Islamic Jihad member Mohammed Al-Mazar Nather and wounding a second man. In a separate incident a shepherd, Ghanem Al-Khatib, 30, is killed near the fence by army fire.

- Israeli troops arrest Dep. PM Nasser Sha'er in his home, making him the highest-level Hamas official to be arrested since Israel began its crackdown in late June. Fateh PLC member Saeb Erekat says the arrest was hurting Pres. Abbas' efforts to form a coalition with Hamas since Hamas PM Haniyeh is "finding it embarrassing to negotiate while his colleagues are jail." ►



Nasser Sha'er

- About 30 members of the Palestinian Journalists' Union, joined by chief Fox News correspondent for the Middle East, Jennifer Griffen, and Wiig's wife Anita McNaught gather outside the PLC in Gaza, holding up signs demanding the release of Olaf Wiig and American correspondent Steve Centanni, who were kidnapped five days earlier.

Aug. 20: In a shooting incident near Hawara checkpoint outside Nablus - reservists apparently open fire at taxis making U-turns to avoid the roadblock - a Palestinian civilian - Jalal Odeh - is killed and three others are wounded.

- In Ramallah, Israeli soldiers detain Sec.-Gen. of the PLC and Hamas PLC member Mahmoud Ar-Ramahi.

- Hundreds of unemployed Palestinians demonstrating in Gaza City and Jabalia and demanding work opportunities clash with PA police.

- The Haifa District Court has ruled that the University of Haifa's dormitory application process, which gives preference to Israeli army veterans, is discriminatory against Arab students. The precedent-setting verdict follows a petition submitted by Adalah - The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel - and three female Arab students whose applications for dorm rooms were rejected last year.

- A UN delegation incl. Terje Roed-Larsen and special envoy Vijay Nambiar arrives in Israel to discuss a possible prisoner exchange between Israel and Hizbullah.

- Turkish FM Abdullah Gul arrives for a meeting with Pres. Abbas in Ramallah.

Aug. 21: During an arrest raid, Israeli troops shot and kill three Islamic Jihad members near the Israel-Gaza border at Khan Younis.

- An Israeli missile strike destroys the home of an Islamic Jihad member in Jabalia RC.

- UN envoy Terje Roed-Larsen tells FM Tzipi Livni during their meeting in Jerusalem that UN Sec.-Gen. Kofi Annan views the Israeli army operation near Baalbek over the weekend as a violation of the cease-fire agreement.

- PM Abbas meets with US CG Jacob Walles in Ramallah.

- Visiting Dutch FM Bernard Bot tells Vice-PM Shimon Peres that it was important for Muslim countries to take part in the international force in Lebanon to show that it was not a European force.

- Thousands of unemployed persons hold protests, calling on their govt. to find them work.

- PM Haniyeh tells visiting Archbishop Antonio Franco and his delegation that he expects Pope Benedict XVI to intervene and secure the release of all Hamas Min.s and PLC members held by Israel.

- B'Tselem reports that during the period of the Lebanon war, there was a sharp increase in violence inflicted on West Bank Palestinians by Israeli

security forces, especially in or next to checkpoints.

Aug. 22: Three Islamic Jihad members are killed by Israeli troops near Kissufim, Gaza.

- Hamas PLC speaker Aziz Dweik - charged with membership of an outlawed organization - attends a hearing for the extension of his arrest at an Israeli military court at the Ofer Prison Camp near Ramallah. Dweik rejects the court's authority, saying "It is a political trial, and I don't recognize it." ►



- PLC members sit next to portraits of Hamas members jailed in Israel, as they attend a special PLC session in Ramallah, after civil servants, incl. teachers, announced they would launch an open-ended strike Sept. 2, the first day of the school year.

- Pres. Abbas has reportedly paid some 5,000 members of Hamas' special "operational force" salaries with money from funds the Arab League sent to Abu Mazen's office to pay the wages of 170,000 PA officials.

- Azzam Al-Ahmad, head of Fateh's parliamentary bloc, says that Pres. Abbas would not form a new coalition govt. unless the Hamas-led Cabinet clearly accepted a political program that recognized Israel.

- The Civil Servant Union of more than 165,000 Palestinian civil servants, incl. teachers, announces that they would launch an open-ended strike starting 2 Sept., the first day of the school year, as they had not received their salaries since March.

Aug. 23: PLC member Mohammed Dahlan tells *Ha'aretz* that "There is no discussion about a unity Palestinian govt. except in the media," adding with a hint to PM Haniyeh: "How can someone condition the formation of a unity govt. on Abu Mazen and Fateh promising to release the Hamas MPs from Israeli imprisonment and removing the blockade against the Hamas govt.? A PM who sets such conditions proves his lack of interest in creating a unity govt."

- A previously unknown Gaza organization calling itself 'Holy Jihad Brigades' has claimed responsibility for the abduction of two Fox News journalists in Gaza City on 14 Aug., demanding the US to release "Muslims detained in American prisons in exchange for the detainees in our hands."

- The West Bank military chief of the Islamic Jihad in Jenin, Hussam Jaradat, is shot in the head and seriously wounded by Israeli undercover commandos; he dies a week later of his injuries.

Aug. 24: Two Palestinian activists are killed and five others wounded in an Israeli army incursion into the southern Gaza Strip.

- An Israeli rocket hitting a house in Abasan east of Khan Younis kills Yousef Abu Daqqa, 47.

- Palestinians blow a three-metre hole in the Gaza-Egypt border wall at the Salah Eddin Gate, so as to allow a crowd of about 5,000 Palestinians to enter Egypt.

- An Israeli military court remands PA Dep. PM Nasser Al-Sha'er in custody for a further eight days. Al-Sha'er refuses to attend the hearing because he considered the court illegal.

Aug. 25: In Gaza, Israeli aircraft bombs the home of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades activist Salim Thabet, claiming it was used as a weapons depot, wounding at least eight people.

- After weeks of closure, the Rafah Terminal is opened for a day. EU observers spokeswoman Maria Telleria says some 15,000 people are waiting to cross to Egypt, among them students, business people and those seeking medical treatment in Cairo, while several hundred people are waiting to enter Gaza.

- Protests against the separation barrier in Bil'in continue.

Aug. 26: During an Israeli army incursion into Nablus, a stone-throwing teen, Muntaser Al-Awka, 16, is killed and at least 12 others are wounded.

- In Gaza City, a Reuters vehicle is hit in an Israeli air strike, wounding two journalists.

Aug. 27: The two Fox News journalists, cameraman Olaf Wiig and correspondent Steve Centanni are released from captivity after a two-week hostage.

- Fateh leaders give Pres. Abbas the go ahead to begin forming a unity govt. with Hamas in an effort to end internal feuding and international isolation.

- *Ha'aretz* reports that since April, Israel has imposed a sweeping ban on the return to the country of Palestinians of Western nationality, primarily Americans, or non-Palestinian spouses, who have been living and working in the West Bank for many years. The people only learn of the directive upon arriving at the border crossings and the policy has led an increasing number of primarily middle-class families to emigrate.

- PM Abbas meets US CG Jacob Walles in Ramallah.

- Based on a proposal by US security coord. Gen. Keith Dayton, Israel and the PA agree in principle to station international observers at the Karni border crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip.

Aug. 28: During clashes in Gaza, an Israeli air strike kills four members of the Hamas-led security force.

- In Jenin, Israeli troops shoot and kill a school guard, Sabri Khalil, 64, after he aims his flashlight at a passing car.

- Over 150 workers at two Palestinian West Bank hospitals go on strike to payment of their long-overdue salaries.

- In Beit Hanoun, a Palestinian boy, 15, is killed and his brother, 13, seriously injured when an unexploded Israeli projectile detonates.

Aug. 29: During an Israeli army operation in Balata RC, two local Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades leaders - Hani Hashash and Ibrahim Neba - are killed.

- Israeli undercover troops kill wanted Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades activist Ala Al-Arabi in Ramallah.

- Israeli soldiers kill two Palestinians and wound five others, incl. a 4-year-old boy, in two separate incidents in Gaza City.

- In Gaza, Palestinian riot police clash with some 300 unemployed Palestinian workers throwing stones at the PLC building during a protest to demand jobs. ►



- An Israeli military court extends the detention of PA Finance Min. Omar Abdul Razeq and 12 PLC members to 17 Sept..

- According to new Interior Min. statistics, the number of West Bank settlers has increased by 2.7% during the last six months, bringing the total to 260,042 (excl. East Jerusalem).

- UN Sec.-Gen. Kofi Annan arrives in Israel for the next leg of his Middle East tour.

Aug. 30: In separate attacks on Gaza City, Israeli troops kill at least eight Palestinians, incl. a 14-year-old girl. Pres. Abbas calls on the international community to "halt Israeli aggression".

- PM Abbas sides with angry civil servants in their growing confrontation with the Hamas govt., affirming the employees' right to strike as some 3,000 govt. employees march through Ramallah to demand payment of salaries. Addressing them at his Ramallah HQ, Pres. Abbas criticizes the firing of rockets at Israel saying, "What is happening in Gaza as a result of rockets fired in vain must stop right now because there is no national interest in this continuing."

- UN Sec.-Gen. Annan meets with Pres. Abbas. He demands that Israel lift its closure of the Gaza Strip and open crossing points there. ►



- Ahead of an international donors conference on the humanitarian needs in the WBGs, UN relief coord. Jan Egeland describes the Gaza Strip as a "ticking time bomb."

- Settlers uproot dozens of olive trees in Hebron.

Aug. 31: During a raid in the Old City of Nablus, Fadi Khafisha, one of the most wanted Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades commanders, is shot dead and at least five other people are wounded.

- Israeli troops end a five-day operation in Gaza City that left at least 20 Palestinian dead and heavily damaged houses, streets and farmlands.

- An Israeli military court at Ofer military base sets 12 Dec. for the trial of two Hamas Cabinet Min.s, PLC speaker Aziz Dweik and 12 Hamas PLC members who were arrested two month ago.

- An armed Palestinian - Nadim Injaz, 28, a suspected informer for Israel from Ramallah - infiltrates the British Embassy in Tel Aviv seeking political asylum and threatening to otherwise commit suicide.

Sept. 1: Israeli forces pursuing Hamas activists in Beit Hanoun fire into a home killing Ismail Abu Odeh and his father Mahmoud, and wound two women as well as eight other civilians.

- A Palestinian who approaches the border fence near Kissufim crossing is shot and killed by Israeli troops.

- Thousands of unpaid teachers begin the new school year with a strike over the non-payment of salaries that shuts down state-run schools across the WBGs. Fateh enforces the strike in is widely viewed as a tactic to pressure Hamas to join a national unity govt. and recognize Israel, thus helping lift the sanctions and renew peace talks.



- PM Haniyeh urges govt. workers to scrap plans for an open-ended strike, saying the resulting chaos would only benefit Israel. ►

- Hamas supporters hold a rally in Gaza City to show support for the Hamas-led govt..

- Seven protesters, incl. four Israelis, are hit by rubber-coated steel bullets fired by Israeli forces during demonstrations against the separation barrier in Bil'in.

Sept. 2: Palestinian civil servants across all sectors, incl. education and health, start an open general strike, demanding the payment of their overdue salaries (for over six months) and regular future payments.

- In Gaza, at least five Palestinians are shot and killed by Israeli troops in separate incidents at the Kissufim crossing and in Beit Hanoun.

Sept. 3: Communications and Technology Min. Jamal Al-Khodari submits his resignation to PM Haniyeh; however, a day later he announces his decision not to step down.

- A new World Bank report recommends in light of the frequent closures of Al-Muntar (Karni) crossing and other restrictions imposed by Israel that the PA use the Rafah border crossing with Egypt for its exports.

Sept. 4: Israeli PM Olmert has shelved his 'convergence plan' to withdraw from large swathes of the West Bank, saying he wanted dialogue with Pres. Abbas.

- In Jenin, hundreds of Islamic Jihad supporters attend the funeral of Hussam Jaradat, leader of their militant wing, who died in a Jordanian hospital four days ago after being shot by Israeli undercover troops in Jenin RC on 23 Aug..

- The Israeli Min. of Housing and Construction issues tenders to construct 690 new housing units in the settlements of Betar Illit (342) and Ma'ale Adumim (348 units), drawing harsh Palestinian condemnation.

Sept. 5: Over 5,000 angry Palestinian security men march through Gaza City, firing in the air, throwing rocks at the PLC and demanding that the Hamas-led govt. pay their long overdue wages. ▶



- Two Israeli air strikes on Rafah RC leave four Hamas members killed and at least 18 bystanders wounded.

- The civil service strikes demanding payment of overdue wages escalates to a general strike with shop owners throughout the West Bank closing their stores.

- Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams arrives for a two-day visit to Israel and the WBGs, though Israeli officials will shun him because of plans to meet with Hamas members. Adams appeals to Israeli and Palestinian leaders to resume their beleaguered peace process, saying war is no solution to political problems.

Sept. 6: Seven Palestinians are killed and many more injured in five different Israeli strikes in the southern Gaza Strip.

- In Jenin, Mujahed Akram As-Sabe', a member of Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds Brigades, is killed by an Israeli undercover unit.

- Israeli army officers tell the Knesset Committee on the Defense Budget that the direct cost of the war in Lebanon totaled NIS 11.2 billion, incl. NIS 3.5 billion for ammunition and NIS 1 billion for the reserves.

- Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams lays a wreath at the grave of late Pres. Yasser Arafat in Ramallah and meets with PLC members.

- Some 70 employees at the Pres.'s Office go on strike to demand salaries. ▶



- Hamas supporters attend a Hamas pro-govt. rally in Gaza.

- Israeli peace activists from Peace Now demonstrate in front of the Erez crossing against Israel's military operations in Gaza and call for peace negotiations with the Palestinians.

- In accord with US Sec. of State Rice and UN Sec.-Gen. Annan, PM Olmert declares the end of Israel's air and sea blockade on Lebanon. The PM took this decision.

Sept. 7: During a raid by Israeli undercover units in Qabatia near Jenin, four Palestinians, incl. wanted Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades member Rashid Zakarna, security force Kaid Zakarna, and civilian Mohammed Abu Rub are killed and over 10 other wounded.

- In response to a petition by hundreds of Palestinian students to the High Court of Justice to instruct the state to allow them to complete their studies, Israel's defense establishment says it would continue banning students from Gaza from studying in the West Bank.

- In an ad placed in *Al-Ayyam*, hundreds of Palestinians, incl. politicians and intellectuals, tell British PM Tony Blair that they did not want him to visit Palestinian areas, accusing him of excessive support for Israel.

- Italy's FM Massimo D'Alema meets with Pres. Abbas in Ramallah.

Sept. 8: PM Ismail Haniyeh declares that his govt. had no intention of stepping down, despite a sweeping civil service strike that has been the widest sign of displeasure with Hamas since it came to power.

- After talks with visiting German FM Steinmeier, Israel's FM Tzipi Livni says it was time that Israel talked to the Palestinians, adding no conditions should be put on meeting Pres. Abbas. Steinmeier later meets Pres. Abbas in Ramallah.

- Visiting Russian FM Sergey Lavrov proposes an international conference of all the regional players to achieve results with regard to the MEPP.

Israel rejects the idea, saying such a conference would only complicate matters further. Lavrov later meets with chief negotiator Saeb Erekat and Pres. Abbas in Ramallah. ▶



- Israeli FM Tzipi Livni says that she opposes an international peace conference to discuss aspects of the Middle East conflict, saying, "We are not enthused with the Arab League's initiative ... An immediate meeting with [PA Pres.] Abbas is necessary so that we can hear about the problems of the Palestinian National Authority from him."

- Vice-PM Peres tells visiting Italian FM Massimo D'Alema that before any international conference, the Arab govt.s' ability to control organizations such as Hamas and Hizbullah must be studied.

- Palestinian protesters clash with Israeli forces during a demonstration at the construction site of the separation barrier in Bil'in.

Sept. 9: At a press conference after a meeting with visiting British PM Blair, PM Olmert says he is willing to meet Pres. Abbas with no preconditions and that he remains "dedicated to advancing the political process with the Palestinians" in accordance with the road map.

Some 13 Palestinian trade unions and companies launch a new initiative, calling on the Palestinian groups to be out of the circle of armed conflict and blaming the Israeli siege for the deterioration in the WBGs.

- Some 40,000 Israelis demonstrate in Tel Aviv to demand that PM Olmert order an independent state inquiry into his govt.'s handling of the war in Lebanon, saying the army had been ill equipped and civilians ill prepared to face Hizbullah rockets during the fighting, which left 1,200 Lebanese, mostly civilians, and 157 Israelis, mainly soldiers, dead.

Sept. 10: At a joint press conference in Ramallah with visiting British PM Blair, Pres. Abbas says he is prepared to meet with PM Olmert immediately to discuss resuming the peace talks, adding that "Ending the conflict in the Middle East will be possible only if Palestinian rights are met, when we set up our sovereign state with Jerusalem as its capital and the problem of the refugees is solved." Blair says that the solution to the Israeli-Palestinian problem should be the highest priority, that a genuine opportunity to further the peace process was at hand, and that he was "willing to invest all [his] efforts to assist in solving the conflict."

- In southern Gaza, Jihad Abu Sneima, 14, is killed and his brother, 20, critically wounded by an Israeli tank shell fired at Palestinians suspected of planting a bomb.

- Israeli Vice-PM Peres proposes to British PM Tony Blair that Dotan and Hermesh settlements in the northern West Bank be evacuated.

- Pres. Abbas travels to Gaza to meet with PM Haniyeh in an effort to reach agreement on a national unity govt.

- A new Yesh Din report states that 90% of the complaints filed by Palestinians against Israeli citizens for violent attacks have been closed without charges being filed and describes the police's handling of the complaints as negligent, careless, unprofessional and disrespectful.

Sept. 11: After PM Haniyeh agrees to indirect recognition of Israel by adopting the Arab peace initiative as the basis for the new govt.'s diplomatic platform, he and Pres. Abbas conclude the parameters for establishing a national unity govt.. According to the agreement - which Israel insists does not meet the international community's conditions for ending its embargo of the PA - the new govt. will include Min.s from Hamas, Fateh, and other factions, as well as technocrats. The post of Dep. PM will go to a Fateh representative.

- During a speech at a memorial service for a soldier killed in Lebanon during the recent war, MK Effi Eitam (National Religious Party - National Union) calls for the great majority of Palestinians in the West Bank to be transferred and for Israeli Arabs to be ousted from Israeli politics as a

fifth column and "a league of traitors." His remarks cause a storm of outrage, with left-wing and Arab MKs calling for Atty. Gen. Mazuz to open an investigation into the comments on grounds of incitement to racism.

- Israeli troops open fire on a car traveling from the Rumane village near Jenin, killing the head of the local village council and wounding two others.

- Two Palestinians are killed in clashes between Fateh and Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

- Pres. Abbas urges civil servants to halt their nine-day strike, saying all "Palestinian people should unite together in the national interest."

- An Israeli court convicts settler Asher Weisgan of killing four Palestinian workers he had taken to jobs in Shilo settlement and shot them upon arrival on 17 Aug. 2005.

Sept. 12: *Al-Quds* quotes PA Labor Min. Mohammed Barghouthi as saying that Pres. Abbas received assurances from the EU and Arab states that they would cooperate with a national unity govt. headed by Haniyeh, adding that if they would not, "the people will have to reconsider the existence of the PA."

- An Israeli military court orders the release of 18 imprisoned Hamas PLC members, incl. three cabinet Min.s, raising questions about the timing of the arrests, noting that the men had served in the govt. for months without penalty.

- During a search for weapons-smuggling tunnels near Kissufim in Gaza, an Israeli tracker is shot dead by two Palestinians who are hiding in the tunnel he was entering.

- Ghazi Hamad, spokesman for the Hamas-led Cabinet, tells Israel's *Army Radio* that Hamas was ready to give Pres. Abbas a chance to pursue his agenda to have peace talks with Israel, though the new govt. would not actually be involved in any such talks because negotiations are supposed to be handled by the PLO. He also says the Palestinians would be ready to establish an independent State in territories occupied by Israel in the 1967 War and that the new coalition agreement was based on a platform that implied recognition of Israel.

- At a press conference following his meeting with Spanish FM Miguel Angel Moratinos in his Gaza HQ, Pres. Abbas calls on the Israeli govt. to release the abducted Min.s, MPs and other officials before the formation of the new national unity govt..

- Israeli troops shoot and kill a Palestinian boy, 13, in Bethlehem as they confront protesters during a raid to arrest a wanted man.

- An Israeli soldier is killed in exchanges of fire with Palestinians during a routine operation near Deir Al-Balah. The PRC claims they had carried out the ambush.

Sept. 13: At a news conference in Ramallah with visiting Polish Pres. Lech Kaczynski, Pres. Abbas says that PM Haniyeh would head the Palestinian unity govt., whose political program would be based on the PLO's political platform.

- The Palestine Development and Investment Ltd. and PalTel begin handing out food coupons worth NIS 500 each to over 40,000 govt. workers as well as some 9,000 families of Palestinian prisoners in Israel.

- Israeli authorities notify the residents of Al-Khader near Bethlehem that they would appropriate hundreds of dunums of their land to continue the construction of the separation barrier.

- Israel rejects an Egyptian call to define in advance the borders of the Palestinian state before solving the other issues.

- The World Bank states that the Western embargo and Israeli restrictions could make 2006 the worse year in the PA's economic history with the average personal income fall by 40% and a poverty rate of 67%.

Sept. 14: PM Haniyeh submits the resignation of his govt. to Pres. Abbas, who then commissions him to form the new unity govt. involving all factions.

- PM Haniyeh's political adviser Ahmad Yousef says the unity govt. would recognize all agreements between Israel and the PLO, but only if they do not contradict the rights of the Palestinians, and stresses that resistance

against Israel was a legitimate right of the Palestinian people, and will not stop as long as Israel continues its acts of oppression.

- Israeli troops shoot and kill an unarmed Palestinian, Iyad Abu Mor, standing next to his house near Sufa Crossing in the Gaza Strip.

- Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades member Maher Abu Salhah, 18, dies while trying to plant an explosive device in the Old City of Nablus.

- French FM Philippe Doste-Blazy meets with Pres. Abbas to discuss the prospects of forming a Palestinian national unity govt. and the resumption of the peace process. He stresses France's support to Pres. Abbas and the PA at this current phase, while Pres. Abbas says Palestinians look forward as usual to a French role in pushing the peace process forward and appreciate their support.

PM Haniyeh accuses the US of undermining efforts to form a new coalition govt., saying the US "does not want the Palestinians to be unified. ... It wants to extort the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Government."

- In talks with the Pres. of the European Jewish Congress, Pierre Besnainou, in Ramallah, Pres. Abbas expresses his optimism regarding the chances of the release of Shalit.

- *Israel Radio* quotes Pres. Abbas as saying that the physical condition of soldier Gilad Shalit is good.

- An Israeli military court suspends the release of 20 Hamas legislators and Min.s detained by Israel following an appeal by the military prosecutor.

- A new UNCTAD report warns that the economy of the OPT is on the verge of collapse.

- Pres. Abbas receives the Pres. of the Party of European Socialists Poul Rasmussen, the FM of Luxembourg, Jean Asselborn, and the Norwegian Envoy to the MEPP, Svein Sevre.

- Israeli police bans a delegation of the European Peace Cycle, which include 24 cyclists of different nationalities, from traveling from Jerusalem to Hebron.

Sept. 15: In a drive-by shooting in Gaza City, Palestinian gunmen kill Brig. Gen. Jihad Tayeh, the head of international coordination in the Palestinian intelligence service, and four other people.

- PM Haniyeh calls on the EU to remove the economic sanctions imposed on the PA after the Hamas election victory and accuses the US of sabotaging Palestinian efforts to establish a unity govt..

Sept. 16: In protest of the Pope Benedict's recent remarks about Islam, some 2,000 Palestinians demonstrate in Gaza against "a new Crusade against the Muslim world." In Nablus and Gaza City, churches are burnt.

Sept. 17: Israeli settlers from Kedumim seize a Palestinian house in Qalqilya.

- Talks on forming a new unity govt. are reportedly put on hold until after Pres. Abbas' return from a trip to the UNGA in New York because of disagreements with Hamas over existing deals with Israel.

Sept. 18: Settlers burn 200 dunums of arable land in Nablus planted with olive and almond trees.

- Due to enraged striking govt. workers, PM Haniyeh is forced to cancel a speech to the PLC on the economic crisis in the WBGS.

- In a press release, the World Bank says that a \$46.6 million grant was given to the PA to support the delivery of basic services in the health, education and social affairs sectors.

- The DM issues demolition orders for 47 structures in West Bank outposts and 39 structures erected by Palestinians without permits.

Sept. 19: During an operation in Sanur, near Jenin, Israeli troops kill Nabil Hanani, 26, in an exchange of fire.

- A pregnant Palestinian woman dies of unknown causes at Tapuah checkpoint near Nablus.

Sept. 20: PM Haniyeh says that Hamas accepts the creation of a Palestinian state on land occupied in 1967 in exchange for a truce with Israel.

- *Wafa* reports that Israeli soldiers had taken money and documents from two money changers in Ramallah and entered the Jordanian Al-Ahli Bank

and five other money exchange institutions in Nablus as well as one in Jenin, where, at gunpoint, they forced the owners to hand over tens of thousands of Jordanian Dinars.

Sept. 21: An Israeli rocket fired at a group of teenagers near a rocket launching site in Beit Lahia kills three of the boys, Sami Dakhruj, Ala Dakhruj and Iyad Abu Rashad, 14-16 years old, who apparently wanted to take the launchers to sell.

- In an arrest raid in Rafah, Israeli forces kill a woman Atmad Mamar and a relative of hers, Mohammad Mamar, demolish their house, injure at least eight Palestinians, incl. two children, and arrest four others.

- The Israeli Min. of Housing and Construction issues tenders to construct 164 new housing units in three West Bank settlements: 88 units in Ariel, 56 in Alfei Menashe and 20 in Karnei Shomron.

- DM Amir Peretz decides to open the Rafah crossing for two days to Palestinians, 10,000 of whom are stranded on the Egyptian side since Israel closed the crossing following the abduction of Corporal Gilad Shalit at the end of June.

- PM Haniyeh's political adviser, Ahmed Yousef, welcomes the Quartet statement on the national unity govt. saying "We consider the absence of a Quartet demand that the new govt. recognize Israel as a sign of the willingness to show softening of the stance vis-à-vis the Palestinians." He further claims it shows the international community's interest in renewing ties with the PA govt..

- According to a Birzeit University poll, support for Fateh stood at 35%, while support for Hamas had fallen to 31%.

Sept. 22: Thousands of Palestinians try to get through the Rafah border ahead of Ramadan as it reopens briefly for the first time in weeks under an agreement with the Israelis. ▼



- Rebuffing Pres. Abbas remarks at the UN that a future coalition would recognize Israel, Hamas says it would not join such a unity govt. but was instead prepared to back a 10-year truce with the Jewish state.

- In Ramallah, Hebron, and elsewhere, Palestinians attend protests after Friday prayers denouncing Pope Benedict's recent remark about Islam.

- Fateh holds a rally against the Hamas govt. in Jabalia RC.

- The Israeli army imposes a two-day closure on the WBGs during Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year.

- Médecins Sans Frontières issue a press release expressing serious concern about the deteriorating access to medical treatment in the OPT, especially in the district of Hebron.

Sept. 23: Pres. Abbas says dialogue with Hamas on the formation of a national unity govt. had "returned to zero" after they refuse to recognize Israel, claiming Hamas was backtracking on agreements he had reached with PM Haniyeh when he went to the US.

- Over 1,000 Palestinian govt. officials and Fateh supporters demonstrate peacefully outside the office of Pres. Abbas to demand payment of salary arrears.

- Palestinian police guarding a Roman Catholic church in Nablus exchange fire with assailants trying to attack as part of a Muslim uproar

over remarks by Pope Benedict XVI a week earlier.

Sept. 24: In Gaza, gunmen from an Islamic splinter group affiliated with the PRC hold a press conference in which they threaten to attack any coalition govt. they view as too moderate, with a spokesman calling himself Abu Abir saying: "We consider any govt. that recognizes Israel as a legitimate target." This is the first time a Palestinian group publicly express its preparedness to attack govt. officials.

- PLO negotiations chief Saeb Erekat says Pres. Abbas will demand that the head of any PA unity govt. recognize the Oslo Accords, which means recognition of Israel.

- In an interview with Egypt's *Mehouar* satellite TV, Pres. Abbas says he would demand Israel free Fateh leader Marwan Barghouti and PFLP leader Ahmed Sa'adat in talks led by Egypt.

- In a conciliatory move, Hamas says it is serious about sharing power with Fateh.'

- A poll of Palestinian govt. workers by the British firm Portland Trust shows that 73% of the public employees are no longer able to make ends meet because of unpaid wages, 95% had stopped paying rent, 91% could no longer pay their mortgages, 65% of employees had put off paying their children's school fees, and 93% no longer bought clothes. Some 40% of the employees want to look for jobs outside govt. and 22% wish to emigrate.

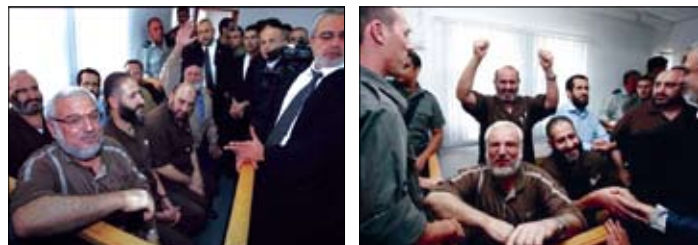
- Hamas Min. for Refugee Affairs Ataf Adwan claims that Pres. Abbas has ample funds to pay govt. officials' salaries but withholds payment in order to put pressure on Hamas.

- PLO Exec. Committee member Taysir Khaled says that Israel's latest settlement expansion was an attempt "to conciliate the radical right wing and settlers after the big failure in the war in Lebanon."

- Palestinians, like Muslims in most Arab countries, begin the month-long observance of Ramadan.

Sept. 25: At a PLO Exec. Committee meeting in Ramallah, Pres. Abbas blames Hamas' hard-line stand for the non-progress in the coalition talks, which are called off by Hamas and Fateh.

- Accepting the state's appeal against the release of 21 Hamas PLC members, Ofer military court reverses its decision to release them on bail and orders them held in detention until the end of judicial proceedings against them. ▼



- *Yedioth Ahronoth* reports that PM Olmert made a secret visit to Jordan two weeks ago and met with Saudi Arabia's National Security Adviser Prince Bandar.

- Pres. Abbas cancels a scheduled meeting in Gaza with PM Haniyeh over the criticism of Min. for Refugee Affairs Ataf Adwan.

- The European Commission says it had begun paying €270 (\$346) to 40,000 needy Palestinian families, identified as those who received social welfare from the previous PA govt..

- Some 72 Israeli university lecturers, writers and reserve officers, incl. writers Amoz Oz and A.B. Yehoshua, sign a petition calling on PM Olmert to open contacts with Syria and the Palestinians, incl. Hamas.

Sept. 26: Five Palestinian residents of Burka and Deir Dibwan have written to DM Amir Peretz and GOC Central Command Yair Naveh demanding the immediate evacuation of Migron, with 160 settlers the largest of the illegal outposts.

- A joint survey by the Truman Institute of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research in

Ramallah shows that 67% of Israelis support negotiations with a Palestinian national unity govt. and 56% of even with a govt. led by Hamas. The poll of Palestinians reveals that 77% support a cease-fire with Israel, 74% believe that armed action is not enough and that a political agreement with Israel must ultimately be reached, 63% favor copying Hizbullah tactics by launching rockets at Israeli cities, 75% favor abducting Israeli soldiers, and 57% support targeting Israeli civilians.

- Hundreds of police officers who have not received their salaries for the past six months protest in northern Gaza, burning tires, firing in the air and blocking roads. Acting PA Finance Min. Samir Abu Aisheh promises all public employees earning under \$450 a month - estimated at some 61,000 out of a total of 165,000 civil servants - that they would receive one salary payment within the next 24 hours.

Sept. 27: An Israeli air strike in Rafah destroys a house and kill a girl, Azah Hamad, 14, in a neighboring building. At least 7 other children are wounded.

- During an arrest raid in Balata RC Israeli troops shoot and injure three Palestinians and destroy a shop.

- The Jerusalem District Court sentences Asher Weisgan, a settler from Shvut Rachel, to four consecutive life sentences plus an additional 12 years in prison for murdering four Palestinian workers and wounding a fifth at a factory in the Shiloh settlement.

- Israel releases Hamas Dep. PM Nasser Eddin Al-Shaer, imprisoned since 19 Aug., after a military tribunal in Petah Tikva rules that there was insufficient evidence to either continue holding or indict him.

- UNRWA Commissioner Karen Koning Abu Zayd urges the world to put pressure on Israel to end its blockades of the WBGS, saying conditions there going from bad to worse.

- Israel submits a formal complaint calling on UN Sec.-Gen. Kofi Annan to take immediate action to stop the Qassam rocket fire from the Gaza Strip.

- A B'Tselem report entitled "Act of Vengeance" concludes that Israel's bombing of the Gaza power plant on 28 June 2006 constituted a war crime and that most Gazans continue to be cut off from electricity for half of every day, with wide-ranging, adverse affects on health care, water supply, sewage, and other aspects of daily domestic and business life.

- Settlers from Kiryat Arba raze 65 dunums of arable land in Hebron.

Sept. 28: Palestinians throughout the WBGS mark the sixth anniversary of the Al-Aqsa Intifada, which began a day after then-opposition leader Ariel Sharon visited the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound.

- Hundreds of Palestinian police and security officers block main roads in Gaza City with garbage containers and burning tyres in a protest demanding unpaid wages from the Hamas-led govt.

- Pres. Abbas orders payments of NIS 1,500 to each of the 165,000 civil servants, who practically received no payment for the past six months. The partial payment became possible through funds donated by Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

- *Yediot Aharonot* reports that one year after Israel's withdrawal from four settlements in the northern West Bank, Israeli forces will return to increase the security of nearby areas.

Sept. 29: Palestinian brothers Anwar and Ghanam Hamdan, 14 and 16, are killed in an Israeli air strike on Beit Hanoun.

- Around 20,000 Palestinians demonstrate in Jabalia RC in support of the Hamas-led govt. as the embattled cabinet marks six months in office.

- Israeli authorities impose a total closure on the Palestinian territories ahead of Yom Kippur.

- A Defense for Children International-Palestine Section press release says that 2006 was the bloodiest year for Palestinian children since 1967.

Sept. 30: Govt. employees and security officials protest in Gaza, burning tires, blocking roads and firing in the air demanding their long-awaited salaries. Five people are wounded when a Hamas supporter tosses a hand grenade into the demonstration.

- An Israeli air strike in Rafah kills two Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades members

and wounds several others, incl. a six-year-old boy.

- The Hamas-led Cabinet sent its 3,500-member security forces into Gaza's streets to quash PA employee demonstrations.

Oct. 1: During attempts by the Hamas-led govt.'s 3,500-man militia to break up protests by civil servants and police forces over unpaid salaries in Gaza City, street battles erupt and spark across the Gaza Strip. In Khan Younis, Hamas gunmen attack the home of



one of a Preventive Security officer as well as a number of policemen identified with Fateh. At the end of what is termed the "Black Sunday," nine people are killed and over 100 injured. ▲

- In retaliation for the Hamas forces' break up of anti-govt. demonstrations in Gaza, Fateh supporters ransack Hamas offices throughout the West Bank, incl. the PM's office in Ramallah, and torch the Cabinet building in Ramallah. Members of the Egyptian security coordination team in Gaza meet with both sides to try to broker an end to the fighting. Later the day, Hamas withdraws its gunmen first.

- In the wake of Hamas-Fateh gunbattles, Pres. Abbas condemns the violence "in the strongest terms", orders an official investigation into the fighting, and calls for calm and a renewal of negotiations over a national unity govt.

- The Palestinian Prisoners Society reports that female prisoners in the Israeli Al-Jalameh Prison had started an open hunger strike nine days earlier, protesting their miserable situation in the prison.

Oct. 2: As fighting between Hamas and Fateh continues for a second day in the Gaza Strip, the death toll increases to 12, with over 120 wounded. In the West Bank, gunmen from both sides attack, kidnap and destroy property from the other group's people, whereby one man is killed in Jericho. In a show of force against Hamas, Fateh enforces a general strike in Ramallah.

- Regarding the factional violence in the PA, DM Amir Peretz says, "Israel has no intention of intervening in PA domestic affairs," but said the defense establishment would continue keeping close tabs on developments there.

- Hamas turns down an Egyptian-mediated Israeli offer to free between 900-1,000 Palestinian prisoners in exchange for captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.

Oct. 3: A missile from an Israeli helicopter hit a workshop in Khan Younis RC, killing a Palestinian teenager, Naji Al-Bardawel, 17.

- A new Peace Now report shows that over 3,500 housing units are currently being built in West Bank settlements - mainly in the settlement blocs of Betar Ilit, Ma'ale Adumim, Modi'in Ilit and Alfei Menashe - compared to 4,144 units under construction in Oct. 2005. In addition, the construction the Tekoa-Jerusalem and the Ma'ale Adumim-Jericho Roads has been resumed and settlers have expanded 31 unauthorized outposts.

- Pres. Abbas has reportedly agreed to a plan proposed by Qatar to end the infighting between Fateh and Hamas, establish a Palestinian unity govt. and release captive Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. The plan foresees a Palestinian unity govt., headed by an independent figure, that will accept the conditions imposed by Israel and the international community (recognition of Israel and agreements made with Israel, and an end to violence) as well as a diplomatic solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on a two-state solution and a mutual and simultaneous cessation of hostilities.

- Azzam Al-Ahmad, the head of the Fateh faction in the PLC, tells *Ha'aretz* that most of the Palestinian factions - not counting Hamas - have agreed to give the political leaders two weeks to reach an agreement on a unity

govt. or otherwise Pres. Abbas must use his powers to dissolve the govt. and hold elections.

- An Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades statement holds Hamas officials responsible for deaths during recent clashes between both groups saying: "We in Al-Aqsa announce ... to execute the head of the sedition, Khaled Mashaal, Said Siyam and Yousef Al-Zahhar, and we will execute this ruling so those ... people can be made an example."

Oct. 4: Two members of Islamic Jihad's armed wing - Yasser Abu Atim and Mohammed Zaquq - are killed in an Israeli missile attack at their car in Khan Younis.

- Armed clashes erupt between security forces and a group of armed men who attack the office of Jawwal Co. in Jabalia RC, Gaza.

- In Hableh near Qalqilya, three masked men shoot and kill Hamas leader Mohammed Odeh as he leaves a mosque.

- Speaking at a joint press conference after talks with US Sec. of State Rice on the crisis in the PA and how the US could bolster his position, Pres. Abbas says any new Palestinian govt. had to honor signed agreements with Israel. Rice calls on Islamic groups to cooperate with Pres. Abbas, saying the Hamas govt. cannot govern in the region and says the US is 'very concerned' about the plight of the Palestinians.

- After meeting with US Sec. of State Rice, PM Olmert says Israel will help Pres. Abbas "create a better environment" and return to peacemaking. ▶

- Pres. Abbas says that national dialogue talks had broken down, so that an agreement announced on



11 Sept. "is now over, and we have to start from square one." "

- The Paz energy company and the PA make a deal, under which Paz will refine crude oil imported directly by the PA to its Ashdod refinery, which it purchased a week ago, and deliver the distillates to the PA, in effect taking over from Dor Alon which supplied most of the PA's petroleum needs before.

- A group calling itself 'Al-Qaeda in Palestine' posts a web video denouncing those who "announce blasphemy against Islam and who are allied with enemies of God and religion, and work in the service of the Jews and the Christians".

- In Ramallah, visiting Bahraini FM Sheikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Bin Mohammed Al-Khalifa affirms the firm position of Bahrain towards the Palestinian issue and the rights of the Palestinian people, stressing that the both sides were reviewing means of pushing forward the peace process.

- US Security Coord. Keith W. Dayton tells a briefing for donors that the US was proposing to expand the Presidential guard for Pres. Abbas from the current 3,500 to 6,000 men and to reduce the number of overlapping PA security services in order to create a single national police force on the model of Italy's carabinieri.

- A Palestinian of Tarkumiyeh, west of Hebron, Iyad Abu Aya, is shot dead man by a border policeman in the Jaffa flea market. The officer is placed under house arrest until the case is solved.

Oct. 5: Israeli troops shoot and kill Islamic Jihad member Yousef Qablan as he approaches the border fence with Israel apparently in order to place an explosive.

- In Khan Younis, an Israeli air strike on a car kills Islamic Jihad members Omar Zakzuk and Yasser Al-Banna.

- In Rafah, unknown gunmen kill Fateh member Mohammed Suleiman Atiyya.

- A Hamas statement says, "Pres. Abu Mazen (Abbas) and certain circles in Fateh are responsible for the refusal to form a unity government on the basis of the National Reconciliation Document and are imposing new conditions corresponding to American and international conditions

rejected by the nation."

- Sec. of State Rice, meeting with Israeli FM Tzipi Livni, says she believed the international economic boycott of the Hamas-led PA govt. was effective and should be maintained.

- During a meeting with Israeli DM Amir Peretz, US Sec. of State Rice urges Israel to loosen its blockade on the WBGS.

- Protected by soldiers, settlers enter An-Nabi Younis Mosque in Hebron to perform prayers and rituals.

- The Rafah border terminal between Egypt and Gaza is opened for a second day in a row.

Oct. 6: Tens of thousands of Hamas members attend a rally in Gaza City to show support for the govt. after Pres. Abbas has threatened this week to dissolve it. PM Haniyeh tells the crowd that all attempts to bring down the govt. will fail, that Hamas would continue to lead the next Palestinian govt., and that he nevertheless hoped a unity govt. to be established. He also reiterates that Hamas is prepared to establish a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders, based on a *hudna* or long-term cease-fire, but not to recognize Israel. ▲



- Former Fateh Security Min. Mohammed Dahlan accuses Hamas of assassinating Fateh rivals and says: "When Abu Mazen and Hamas actually finish their soap opera of them, they are going to find out there's nothing left to talk about. (Israel) will have taken all the territory and land they want to take."

- Armed settlers overtake the Halhoul Mosque and begin performing religious services.

Oct. 7: Head of Fateh in the PLC, Azzam Al-Ahmed, calls for new elections in the PA, saying "How can one authority have two heads blaming each other?" and that "Any country whose govt. reaches a dead end calls for early parliamentary elections. Those who trust themselves do not fear the people."

Oct. 8: In Balata RC, wanted Fateh activist Usama Talad is shot dead and three others are injured in clashes with Israeli troops during an arrest operation.

- A Palestinian from Nablus, Ahmed Tirawi, is shot dead near Tell village when Israeli troops open fire at his vehicle on a dirt road near Road 60.

- In Hebron, the Israeli army denies Palestinian worshippers access to the Ibrahimi Mosque, while keeping it open for Jewish worshippers.

- *Ha'aretz* reports that Israeli forces are increasing their efforts to enable Palestinian farmers to reach their lands across the separation barrier. Restraining orders have been issued to five right wing settler extremists involved in confrontations with Palestinians and soldiers, forbidding them to leave their settlements.

- Over 50 prominent Palestinians - academics, politicians and public figures, with no particular political affiliation - sign on "The Appeal," announcing an initiative calling for a transitional govt. of technocrats should the national unity govt. talks fail.

Oct. 9: A Palestinian youth, Mohammed Abu Nasser, 14, is killed and three other Palestinians are injured in an Israeli missile attack on Beit Hanoun.

- At Hawara checkpoint, outside Nablus, a Palestinian, Mohammed Saada, armed with a knife and allegedly attempting to stab a policeman is shot by a soldier death.

- In Gaza, Qatari FM Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jabr Al-Thani holds separate meetings with Pres. Abbas and PM Haniyeh, offering a six-point plan aimed at resolving differences between Fateh and Hamas and renewing ties between the international community and Hamas. Head of

Fateh's PLC faction, Azzam Al-Ahmed, says Pres. Abbas is committed to the plan and that "We are waiting for an answer from Hamas."

Oct. 10: A Palestinian man is killed and another wounded when Israeli troops open fire at a group of Palestinians breaking into a building at the Gaza International Airport near Rafah.

- Hamas and Fateh trade accusations with Abbas advisor Nabil Amr accusing Hamas leaders of trying to fundamentally change the Arab peace initiative in order to cause it to fail, and Hamas Information Min. Yousef Rizqa telling reporters that associates of Abbas "were conducting media wars" against Hamas to cause it "to lose its principles."

- After further separate meetings with Pres. Abbas and PM Haniyeh in Gaza, Qatari FM Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani states "I cannot say that the gap has narrowed, but there are other aspects that should be welcomed now on this matter," adding: "The goal is not only a Palestinian govt., but a recognized Palestinian govt. that will work to lift the embargo placed on it." Ghazi Hamad, spokesman for the PA govt., says Hamas was not ready to recognize Israel or give up its armed struggle against Israel, adding that Hamas was ready to continue the negotiations: "The way is not blocked." ▲



Oct. 11: Israeli soldiers operating near Al-Muntar (Karni) crossing shoot and kill a Palestinian on the Israeli side of the fence who was apparently planning to place an explosive.

- In a RC in Nablus Israeli soldiers shoot and kill Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades member Abdullah Mansour, with a single bullet in the head as he stands at a window of his house.

- OCHA reports that the number of Israeli military roadblocks in the West Bank increased by nearly 40% in the past year to currently 528 obstacles.

- *Ha'aretz* reports that the Israeli army is in no rush to evacuate illegal settlement outposts, despite declarations to the contrary by DM Amir Peretz.

- *Ha'aretz* reports that according to migration statistics Jewish settler communities in the West Bank have a greater population turnover than Jewish communities elsewhere in the country, but this has not affected the settlements' growth rate as they have grown at a faster rate than most other communities in Israel over the past two decades.

- American student Michael Leighton Phillips, 24, a volunteer with the Canada-based Project Hope, is freed after being held for a day by Palestinians in Nablus.

Oct. 12: During an Israeli offensive near Khan Younis, four Hamas members and a 14-year-old boy are killed and six other Palestinians are wounded by a rocket fired from an Israeli drone.

- An Israeli aircraft firing a missile at a building in the crowded Shajaiyeh section of Gaza City, kills three Palestinians, incl. a 10-year-old girl and her father, an alleged Hamas member, and wounds at least seven others.

- A report by the Dept. of Ambulance and Emergency of the PA Min. of Health states that 290 Palestinian civilians had been killed during Israel's "Operation Summer Rain", aimed at freeing the abducted Israeli soldier, incl. 135 were children and 35 women. Some 4,350 were injured, incl. 1,700 children.

- A new report by Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) charges that the Shin Bet is systematically preventing Palestinians who need medical treatment unavailable in the territories from entering Israel. According to the analysis, anyone with a record of security offenses, as well as single men and women, or married but childless couples, are usually turned down. Those between the ages of 16-35 (sometimes 18-40, are considered "dangerous".

Oct. 13: During Israeli army operations in the Gaza Strip, a woman, Zahariya Kadiyah, 29, is killed by an Israeli sniper while standing outside her house.

- An Israeli air strike at a car carrying Hamas operatives near Beit Lahia kills three Palestinians, incl. Izzeddin Al-Qassem head in Beit Lahia, Imad Al-Mokassi.

- New Hamas-Fateh clashes erupt several hours after the assassination of Majd Abu Drabia, the commander of Hamas' Izz ad-Din Al-Qassam Brigades in Beit Lahia.

Oct. 14: During clashes in northern Gaza, seven Hamas gunmen are killed in an Israeli air strike and at least 15 were wounded. ►

- An Israeli missile hitting a car in northern Gaza, kills an Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade operative and wounds another.



- In a letter, 14 Palestinian University Presidents call on the international academic community to take action against Israeli policies that limit freedom of movement within and to the territories and prohibit entry to the PA.

Oct. 15: During a Cabinet meeting, senior Israeli military officials say they believed Hamas had smuggled anti-aircraft weapons into Gaza for the first time.

- In a press release, PA Min. of Refugees Atef Adwan accuses the Jordanian govt. of making a deal with the UNHCR to transfer 280 Palestinian refugees from Iraq to Canada, questioning why Jordan was able to allow 600,000 Iraqis in but not 280 Palestinians.

Oct. 16: PM Olmert calls Lebanese PM Fuad Siniora to meet with him directly to sign a peace treaty between the two countries, a move rejected by Siniora, who says that Israel must first withdraw from the Shaba Farms area to prove that it seeks peace.

- Israeli PM Olmert tells the Knesset at the opening of its winter session that Pres. Abbas "is a legitimate partner. We maintain ongoing contact with him and his people, and I am willing to meet with him immediately to discuss ways to move forward according to the sequence of the Road Map and the phases therein."

Oct. 17: During an undercover arrest operation in Askar RC near Nablus, Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades member Adel Abu Rish is killed along with his cousin Faras.

- In Qabatia, Israeli troops kill Islamic Jihad member Mohammed Zaharna.

- The Israeli army launches a major operation along the Philadelphi Route in the southern Gaza Strip to search for tunnels. ►



- At a press conference in Ramallah, Pres. Abbas calls for the establishment of a govt. of technocrats to replace the current Hamas govt., saying such a solution would offer Fateh and Hamas a situation in which neither side would have to make concessions, yet would allow the Palestinians to move forward.

Oct. 18: DM Amir Peretz is reportedly considering granting legal status to a number of unauthorized settlement outposts in the West Bank if the Yesha Settler Council would evacuate the rest.

- Israeli troops kill four Palestinians in Rafah RC: Ashraf Al-Muasher, allegedly one of the abductors of the kidnapped soldier Shalit, as well as Mohammed Abu Arar, Zahir Tanani, and Ghazi Abu Dahrouj.

- Palestinian women protest in Ramallah the continued fighting between Hamas and Fateh, calling upon both parties to stop the fighting and urg-

ing Pres. Abbas to find a solution on the coalition govt..

Oct. 19: According to a survey by Peace Now, 43% of the 16,196 dunums on which 75 of the current 102 West Bank outposts are erected are on private Palestinian land, while 7.6% are on lands pending recognition as state lands (1,226 dunums) and only 49% are on state land (7,984 dunums).

- *Ha'aretz* quotes Col. (res.) Ron Shechner, a former Yesha Council security officer and then DM Shaul Mofaz's adviser on settlements as saying that former PM Ariel Sharon stalled the evacuation of illegal outposts, while "Mofaz never initiated anything... The only evacuations that took place resulted from the intervention of the High Court of Justice."

- *Ha'aretz* reports that the heads of six Israeli universities have recently sent a letter to DM Amir Peretz, demanding he "cancel the sweeping ban" on Palestinian students, and "examine each case on its own merit, and permit students, who are not suspected of involvement in activity that endangers Israel's security, to reside in Israel for school purposes." The call is seconded by Education Min. Yuli Tamir and Science, Culture and Sport Min. Ophir Pines-Paz.

- In an interview with *Ha'aretz*, senior Israeli Cabinet Min. Meir Sheerit (Kadima) says that Israel should hold permanent peace negotiations with Arab states, based on the Saudi initiative, and agree to negotiate over the Golan Heights if Syria halted its support of terrorism.

Oct. 20: Hamas PLC faction speaker Salah Al-Bardawil says that the Hamas-led PA govt. had agreed to form a technocrat govt. comprised of professionals and qualified people on the condition that it had a clear political platform that was agreed upon by the factions, adding that the new govt.'s reference point should be the National Reconciliation Document. ►



Salah Al-Bardawil

- A Peace Now survey reveals that some 74% of the 102 unauthorized settlement outposts in the West Bank are at least partly built on private Palestinian land.

- The UAE-based Sheikh Mohammed Ben-Rashed Al-Maktum Institute begins building a pharmacy in the Balata RC near Nablus at a total cost of \$750,000.

Oct. 21: Israeli soldiers shoot dead a 50-year-old Palestinian during an operation in of Khan Younis.

- Ahmed Yousef, a senior aide to PM Haniyeh, says that "Qatar amended its six-point initiative and it may present it again to Hamas leadership directly after Eid Al-Fitr."

- In a meeting with PM Haniyeh, prominent Palestinians urge him to consider a Cabinet made up of professionals to end the deadlock with Fateh over the formation of a national unity govt.

- Pres. Abbas brings security commander Ismail Jabr out of retirement to pass to him command of all West Bank security forces, except the three branches under the control of the PA Interior Min. ►



Ismail Jabr

Oct. 22: At a press conference to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 1956 Kufr Qassem massacre, Shawki Khatib, Chairman of the Higher Arab Monitoring Committee, calls on PM Olmert to stop coalition talks with Avigdor Lieberman's Yisrael Beitenu, which he calls a "fascist party."

- With vote of 11:12, the Israeli cabinet rejects the petition filed by Min. without Portfolio Eitan Cabel (Labor), against the decision by the Min. ial committee for legislation to support legislation proposed by MK Avigdor Lieberman (Yisrael Beitenu) advocating a Pres.ial system of governance.

- During an operation to arrest an Islamic Jihad activist in Tammoun, one Palestinian is killed and 15 are wounded by Israeli forces.

Oct. 23: At least seven Palestinians are killed and over 30 others injured

in clashes with Israeli troops in the Beit Hanoun area. Pres. Abbas calls the operation a "loathsome massacre carried out, of all days, on the first day of Eid Al-Fitr," which marks the end of Ramadan, and calls on the international community to intervene to prevent a further escalation in the situation. Various Palestinian factions vow revenge.

- Four Fateh operatives are shot to death, apparently by Hamas members, in Jericho, Tulkarem, Khan Younis and Al-Bureij RC.

- Pres. Abbas orders over 20,000 security personnel, incl. Fateh-affiliated paramilitaries and police, to be deployed in the Gaza Strip during the Muslim holiday of Eid Al-Fitr.

- A secret, two-year investigation by the DM shows that there has been rampant illegal construction in dozens of settlements and in many cases involving privately owned Palestinian properties.

Oct. 24: The Israeli army completes a six-day operation along the Philadelphi Route in the Rafah area during which 15 tunnels were destroyed.

- Palestinian gunmen kidnap AP photographer Emilio Morenatti in Gaza City, but release him the next day.

Oct. 25: Settlers attack and injure five olive-picking Palestinians from Far'ata, Qalqilya, near the Havat Gil'ad outpost.

- Human rights and Arab activist organizations slam a meeting of EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana with rightwing MK Avigdor Lieberman, calling on the EU to work against Lieberman's joining the cabinet.

- PA Min. of Education Nasser Al-Shaer urges Arab leaders to help rescue the education system in the OPT, after a two months' loss of schooling, and to provide the needed financial support.

- According to a CBS report, 214,000 Israelis have left the country permanently since 1990, half of those being new immigrants.

Oct. 26: During an operation near Khan Younis, Israeli soldiers kill a member of the PA security services, Lami Hamdan Abu Lahiya, 22. In the ensuing clash with Palestinians, troops kill a teenager, Ahmed Al-Barim.

- Israel's High Court of Justice rules against Palestinian plaintiffs from villages near the settlements of Emmanuel, Karnei Shomron, and Ma'ale Shomron, saying that since the Israeli army is obligated to allow Palestinian farmers access to their land through gates, the court need not interfere with the army's decision to erect the separation barrier in the area.

- Israeli soldiers fire at two Palestinians walking near the border fence and not heeding the calls to stop, killing one. The men had been laying bird traps in the area.

- During a meeting with Vice-PM Peres, visiting EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana demands to know why Israel is keeping the Gaza Strip's border crossings closed, saying this causes hunger and frustration, which ultimately encourages anti-Israel violence. Peres responds that "Israel is first and foremost obliged to provide security for its citizens" and that the EU must "understand that as long as Hamas continues with its policy of extremism, the Palestinian people will continue to suffer and there can be no progress toward a peace deal, which could have been signed some time ago." In separate talks with FM Tzipi Livni, Solana calls for the evacuation of illegal settlement outposts.

- Israeli planes drop leaflets over northern Gaza, stating: "Terrorists take advantage of you and use you as human shield and they are responsible for continuing the suffering of the Palestinian people... The Israeli army is operating in your area to thwart terror attacks that irresponsible members plan to carry out from your residential area."

- A new B'Tselem report says Israel was violating the right of the Palestinians to visit relatives held in Israeli jails, transferring the detainees out of the WBGS in violation of international law, and placing restrictions on the visits.

Oct. 27: In Yamoun, west of Jenin, Israeli troops open fire on a house, killing unarmed Ahmed Abu Al-Hassan, 28, and injuring two of his brothers.

- In Al-Fara'a RC, east of Jenin, Israeli troops kill Islamic Jihad member

Fadi Sabah and Al-Awda Brigades member Mustafa Zlat.

- During a stop at Askar RC, EU foreign policy chief Solana urges Palestinian leaders to move with urgency to form a new govt., warning that the plight of the Palestinians was worsening and "Things may get too bad that it will be difficult to recuperate. We have to reverse the situation."

Oct. 28: In Hebron, settlers from Tel Rumeida damage the water pipes of Palestinian homes for the fifth time in two months. Settlers also attack and injure a female international volunteer helping a Palestinian family pick olives on their land near the settlement.

- Chief negotiator Saeb Erekat says the Palestinian economy was close to collapse and urges the Hamas-led govt. to deal with the crisis.

Oct. 29: Israel's public TV reports that a group of Israeli negotiators – incl. Oslo negotiator Prof. Yair Hirschfeld, and Tel Aviv University researcher Res. Gen. Shlomo Brom - had secretly met with Hamas representatives – incl. PM Haniyeh advisor Ahmed Yousef - in London earlier in the month for talks organized by former British intelligence officer Alistair Crook.

- As residents of the Israeli Arab village of Kufr Qassem gather to mark 50 years since troops killed 47 people returning home from work, the founder of the Islamic Movement in Israel, Sheikh Abdullah Nimr Darwish, warns Avigdor Lieberman "that we are one and a half million Palestinians. I advise you not to test us. We will stay here dead or alive. But in such an event [that we die] we will not be buried alone." ►



Sheikh Abdullah Nimr Darwish

- A Palestinian, Musa Abu Sneineh, who was trying to steal equipment from the unused Gaza airport, is shot and killed by what Palestinian security officials claim were Israeli soldiers while the army denies involvement.

Oct. 30: A Spanish aid worker, Roberto Vila, is kidnapped in Gaza by Palestinian gunmen but released later that night unconditionally. Hamas spokesman Ghazi Hamad condemns the kidnapping, saying those behind it "are not nationalists. They are just looking for personal profits" and their actions hurt the Palestinian image abroad.

- After the Knesset approves MK Avigdor Lieberman's inclusion in the govt. as Dep. PM and Min. in charge of strategic affairs, Arab MKs exit en masse, with MK Ahmed Tibi (UAL-Ta'al) calling out: "Hooray for Haider!" and Meretz MK Ran Cohen saying "Lieberman represents a racist-facist position toward the Arab public... He is already bombing the Aswan Dam and Tehran, and turning Gaza into a soccer field." ►



MK Avigdor Lieberman

- A 12-member delegation from the European Parliament, led by the head of the Development Committee in the European Parliament Luisa Morgantini, concludes a visit to the OPT, saying that the Israeli occupation of Gaza had turned it into a big prison and that the European Parliament adopted a decision to demand the release of Palestinian Legislators, Min.s and members of the local councils.

Oct. 31: In Khouza near the Gaza-Israel border, Israeli troops shoot and kill three Palestinians from the military wing of Hamas.

- Addressing the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, GOC Southern Command Yoav Gallant warns that Hamas will soon have a force of several thousand gunmen, equipped with modern weaponry, available in the Gaza Strip.

- In an address to a conference at Tel Aviv University, DM Amir Peretz lauds the dormant 2002 Saudi peace initiative as a "basis for negotiations," though not endorsing it.

- After a series of top-secret meetings, Israel's leading gasoline retailers - Paz and Dor Alon - reach an agreement on supplying fuel to the PA: while Paz will fuel the West Bank, Dor Alon will handle supplies to Gaza.

Nov. 1: During heavy fighting as part of Operation "Autumn Clouds" in the Beit Hanoun area, one Israeli soldier and seven Palestinians are killed and over 50 Palestinians wounded.

- The Israeli security cabinet adopts a number of resolutions aimed at satisfying US requests in advance of PM Olmert's visit to Washington in another 10 days: It decided to work to strengthen "elements in the PA other than the Hamas govt.," thereby effectively giving its approval to Gen. Dayton's plan to arm and train forces loyal to Pres. Abbas, to consider the requests to transfer thousands of rifles from Egypt and Jordan to Abbas' forces and allow the PLA's Badr Brigade to relocate from Jordan to the territories.

- After sharp protests from the US and the EU, the Israeli cabinet agrees to give residency permits to some 5,000 Palestinians who hold American or European passports and had returned to the West Bank after the Oslo Accords on tourist visas (having lost their residency permits due to long absence) which, for years, were automatically renewed. Recently, however, the Interior Min. has refused renewal, preventing re-entry to many who thus were cut off from their jobs and families.

- Newly appointed Min. Avigdor Lieberman says that Israel should act "like the Russians in Chechnya" and cultivate a friendly local leadership in Gaza, since there was no point in toppling the Hamas govt. until there was something to put in its place.

- *Yediot Aharonot* reports the removal of five empty caravans in the outposts of Migron and Ma'ale Mikdash, and plans to remove four more.

Nov. 2: During an Israeli operation in the northern Gaza Strip, seven Palestinians are killed, incl. a boy, 15, a woman, and a 75-year-old man. Two other civilians are killed in a missile strike near Beit Hanoun.

- During an Israeli incursion into Balata RC, Nablus, a Palestinian teenage boy, Ibrahim Sanaqra, is killed and his older brother Ahmed injured.

- After meeting with Pres. Abbas, PLC member and Mubadara head Mustafa Barghouti arrives in Gaza for talks with PM Haniyeh on a national unity govt.

- PA Pres. Abbas holds talks on Israel's military escalation in Gaza with US Asst. Sec. of State for Near Eastern Affairs, C. David Welch, and the US Dep. National Security Advisor, Elliot Abrams.

- *Ma'ariv* reports on a new settler reconnaissance patrol - created in cooperation with the Yesha Council and the Foundation for Eretz Yisrael - intended to monitor and document the Palestinian olive harvest.

Nov. 3: In Beit Hanoun, Israeli troops kill at least nine Palestinians and injure over 20. ►

- During an operation to arrest Islamic Jihad activist Taher Hassan in Bethlehem Israeli troops shoot and kill a 17-year-old stone-thrower and a 65-year-old Palestinian woman,



and wound several others. Later, after bulldozing the two houses where Hassan was hiding, his body was found beneath one of them.

- Four Hamas members are killed in an Israeli Air Force strike in Gaza City's Sajaiya area.

- In Balata RC, Nablus, Israeli troops open fire at two Palestinians pulling barbed wire from a car, killing one of them and injuring the other.

- Israeli soldiers arrest PA Min. of Public Works and Housing Abdul Rahman Zeidan in his house in Ramallah, bringing the number of detained Min.s to five (in addition to 27 PLC members. The PA issues a statement condemning the arrest as does Fateh spokesperson Jamal Nazzal, saying such Israeli escalations coincided with Palestinians effort to reach a decisive moment in forming a national unity govt.

Nov. 4: In Gaza, at least 27 Palestinians are killed – at least 11 of them civilians - and dozens more wounded in Israel's ongoing operation "Autumn Clouds", bringing the total number of dead since the start of it to over 40. A PRC spokesman announces that if the operation is not stopped within 48 hours, Palestinians will resume suicide bombings inside Israel. ▲



- Israeli troops prevent Palestinian farmers from Deir Al-Hatib, near Nablus, from harvesting olives claiming they want to prevent clashes between Palestinians and hundreds of visitors who spent the weekend in Elon Moreh settlement.

Nov. 5: Israeli troops kill three Palestinians in Beit Hanoun, bringing the death toll to at least 45 on the fifth day of Operation "Autumn Clouds," which has also seriously damaged the city's civil infrastructure.

- The ICRC deplores the killing by Israeli troops of two "clearly marked" ambulance workers a day earlier in Gaza.

- Dr. Jum'ah As-Saqqa of Ash-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City says that medical crews had discovered, from cases brought to the hospitals, that a new weapon was being used by the Israeli army, which "cause burns that pass through the body to the internal organs."

- Amidst international criticism, PM Olmert says that military operations in Gaza would continue until Palestinian rocket attacks significantly decreased.

Nov. 6: Israeli troops kill three Palestinians in northern Gaza. In a separate missile strike near a school in Beit Lahia, two teenage schoolboys are killed and a teacher and four other students are wounded.

- The Israeli army begins withdrawing some of its forces from Beit Hanoun, where 53 Palestinians and one soldier were killed during the past six days.

- During a meeting on the creation of a national unity govt. in Gaza, Pres. Abbas refuses PM Haniyeh's candidate for the post of PM, current Health Min. Bassem Naim.

- A female suicide bomber blows herself up near troops in Beit Hanoun, wounding one of them.

- DM Amir Peretz meet with US Amb. to Israel Richard Jones, and US security coord. Gen. Dayton to discuss improving the humanitarian situation in Gaza, incl. opening Gaza border crossings and deploying a Palestinian security force.

- Police officers deliver warrants for the immediate evacuation of settlers from nine structures at the Itzhar Darom outpost, south of Nablus.

- PA Pres. Abbas received US CG in Jerusalem Jacob Walles in his Ramallah HQ to discuss the latest developments in the OPT and Israel's incursions into Gaza.

- FM Al-Zahhar calls on Arab countries to assume responsibility towards the Palestinian people and act urgently through international organizations and by all methods to put an end to the Israeli aggression.

- PA Pres. Abbas asks the UNSC to intervene and bring an end to the escalations in Gaza, calling for a ceasefire and the presence of UN observers.

Nov. 7: Two Islamic Jihad members are shot dead by Israeli soldiers near Beit Hanoun, while north of Gaza City, a woman, Nahla Shanti, and Abdel Majid Ghirbawi are killed when a shell struck the home of a Hamas lawmaker where the two were staying. Another Palestinian is killed during clashes in Jabalia RC.

- In an interview with the Saudi newspaper *Asharq Al-Awsat*, Pres. Abbas calls on Hamas to release Cpl. Gilad Shalit into his custody, so that he could begin negotiations with Israel over his release.

- *Ha'aretz* reports that a number of Palestinian women from the Ramallah

and Hebron areas were arrested recently by the Shin Bet on suspicion of helping transfer funds from Islamic Jihad's Damascus HQ to activists in the territories.

Nov. 8: Israeli artillery shells hit a four-story house in Beit Hanoun, killing 19 Palestinians, incl. 17 members of the Al-Athamneh family, and wounding some 40 others, mostly women and children. In response, senior Hamas members call for resumption of attacks inside Israel, while Islamic Jihad and Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades also vow revenge attacks. Pres. Abbas condemns Israel's "terrible massacres", which destroyed "all chances of peace."

- Two members of the Izz Eddin Al-Qassam Brigades, Ahmad Rajab and Ramzi Shheib, are killed in an attack on their car in Gaza.

- Near Jenin, Israeli troops ambush a group of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades activists, killing four as well as a civilian bystander.

- During an Israeli raid in Yamoun, soldiers shoot and kill two wounded and unarmed men, Salim Abu al-Heijah and Mahmoud Abu Hassan. (A B'Tselem investigation into their deaths states ten days later "that [they] were executed by soldiers while they lay wounded, unarmed and posed no risk to the soldiers," adding that "such a killing is defined as a war crime.")

- An Israeli sniper shoots and kills Nimr Mohammed Abul Naji, 17, in Beit Lahia.

- PM Olmert and DM Amir Peretz publish a joint statement in which they express regret for the civilian deaths in Beit Hanoun and offer humanitarian assistance to the PA.

- An Israeli court orders 71 Palestinians from 13 Bedouin families to immediately vacate land near Deir Nidham, Ramallah, where they live since 1969 on the grounds it is state land. The Bedouins claim that the land belongs to Palestinians living in the US.

Nov. 9: In Beit Hanoun, over 20,000 Palestinians participate in the funerals of the victims of Israeli shelling, incl. 17 members of the Al-Athamneh family. PRC and Islamic Jihad activists say through bullhorns that every Israeli target is legitimate for attack, incl. Israeli diplomatic missions in Arab countries and elsewhere. ▼▶



- Israeli army sources say a technical malfunction in the radar of the artillery battery that carried out an attack against Beit Hanoun was the cause for the mistaken shelling of civilians, which resulted in the deaths of 19 Palestinian civilians.

- Pres. Abbas and Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al speak on the telephone in their first contact since Masha'al made a speech in Damascus attacking Abbas' leadership.

- Fateh official Ahmed Qrei'a tells Israeli reporters that in order to salvage the peace process, the US and the Quartet must be more involved and calls on Pres. Bush to convene an international peace conference with representatives of countries from the region and present a new vision that would allow implementation of the Road Map.

- PMA head George Al-Abed says the Palestinian economy would shrink by at least 15% during this year and would not recover unless "the economic siege" of the Hamas govt. was lifted.

Nov. 10: At a press conference in Gaza, PM Haniyeh says he had agreed with Pres. Abbas on the guidelines for the new govt., which would be

based on the 'Prisoners Document,' but reiterates that his govt. would not be willing to give anything up in negotiations.

- MK Mohammed Barakeh (Hadash) says in Ramallah that the lives of Israelis would not improve "as long as our lives were the price. The security of your children is tied to the security of our children."

Nov. 11: At a ceremony at the Muqata'a in Ramallah marking the second anniversary of the death of late Pres. Yasser Arafat, Pres. Abbas tells the crowd of thousands that he hoped the new govt. would be established by the end of the month. He says: "Peace and security will not be realized under occupation and settlement and the inclusion of noble Jerusalem into Israel," adding that "Israel, if it wants peace, should apply international decisions and withdraw from Palestinian and Arab lands to the 1967 borders."

- Some 800,000 Palestinian students return to classes after the PA agreed to pay the teachers partial salaries, ending the strike.

Nov. 12: Israeli forces kill a Palestinian teenager near Beit Hanoun, who had entered an area used earlier to fire rockets at Israel.

- Following the US veto on a UNSC draft resolution on Israel's operations in Gaza, four Palestinian groups, including the PRC, threaten to target US interests and citizens.

- The Fateh RC decides to appoint Pres. Abbas Supreme Commander of Fateh, a post previously held by Yasser Arafat.

- Hamas and Fateh open talks on allocating Cabinet seats in a national unity govt.

- Former PM Ahmed Qreia arrives in Gaza to represent Pres. Abbas in talks between Palestinian factions.

- FM Zahar tells *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper: "We will not recognize Israel. We do not want to repeat the mistakes made by Fateh when it recognized [Israel] and gave concessions."

- FM Zahar endorses a statement by the Arab FMs calling for a peace conference attended by Arab parties, Israel and the UNSC's permanent members in order to reach a just and comprehensive settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict on all tracks according to international resolutions and the principle of land for peace.

Nov. 13: US-educated Prof. and long-time Pres. of Gaza's Islamic University, Dr. Mohammed Shubeir, has reportedly accepted the nomination to be the next PM of an emerging unity govt. ►

- In Ein Beit Al-Ma RC, Nablus, Israeli troops shoot dead Baha' Al-Khater, 26, of the PFLP's Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades.

- In a special interview with *Al-Quds*, PM Olmert says he would be willing to meet with Hamas Min.s. if the new govt. adopts the principles of the Quartet - recognizing Israel, renouncing violence and terror and accepting existing agreements. He also says peace would never be reached, except by a two-state solution and apologizes for the "tragedy of Beit Hanoun," saying it was not the goal to harm innocent people.

- The Knesset Legislative Committee says there are currently 710 Palestinians being held in Israeli jails under admin. detention without trial, in what Dep. State Prosecutor Shai Nitzan calls a preventative action, to keep them from committing future crimes.

Nov. 14: According to the initial agreement on forming a new govt., Hamas would head 10 ministries and Fateh 6. Hamas' spokesman in Gaza, Ismail Radwan, says Pres. Abbas has given Hamas guarantees that Arab countries and other members of the international community will end the boycott of the PA once a new govt. of technocrats is formed, even if the new govt. still refuses to recognize Israel. Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum says the agenda of the proposed national unity govt. would not include recognizing Israel or accepting a two-state solution.



Dr. Mohammed Shubeir

- In Jerusalem, US Security Coord. Lt. Gen. Keith Dayton convenes a first session of a security working group with Israelis and Palestinians meant to assure regular opening of the Rafah crossing. Participants included Palestinian Chief Negotiator Saeb Erekat, Israeli DM official Amos Gilad, and representatives from Egypt and the EU.

Nov. 15: A Qassam rocket fired from Beit Hanoun area on Sderot kills a woman and wounds two others people. Hamas and Islamic Jihad both claim responsibility for the attack.

- Pres. Abbas calls on Israel "not to waste the chance for peace" and to renew talks on a final settlement with the Palestinian, saying that as part of such a settlement, Israel would have to withdraw from the entire West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem.

- Pres. Abbas arrives in Gaza to meet with PM Haniyeh for talks over the PA unity govt..

- The ICRC says hospitals in the West Bank are working at only one-fifth of their capacity due to a lack of money sent to the PA, adding that a strike by govt. health workers had made matters worse.

Nov. 16: In Beit Al-Ma' RC, Israeli soldiers kill Mohammed Hmeidan.

- Pres. Abbas holds further talks on a new unity govt. in Gaza.

- Israel rejects a new EU initiative, headed by France and Spain, which calls for the deployment of an international force to supervise a cease-fire in the Gaza Strip. FM Tzipi Livni tells Spanish FM Miguel Moratinos that no initiative involving Israel which "was not coordinated with us" is acceptable.

- PM Olmert expresses reservations regarding the possibility that Israeli may undertake an extensive operation in the Gaza Strip and rejects a renewed occupation of the Philadelphi Route, along the border between Gaza and Egypt.

- While the PA welcomes the initiative unveiled by Spanish PM Zapatero for an international peace conference on the Middle East, Israel rejects it "out of hand" with FM Tzipi Livni telling Spanish FM Moratinos that Israel did not accept an initiative that was not coordinated with it in advance.

- The three Palestinian families - Athamneh, Kassem and Adwan - who lost 19 relatives in Israel's shelling last week of Beit Hanoun, hire Atty. Ehud Segev to sue Israel for monetary damages.

- Two Hamas PLC members - Mushir Al-Masri and Ahmed Bahar - cross into Gaza from Egypt carrying a total of \$4.2 million, saying the funds would be registered with the PA Finance Min..

- Israeli Infrastructure Min. Benjamin Ben-Eliezer calls on public radio for stepped up "targeted killing" operations of Palestinian leaders involved in rocket attacks.

- Noam Shalit, the father of the captured soldier, visits hospitalized Palestinian survivors of Israel's artillery barrage, calling both peoples "victims of the same madness" and urging an end to the bloodshed.

- The Nazareth District Court gives a compromise between the state prosecution and representatives of the families of 11 Arabs who were killed in the Oct. 2000 riots the status of a verdict, according to which the state will pay millions of NIS in compensation (the exact sum is not revealed) while stipulating that the agreement does not include any admission of responsibility for the deaths.

Nov. 17: During an Israeli arrest operation in Qalqilya, targeting wanted Hamas activist Mohammed Zayed, three Palestinians are killed and over 30 injured when troops open fire at a group of stone-throwers.

- During an anti-separation barrier demonstration in Bil'in, five protestors and two Israeli forces are injured.

- In response to the European peace initiative, a spokeswoman for the Israeli FM says Israel preferred direct dialogue between the parties, rather than an international conference, while Tzahi Hanegbi, Chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, calls the initiative superfluous, saying that an international observer force in Gaza would make Israel unable to take any action against rockets fired from there and would bring only a temporary false calm.

- Pres. Abbas meets with PM Haniyeh of Hamas for another round of talks on a unity govt., but with no progress.

- Hamas FM Mahmoud Zahar stresses that the formation of a national unity govt. hinges on international guarantees to end the boycott against the PA and the siege on the Palestinians.

Nov. 18: In Gaza, PRC gunman Said Hahjij, 20, is shot and killed by Israeli troops outside Beit Lahia. Later the day, troops kill a Palestinian youth, Thaer Al-Masri, 16, and injure five others in the same area.

- Pres. Abbas holds his first meeting with Mohammed Shubeir, the former University Pres. expected to head an emerging national unity govt..

- Min. for Strategic Threats Avigdor Lieberman calls for Israel to retake control over the Rafah crossing and the Philadelphi Route, telling *Israel Radio* that diplomatic and security initiatives are senseless since "There is no point in striking refugee camps and Palestinians who have nothing to lose," and "Instead, we should strike the entire Hamas leadership," while the West Bank "should be handled in cooperation with Jordan, and Abu Mazen should be ignored as he is not relevant, hated and lacking any authority in the territories." In response, Meretz Chairman Yossi Beilin calls on PM Olmert to dismiss Lieberman and Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat says Lieberman's ideas are "a recipe for the continuation of bloodshed, violence, extremism and hatred between the two sides."

- The Israeli army cancels a planned air strike on the homes of PRC commander Mohammed Al-Baroud and a Hamas activist in Jabalia RC after hundreds of Palestinians gather there to prevent their bombing. ►



- In response to UNGA Res. ES-10/16 adopted a day earlier, PA Interior Min. Said Siyam says it was an unjust resolution that equalizes between the victim and the executioner, while Israeli govt. spokesman Avi Pazner calls it an expression of "the anti-Israeli majority" and as "unbalanced and ... inapplicable, since it does not take into consideration the reason for the Israeli military operations, which come as a response to terrorist attacks".

Nov. 19: In an Israeli missile attack on a car in Gaza City, targeting two Hamas members, an elderly man on a donkey cart passing by at the time is killed and eight others are wounded, incl. three children.

- PM Haniyeh said that the participation of Hamas in a national unity govt. depends on guarantees that Western economic sanctions would end once a new administration was in place, telling reporters: "We are not going only for a photo opportunity. We want to lay the basis for real national unity, for a real political partnership. Therefore, the United States, the Europeans and our brothers, the Arabs, must shoulder their full responsibility to end the siege of the Palestinian people."

- PM Olmert dismisses the UNGA resolution that deplores a deadly Israeli artillery strike two weeks ago in Gaza, saying the forum should aim its criticism at Palestinian militants. *Israel Radio* quotes FM Tzipi Livni as saying the UNGA resolution, which was largely symbolic, shows pro-Palestinian nations were "letting off steam" after the US' veto.

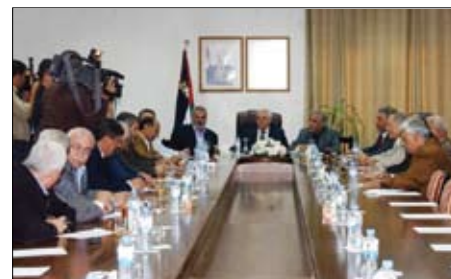
Nov. 20: In Gaza City, an Israeli air strike on a car kills two Hamas activists - Abdel Khader Habib and Basel Obeid - as well as six passersby.

- On a visit to Gaza, during which she also met Pres. Abbas, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour says human rights violations in the OPT were "massive" and "intolerable."

- At a meeting of Hamas, Fateh, Islamic Jihad, PFLP and DFLP in Gaza, Pres. Abbas says he received a proposal from Israeli DM Amir Peretz for a mutual ceasefire, in which Israel - unlike in previous proposals - would

agree to stop the fighting from its side, as well. Hamas says it was prepared to immediately halt Qassam attacks on Israel if the ceasefire was mutual. ►

- Hamas-Fateh national unity govt. talks are suspended after Hamas insists to retain the Finance and Interior Min. posts, while Fateh wants independent experts to take them over.



- Eight families of Israeli Arab victims killed in the Oct. 2000 riots reject a settlement approved by the Nazareth District Court, which ordered a one-time payout to 11 families of victims - averaging NIS 800,000 - on condition that the state does not take responsibility for the riots and subsequent loss of life. The eight families instead insist that "the Israeli establishment is primarily responsible for the murder of our sons, and therefore, we will act to bring to justice those who killed our sons, be it within local or international jurisdiction."

- In contradiction to their claims during the Lebanon war, the Israeli army admits for the first time targeting populated areas with cluster munitions, saying in a statement that "the use of cluster munitions against built-up areas was done only against military targets where rocket launches against Israel were identified and after taking steps to warn the civilian population."

Nov. 21: During a raid in Gaza City, Israeli soldiers kill two Palestinians, incl. top Hamas commander Wael Hassanein and a 70-year-old Palestinian woman, Sadeya Herez.

- Unknown militants abduct two Italian ICRC aid workers, Claudio Moroni and Gianmarco Oronato, near Khan Younis. They are released after eight hours.

- Israelis throw stones at the car of UNCHR High Commissioner Louise Arbour at the site of a Qassam attack near Sderot.

- A Peace Now report says that nearly 40% of the land on which settlements are located had been seized from private Palestinian owners, with much of it seized since the practice was outlawed in 1979.

Nov. 22: During clashes with Israeli troops in Gaza, two Hamas operatives, a woman and a boy are killed.

- In Jenin, Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades activist Fadi Imour is killed by Israeli soldiers.

- The diplomatic-security cabinet adopts Shin Bet chief Yuval Diskin's recommendation to refrain from targeted killings of Palestinian politicians as response to ongoing Qassam rocket fire and approves targeting Hamas institutions instead.

- Spokesman for the PA Interior Min. Khaled Abu Hilal announces that all necessary steps will be taken to arrest anyone involved in the abduction of foreigners.

- An ICRC report reveals a significant deterioration of the household economies in the WBGS over the last four years, with Dominik Stillhart, head of the ICRC delegation for Israeli and the OPT, saying "Humanitarian assistance alone, in whatever form, will not solve the problem in a sustainable way. It is the responsibility of the State of Israel, as the occupying power, to ensure that Palestinians can meet their basic needs."

- A Market Watch poll shows that 57% of Israeli respondents would like to see Israel engage in negotiations with Syria, though 54% are unprepared to withdraw from the Golan Heights in return for peace. Some 70% think Israel cannot handle holding negotiations with both Syria and the Palestinians at the same time, with 58% preferring Israel begin talks with Palestinians.

Nov. 23: Three Palestinians from the PRC, incl. the group's head in the northern Gaza Strip, Fayege Abu Al-Qumsan, and his Dep. Mahmoud Basiouni, are killed in a missile attack at their vehicle in Jabalia RC.

- Israeli tank fire in Beit Lahia kills two Palestinians, a Hamas and an Islamic Jihad member.
- A Palestinian man, Ala Omar Khalil, 20, is shot dead by Israeli troops near Jabalia.
- A woman, Fatmeh An-Najar, 57, carries out a suicide bombing on behalf of Hamas, near a group of soldiers, outside Jabalia RC.
- Islamic Jihad, Hamas and Fateh agree to stop launching Qassam rockets against Israel, if the Israeli army ceases its operations in the Gaza Strip.
- Meretz MK Yossi Beilin suggests a peace initiative called "Mapping the road from realignment to permanent status", saying: "We are on the verge of a [diplomatic] development in the region," and adding that both sides realized that "violence won't work".

Nov. 24: An unarmed Palestinian is killed near Al-Muntar (Karni) crossing when Israeli soldiers fire on three Palestinians approaching the border "in a suspicious manner."

- In clashes with Israeli troops in Jabalia RC, Hamas activist Ayman Juda, 22, and a boy, Abdul Aziz Salaman, 10, are killed.

- Lt.-Gen. Keith Dayton, US Security Coord. between Israel and the PA, tells *Yediot Achronot* that Iran was helping arm and fund Hamas, while the US wanted to prevent "moderate forces" in the OPT from being eliminated. "We are involved in building up the Pres.ial Guard, instructing it, assisting it to build itself up and giving them ideas. We are not training the forces to confront Hamas." ►



Lt.-Gen. Keith Dayton

- UNRWA bills the Israeli govt. \$28 million for port and container charges that it should never have had to pay, with UNRWA spokesman Matthias Burchard, saying: "The delays and the unrightfully collected port charges are the equivalent of food aid provided by the agency to all of Gaza in 2005,... It is causing us huge losses and leaving a big gap in our budget, which is a serious problem", adding that the Israelis had failed to honor agreements granting UNRWA immunity from the charges.

Nov. 25: An Israeli air strike on Gaza kills Hamas activist Mohammed Abdullah and wounds four others.

- Israeli forces shoot and kill Islamic Jihad activist Ahmed Labad, 22, in Gaza.

- Pres. Abbas and PM Haniyeh agree, with all Palestinian factions, to a ceasefire, incl. a halt to launching rockets from Gaza, to start the following day at 6 a.m.

Nov. 26: PA Interior Min. spokesman Khaled Abu Hilal tells *Ha'aretz* that the ceasefire beginning today in Gaza was the first decision of its kind involving all factions and if successful, would be extended to the West Bank, adding that "We are waiting for confidence-building measures from Israel."

- PA security forces begin deploying along Gaza's border with Israel in order to prevent Palestinians from firing Qassam rockets in violation of the ceasefire.

- Few hours after a ceasefire between Israel and Palestinian factions in Gaza goes into effect, three rockets are fired, claimed by the military wings of Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Saeb Erakat condemns the attacks and Hamas govt. spokesman Ghazi Hamad says all armed groups were committed to the agreement and any violations were rogue acts: "There is a 100 per cent effort to make this work, but there is no guarantee of 100 per cent results."

Nov. 27: The Israeli army kills two Palestinians - PRC activist Abdul Razeq Bakhar, and a 55-year-old woman, Fatma Nazzal - during an arrest operation in Qabatya, near Jenin.

- In a speech delivered at Sde Boker, PM Olmert proposes negotiations with Pres. Abbas over the establishment of a Palestinian state that would enjoying territorial contiguity in the West Bank, and promises that Israel would agree to "evacuate ... any communities which were established therein" as well as release many Palestinian prisoners, incl. those serving long terms - in exchange for abducted soldier Gilad Shalit. He also says that if 'terrorism' stops, Israel will undertake a series of steps to improve the Palestinians' quality of life.

- In response to Olmert's speech, spokesman for Pres. Abbas, Nabil Abu Rudeineh says what is needed now are actions and not words: "We need to sit down at the negotiating table in order to begin serious discussions based on the road map, the Saudi peace initiative, and primarily on UN Resolution 194 on the return of refugees." PA govt. spokesman Ghazi Hamad expresses suspicion at Olmert's words, saying "This is a collusion, a new maneuver ... Olmert speaks of a Palestinian state without detailing its borders."

- *Palestine Times*, the first privately owned English language daily in the WBGS is launched by its editor-in-chief, Othman Haj Mohammed, with an initial 12 pages and a circulation of 5,000. ►



- PM Haniyeh calls on Israel to halt its military operations in the West Bank in order to bolster the ceasefire in Gaza.

- The Islamic Movement rejects compromise proposals put forth by the Museum of Tolerance management, which include transferring the Muslim graves discovered at its construction site in Jerusalem to a nearby Muslim cemetery, or constructing underground spaces for the graves, as "violat[ing] Islamic law".

- US envoy Elliott Abrams arrives in Israel in preparation of Sec. of State Rice's visit to Jerusalem.

- The Army of Islam, believed to be behind the capture of Cpl. Gilad Shalit, says in an Internet statement that it would not abide by a ceasefire with Israel.

Nov. 28: Despite harsh criticism by the High Court of Justice, the govt. proposes to extend the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law (the Temporary Order known as the "Citizenship Law"), by another two years, until the end of 2008.

- PM Haniyeh leaves Gaza for a visit to Islamic countries, incl. Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Syria.

- The Knesset Internal Affairs and Environment Committee begins deliberations on 'Amendment 19' to the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law, which would obligate anyone without a valid residency permit to leave the country for a cooling-off period of from one to five years. Most affected by the amendment are Israeli Arabs who want to marry a resident of the PA and live with him/her in Israel, since the couple would only be able to apply for residency in Israel for the Palestinian partner on the basis of family reunification following an extended, and illegal, stay in Israel. MK Jamal Zahalka (Balad) says the bill shows that "everything aimed at hurting [Israel's] Arab citizens passes easily."

Nov. 29: Israeli troops kill a Palestinian activist and a 50-year-old woman during an exchange of fire in the West Bank.

- On orders by a military court, Israel releases Public Works and Housing Min., Abdel Rahman Zeidan - arrested on 3 Nov. - after failing to find evidence that he had been involved in violence himself.

- Israel closes the Rafah Terminal after FM Zahar brought in millions of dollars in his suitcase.

- In talks with senior Israeli officials, Egyptian Intelligence Chief Omar Suleiman indicates that in spite of the ceasefire agreement, a resolution of the abduction of Corporal Gilad Shalit is not forthcoming.

- In a speech at the burial site of Israel's first PM, David Ben-Gurion, in Sde Boker, Olmert reaches out to the Palestinians, saying he was prepared to grant them a state, release funds and free prisoners if they choose the path of peace.

Nov. 30: Israeli soldiers shoot dead a rocket-throwing youth, Shahdi Nayef, 16, in Beita, near Nablus.

- During talks with Pres. Abbas in Jericho and PM Olmert in Jerusalem, US Sec. of State Rice says she hopes for "a more comprehensive ceasefire." ►



- Pres. Abbas announces at the press conference that the talks with Hamas on the creation of a national unity govt. have reached a "dead end."

- A new OCHA report entitled "The Agreement on Movement and Access: one year on", states: "The ability of Palestinian residents of the Gaza Strip to access either the West Bank or the outside world remains extremely limited and the flow of commercial trade is negligible. ... There has been no peaceful economic development as envisaged by the Agreement on Movement and Access but rather a deterioration in the humanitarian situation and an increase in violence overall."

Dec. 1: Israeli troops shoot dead Bashar Al-Ja'bari, 22, near the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron, allegedly after throwing a Molotov cocktail at them.

- Pres. Abbas convenes the PLO Exec. Committee and leaders of all parliamentary groups, excl. Hamas, to discuss future steps after declaring that talks to form a national unity govt. with Hamas was at a dead end. He also calls on PM Haniyeh to resign to make way for the appointment of a new PM who could then resume negotiations with Abbas.

Dec. 2: PM Haniyeh rejects demands that his govt. resign and calls for the resumption of talks to form a national unity govt. with Fateh. Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum calls the call for Haniyeh's resignation "a coup" and says "We cannot accept such a step which is against Palestinian democracy and goes against the election results. The PLO does not represent the Palestinian people." ▲



Fawzi Barhoum

- In Askar RC in Nablus, Israeli troops shoot dead a Palestinian boy, Jamil Az-Zabazhi, 15, during clashes.

- A six-year old Palestinian boy is shot by settlers while crossing Road 60 near the settlement of Haggai.

- Palestinian factions agree with Pres. Abbas to enforce the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and on forming a special committee to outline conditions that secured the continuation of calm.

Dec. 3: *Ha'aretz* reports that the Dutch bank ASN has decided to divest itself of its holdings in a French company that is participating in building Jerusalem's light rail system, on the grounds that the project "is not in line with the United Nation's demand to stop all support for Israel's settlement activities."

- Israel's diplomatic security cabinet rules that Israeli forces will no longer arrest Palestinians in the West Bank without explicit approval from either the GOC Central Command or the army commander, and that targeted killings need approval from both PM Olmert and DM Peretz.

- Hamas announces that it would boycott discussions on expanding the ceasefire to the West Bank in protest over Pres. Abbas' decision to halt

talks on establishing a unity govt.

- *Ha'aretz* reports of PM Haniyeh's announcement that the Qatari govt. had agreed to pay the salaries of all teachers employed by the PA Education Min., at a cost of \$22.5 million a month.

- Settlers from Haggai settlement in Hebron uproot 100 olive trees belonging to villagers in Qalqas.

- Banks in the OPT go on a one-day strike to protest an attack against a bank in the Gaza Strip. The strike was a warning against attacks on Palestinian institutions.

- During a visit to the Gaza Strip, French Socialist Pres.ial candidate, Segolène Royal, calls for the resumption of international aid to the Palestinians. ►



Dec. 4: Israeli forces shoot dead Mahmoud Abdul Ael, 23, and injure another man in Tulkarem.

- In Hebron, a boy, Mohammed Faris Al-Atrash, 5, is seriously wounded after being shot by a settler while he was standing in the courtyard of his house, near the Haggai settlement.

- Israeli Environment Min. Gideon Ezra says that he supports the release of imprisoned Fateh-Tanzim leader Marwan Barghouti in exchange for kidnapped soldier Gilad Shalit and a pledge to continue the ceasefire, saying that Barghouti's release could reduce terror and strengthen Fateh as a moderate factor.

- PM Olmert states that Israel should show restraint in the face of continued Qassam rocket fire since the declaration of the ceasefire, while Likud Chairman Benjamin Netanyahu warns that "the policy of restraint will turn Gaza into Lebanon number two."

- PM Haniyeh urges that efforts to form a national unity govt. must continue.

- The PA Planning Min. and Acting Finance Min. Samir Abu Aisha announces that an agreement had been reached between the govt. and the Union of Health Workers, guaranteeing that the salaries of the employees would be paid and they would return to work, ending their four-month strike. ►



Samir Abu Aisha

- A Fateh's Central Committee statement reads: "The impasse which negotiations over the national unity government ran up against resulted from the intransigence of Hamas and its refusal to recognize past Israeli-Palestinian agreements. ...Fateh is entirely ready to support a government of national unity able to lift the blockade and end the international boycott".

- In Kufr Biddya an Israeli truck driver is stabbed and his truck stolen but later recovered in Qalqilya.

- Israel's Education Min. Yuli Tamir orders that new geography textbook maps include the Green Line (the June 1967 border between the West Bank and Israel). While many MKs sharply criticize the recommendation, PM Olmert raises no objection but stresses the obligation to emphasize that Israeli "govt. position and public consensus rule out returning to the 1967 lines."

Dec. 5: The European Commission, through the TIM, has begun to pay a social allowance of €185 to over 73,000 Palestinian households living below the poverty line.

Dec. 6: Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court sentences to nine months in jail Shimon Ben-Haim, a man who together with his partner, Victoria Steinman, threw a pig's head into the Hassan Bek Mosque in Jaffa, claiming that

with this act they intend to disrupt disengagement.

- AP quotes Israeli Vice-PM Shimon Peres as saying that " Hamas does not want peace, even if we give them '67 borders ... Hamas wants to use Fateh as a façade to get money."

- OCHA head David Shearer says the UN would ask donor countries to contribute \$450 million when it launches its consolidated appeal for the OPT on 7 Dec., to support job creation, cash assistance, the health and education systems, and food aid to the Palestinians.

Dec. 7: The PLO's Exec. Committee recommends that Pres. Abbas dissolve the Hamas govt. and call for early elections as early as March in an attempt to overcome the deadlock in the talks between Hamas and Fateh.

- Reuters reports that an Israeli businessman, Avi Shaked, had offered PM Haniyeh \$1 billion if he and his Israeli counterpart would sit down and reach a peace agreement, quoting Shaked as saying: "The moment that both sides reach an agreement, this private equity that I am offering will immediately invest \$1 billion. The first 10% will be invested immediately when the negotiations start."

- Ma'ariv reports that the US was putting pressure on Israel to accept the 2002 Saudi initiative while attempting to make some amendments to the initiative in order to better suit Israel.

- 12 UN agencies and 14 NGOs operating in the OPT launch an emergency appeal for \$453.6 million to help meet increasing Palestinian humanitarian needs in 2007. According to OCHA it was the largest appeal for emergency humanitarian assistance ever launched in the OPT and the third biggest in the world.

- The ICRC says it was increasing aid to growing numbers of " destitute families" in Israel and the OPT suffering from the "further degradation of the economic situation", for a total of 71 million Swiss francs.

Dec. 8: Israeli soldiers open fire on a group of children playing with a plastic rifle in the Aida RC near Bethlehem, seriously injuring Miras Al-Azza, 12, with a shot in the abdomen.

Dec. 9: Pres. Abbas proposes Mohammed Dahlan return to his former job as the PA's national security adviser. Dahlan does not agree immediately.

- In Gaza, hundreds of Fateh-affiliated PA security forces demonstrate against the non-payment of their salaries, resulting in exchanges of fire between Hamas and Fateh gunmen that wound one policeman. ►



- In Jenin, some 4,000 members of the Palestinian security forces stage a march to press for their salaries.

- In Hebron, dozens of parents carrying infants break into a mother-and-child clinic, which has been closed because of the health workers' strike, demanding vaccinations for their babies.

- At a PLO Exec. Committee meeting, Pres. Abbas says he might call early elections. ►

- Ha'aretz reports that two emissaries of PM Olmert - his Bureau Chief Yoram Turbowicz and his political adviser Shalom Turjeman - had secretly visited Pres. Abbas in Ramallah to discuss, *inter alia*, the possibility of an Olmert-Abbas meeting. Abbas indicates that he wants Fateh leader Marwan Barghouti released from prison.



Dec. 10: Three children, Osama, Ahmed, and Salam, 3-9 years old, and their driver are killed in Gaza in a failed attempt to assassinate senior intelligence officer Baha Balousha, the father of the dead boys. Following

the attack, Fateh officials call for the resignation of PM Haniyeh and Interior Min. Siyam, accusing them of turning a blind eye to the political assassinations. Hamas condemns the killings and issues a statement saying it was not involved in the murders. ►



- Israeli DM Amir Peretz says that the Saudi peace Initiative, which calls for a two-state solution along the 1967 borders, must be used as a basis for negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians."

- Hamas PLC member Mohammed Al-Ghoul says that "According to the law, the President has no authority to call any referendum or any election. This requires changing provisions in the constitution. It's another desperate attempt to overthrow the existing parliament and government."

- Physicist Stephen Hawking on his 9-day visit to Israel and the PA tells PM Olmert that he notices a marked deterioration in the situation in the Middle East since he last visited the region in 1990. The two agree on the importance of strengthening the moderate Palestinian side.

Dec. 11: Yasser Abed Rabbo is appointed Sec.-Gen. of the PLO Exec. Committee.

- Senior Islamic Jihad official Khaled Al-Batsh says a higher committee of Palestinian factions will propose a new plan to settle differences between Hamas and Pres. Abbas over forming a unity govt.

- The Israeli High Court rules on a key petition filed by ACRI and Adalah on behalf of nine human rights organizations, calling to rescind the 'Intifada Law', i.e., amendment to the civil damages law that frees the army of any obligations to pay damages for incidents that occurred since Sept. 2000. The Court unanimously overturns this major section of the Law, but declines to overturn another one, which bars subjects of enemy states and members of terrorist organizations from filing damage suits against the state, and upholds the state's immunity from suits for damages incurred during combat operations.

- A group calling itself 'Human Rights in Yesha' maintains that "the settler public" suffers "blatant violations of its human rights", charging in its report that the settlers receive nearly no backing from human rights organizations operating in Israel. Writing about the clashes that erupted between settlers and Israeli forces during the disengagement from Gaza and the evacuation of the illegal outpost of Amona, the group charges the police with exercising "organized and planned violence".

Dec. 12: As Fateh-Hamas clashes flare up following the killing of three children of a Fateh official, Hamas security forces open fire on stone-throwing demonstrators in Khan Younis, wounding four Fateh activists, and heavily-armed members of PA security forces deploy around key installations and road junctions in Gaza City.

- In the wake of the killing of three children of a Fateh official a day earlier, Fateh senior official Hussein Sheikh says, "Of course people very close to Hamas, to say the least, are behind the killings. We hold the Government and the Interior Min. directly responsible".

- During an Israeli raid in Qalqilya, Latifa Miskawi, 57, dies of a heart attack when soldiers hurl a stun grenade inside her home.

- Atty. Gen. Mazuz demands that DM Peretz stop delaying the publication of regulations - incl. imprisonment and heavy fines - that would make it easier for the state to combat illegal construction in settlements and outposts. Mazuz also makes clear that although illegal Palestinian construction in the West Bank is twice as extensive as illegal Jewish construction, from 1997 to 2006, 10 times as many illegal Palestinian houses as illegal Jewish houses have been destroyed: 1,519 Palestinian compared to 150 Jewish buildings.

- Atty. Gilad Sherman of the Israeli Justice Min.'s High Court division

acknowledges publicly that “the law enforcement situation in the territories is not good.”

- Riad Al-Luh, a Gaza-born Israeli citizen who was kidnapped in the Gaza Strip on 27 Oct. is released after 46 days in captivity.

- An UNRWA press release says that the living conditions among Palestinians had slumped to levels unseen since 1967 and appeals for \$246 million in emergency funding for 2007.

Dec. 13: Tensions flash into violence between Hamas and Fateh in the West Bank following the assassination of Shari’a Court judge and Hamas member Bassam Al-Far’a in Khan Younis by what is widely believed Fateh gunmen, although no one claims responsibility for the killing. PM Haniyeh cuts short his tour of Muslim states.

- After PM Haniyeh is delayed for hours before being allowed to return to Gaza through the Rafah crossing and forced to leave behind over \$30 million in cash contributions from Iran and Arab states, violent outbursts of Hamas supporters occur, and 15 Palestinians are injured in a gun battle with Egyptian security forces.

- A Palestinian man stabs and seriously injures an Israeli security guard at Qalandia checkpoint.

- Israeli troops shoot and kill a Palestinian, Ala Makawi, 22, approaching the border fence near the Al-Muntar (Karni) crossing.

- In Hebron, Israeli soldiers storm into As-Samoa’ High School, damaging equipment and property, and seize an adjacent house belonging to the Al-Badareen family, turning it into a military post.

- Vice-PM Peres tells British Sec. of State for International Development Hilary Benn that Israel will transfer tax revenue to the PA only once it is confident that the money will not be used to finance terror against Israel. Benn expresses Britain’s interest in cooperating on the joint Israeli-Palestinian-Jordanian “Peace Valley” industrial park industrial park, which will receive a preferred trade agreement.

- Israel’s High Court rejects by a vote of 6:1 a petition filed by residents of Dahiet Al-Barid to move the separation barrier, which bisects the neighborhood, stating “We found no reason to assume that the fence was intended for the purpose of annexing territory. The damage to the petitioners is not so grave as to be disproportionate.”

Dec 14: In Nablus, Israeli undercover forces kill the head of Fateh’s military wing, Mohammed Rammah, while trying to arrest him. ▶



- During clashes between soldiers and stone-throwing Palestinians in Ad-Dik near Nablus, Wahib Al-Dik, is shot and killed by troops.

- After being delayed for hours at the Rafah crossing, as order by Israeli DM Peretz, PM Haniyeh returns to Gaza without an estimated \$35 million he had carried. Emerging from the border terminal, shots are fired at him, killing one bodyguard and injuring his son Abdel Salam, political adviser Ahmed Yousef as well as 27 others.

- In further Gaza violence, gunmen shoot and injure several Palestinian intelligence officers while arresting PRC member Hisham Mukhmir, a suspect in the killings of the three young sons of a Fateh security official on 11 Dec.. In return, PRC members kidnap intelligence officer Maj. Mohammed Abu Siyam.

- Israeli High Court of Justice rules that targeted killings of ‘terrorists’ are legal under certain circumstances, but not all, and puts forward several criteria that must be met: a) the need for “convincing and well-founded” information proving the “direct” involvement of the target in terrorist activity, b) an impossibility of dealing with the problem through other methods, such as, for example, arrest c) no (or unavoidable and ‘balanced’) harming of innocent civilians in the vicinity of the target; d) the need for the target still to be directly involvement in terrorist activity,

e) the need for a thorough and independent investigation into the accuracy of the target’s identification as a terrorist and, if the identification was mistaken, a liability of the state to pay compensation.

- The Israeli High Court of Justice rules that military police and prosecution must open a new investigation into the killing of Iman Al-Hams, 13, who was shot by soldiers on her way to school in Gaza in Oct. 2004. An earlier probe had ended with the responsible officer’s acquittal after two key witnesses admitted to having lied. The new investigation will focus on whether the troops were given illegal orders and by whom.

- Responding to a petition by local Palestinian residents and ACRI, the High Court of Justice rules that the army has six months to dismantle a 14-km-long part of the separation barrier along a road between the two West Bank settlements of Carmel and Tena in the South Mount Hebron, which prevents pedestrians and flocks of sheep from crossing the road and was a “disproportionate” security measure.

Dec. 15: Hamas and Fateh-allied gunmen exchange fire in Gaza City hours after Hamas accused Mohammed Dahlan of orchestrating the attack on PM Haniyeh at the Rafah border terminal a day earlier.

- In Ramallah, Hamas supporters marching to mark the 19th anniversary of Hamas’ founding clash with Fateh-allied police, which leaves over 32 people wounded. ▶



- Settlers from Susiya uproot 70 olive trees belonging to a Palestinian farmer from Samoa.

Dec. 16: Speaking at the Muqata’a in Ramallah, Pres. Abbas asks the Central Elections Committee to prepare for early elections and to discuss a date with him, adding that until then, he would be willing to discuss setting up a technocrat cabinet with Hamas, which he blames for the deteriorating security and economic situation in the PA. Hamas leaders reject the call for early elections, calling it an attempted coup, and say that the “confrontational” tone of Abbas’ speech made it clear he was no longer a partner. PM Haniyeh advisor Ahmed Yousef says “Abu Mazen is not part of the solution anymore. He is part of the problem now,” adding, “We will challenge him everywhere.” Islamic Jihad leader Ramadan Shallah urges Hamas and Fateh to reach an agreement, calling Abbas’ decision “lawless”. Following Abbas’ announcement, Fateh and Hamas supporters clash in Gaza.

Dec. 17: After a day of bloodshed in which Pres. Abbas’ office comes under fire, his forces take over two Hamas-run ministries, FM Zahar’s convoy is shot at, three Palestinians (incl. a 19-year-old girl, Hiba Masbah, a member of the Pres.ial Guard, and a Fateh security officer) die and 20 are wounded, Hamas and Fateh reach a deal - brokered by Islamic Jihad, DFLP and PFLP - to stop fighting, incl. a halt to displays of arms, marches, incitement, abductions, and besieging offices. They also agree to establish a special committee to investigate the recent violence.

- Fateh issues a statement late during the day calling on its members not to fire unless there was a serious threat on their lives. The statement also accused Hamas of trying to overthrow Pres. Abbas.

- Pres. Abbas meets with members of the Central Election Commission to discuss a possible elections date.

- A poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research places Pres. Abbas (46%) and PM Haniyeh (45%) in a statistical tie in a Pres.ial race, while Fateh would defeat Hamas by a 42-36 margin in parliamentary elections.

- *Ha’aretz* reports that in order to sell goods in the Gaza Strip merchants have to pay over half a million shekels in “protection money” to drivers and shippers for transfer of goods from Israel to Gaza through the Al-Muntar (Karni) crossing point.

- British PM Blair arrives for meetings with Pres. Abbas in Ramallah and PM Olmert in Jerusalem in a bid to push for the resumption of the peace process, vowing to cooperate with any Palestinian govt. that recognizes Israel, renounces violence and accepts all previous agreements between the PLO and Israel. ►



- Settlers from Pnei Hever burn 200 olive and almond trees belonging to a Palestinian farmer from Bani Na'im.

Dec. 18: The ceasefire between Palestinian factions in Gaza collapses less than 24 hours after it was forged when Hamas gunmen abduct former Fateh Cabinet Min. Sufian Abu Zaida, and Fateh responds by kidnapping 11 Hamas members in the Jabalia area.

- As part of a deal between them, Fateh and Hamas free members of the other side they had abducted during recent the violence.

- At a press conference with visiting British PM Blair, Pres. Abbas says he will push ahead with his call for new elections.

- British PM Blair meets with Israeli PM Olmert, FM Livni and DM Peretz in Jerusalem, speaking about his initiative to strengthen the PA's capacity to govern. At the meeting, Olmert announces that he is setting up a joint panel with the Palestinians to discuss the release of Palestinian prisoners and says he was very interested to meet Pres. Abbas.

- *Yedioth Aharonoth* reports that the Israeli army did nothing to prevent a dozen settlers, evacuated from Homesh settlement in Sept. 2005, to return to the site for Hanukkah.

- UN and other international organizations in the WBGs are reviewing the implications of an order, issued by GOC Central Command Yair Naveh on 19 Nov., that states: "An Israeli will not transport in an Israeli vehicle within the area a person who is not Israeli, except in accordance with a permit given to him or given to the person who is not Israeli." ACRI, Machsom Watch, Yesh Din, and others announce their intention to ignore the order and not apply for permits.

- In a meeting with PM Olmert, a delegation of US senators, led by John McCain and Joseph Lieberman, urge Israel not to be tempted by Syria's recent overtures regarding negotiations, reminding that the Baker-Hamilton report, which recommends US talks with Syria and Iran, has not been adopted by the US Admin.

- The Israeli High Court of Justice calls Israel's ban on Palestinian students to study at Israeli universities "unreasonable," and orders the army to set criteria for the admission of Palestinian students into local universities. The Arava Institute for Environmental Studies, as well as the heads of six of Israel's seven universities, the Education Min., the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, and MKs join the petition demanding the elimination of the ban.

Dec. 19: Near Tulkarem, Israeli soldiers shoot a girl, Da'ah Abd al-Qadr, 14, and seriously wound her friend, Rasha Shalbi, 12, while trying to cross the separation fence to visit relatives in Israel. The responsible officer is dismissed from his post five days later following an investigation conducted by GOC Central Command Maj.-Gen. Yair Naveh. ▲



- Six Palestinians are killed in fighting between Fateh and Hamas gunmen in Gaza. Later at night both sides agree to a renewal of calm.

- Pres. Abbas issues a statement calling on all factions "without exception" to observe a ceasefire agreed late the previous day. Late during

the day in Ramallah, after PA Interior Min. Said Siyam had met with the chiefs of Fateh-affiliated security and police forces, Abbas announces a new ceasefire to take effect at 11 p.m..

- In Nablus, Israeli forces kill Fateh operative Rami Anab, 22. ►

- During a raid in Sida village, an Israeli undercover unit shoots and kills Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades commander in the Tulkarem area, Mohammed Hamad.

- Fateh's Sufian Abu Ziadeh is released a day after being kidnapped by what he says were teenagers who did not understand the implications of their acts.

- In Hebron, masked gunmen kidnap known Hamas loyalist Mohammed Al-Kharuf, 40, while working in the Ahli Hospital.

- The Knesset approves by a vote of 46:9 the first reading of a govt. proposal to extend a temporary amendment to the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law by two years, until the end of 2008. Under the bill, Israel has the right to reject an applicant for family unification even if he otherwise meets all the criteria, "if, in the applicant's country of residence, or within the vicinity of his residence, activities liable to endanger the security of the State of Israel or its citizens take place," making it possible to reject any resident of the PA, as well as of most Arab country.

- Top Jewish, Christian, Muslim and Druze leaders in the "Interreligious Dialogue" program of Israel's Arabic TV, find themselves unable to agree on how to word a statement on ending violence in the region. The religious leaders find it hard to agree on the word "occupation" with Sephardi Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar rejecting the word "occupation" on the grounds that "the blessed God, creator of the heavens and earth, gave the Land of Israel to the people of Israel. I don't call that occupation".

Dec. 20: In Silat Al-Hartiya near Jenin, two wanted Islamic Jihad members, Salah Sawafat and Hussam Issa, are killed in a firefight with Israeli forces. ►



- Israel's State Prosecutor's office maintains that because three Hamas PLC members from Jerusalem are "senior members of Hamas, which calls for the destruction of the State of Israel," it was right for the state to rescind their status as permanent residents.

- At a press conference with visiting Norwegian PM Stoltenberg, PM Olmert reiterates his rejection of Syrian Pres. Assad's offer to renew peace talks with no preconditions, saying "We want to make peace with Syria, but our skepticism stems from Syria's behavior."

- Israeli settlers from Immanuel begin leveling land belonging to Palestinians from Jinsafut (Qalqilya) for the expansion of the settlement.

Dec. 21: Aides to PM Olmert and Pres. Abbas meet for preparatory talks in advance of the leaders' planned meeting, outlining each others expectations, with Palestinians stressing the issue of releasing Palestinian prisoners. An agreement on removing certain checkpoints and ease Palestinian movement is reached.

- At a news conference with PM Abbas, visiting Italian FM Massimo D'Alema affirms that his country was ready to propose the tripartite initiative by Italy, France and Spain as a European initiative, adding that domestic stability in the OPT was a precondition for the European peace initiative, which includes international forces to be stationed in the Gaza Strip, along with the establishment of a Palestinian State by the end of 2007.



- European monitors stationed at the Rafah crossing reach an agreement with Palestinian, Egyptian and Israeli officials to stop cash being brought in by Hamas officials; instead the money will now be deposited in an Egyptian bank.

- DM Amir Peretz has approved the original route of the separation barrier surrounding Ma'ale Adumim, placing 64,000 dunums of West Bank land on the Israeli side of the barrier.

Dec. 22: Despite a two-day-old ceasefire between, several heavy gun battles between Hamas and Fateh break out in Gaza City and Nablus. A Hamas activist is killed and at least ten other people are wounded.



- In Nablus, six Palestinians are wounded, two of them seriously, in clashes between Hamas and Fateh, which erupted when Fateh men tried to prevent Hamas supporters from organizing a 19th anniversary celebration. ▲

- PM Haniyeh says he accepted calls by Pres. Abbas to resume talks on forming a unity govt..

- In a FAFO opinion poll 54% of the Palestinian respondents say they would prefer a new national unity coalition govt. over new elections (21% support).

Dec. 23: In the first meeting with Pres. Abbas in 22 months, PM Olmert makes some concessions to help bolster the PA Chairman, incl. the transfer of \$100 million in frozen tax money to the PA to meet humanitarian needs, and to remove several West Bank checkpoints, but rejects the release of Palestinian prisoners before kidnapped soldier Gilad Shalit is released. Olmert reiterates his willingness in principle to transfer guns from Egypt to Abbas' forces in Gaza, and to have the PLA's Badr Brigade from Jordan come to Gaza. ▲



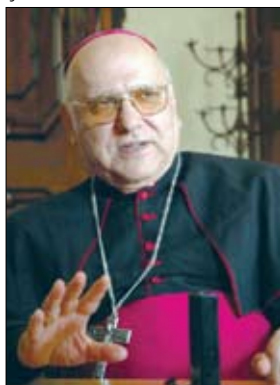
- As violence among rival Palestinians factions continues, Pres. Abbas rejects a Hamas proposal for a several-year truce with Israel as a "defrauding of the Palestinian people."

Dec. 24: The army comes out against Olmert's promise to remove some checkpoints in the West Bank and DM Peretz rejects a specific plan to remove 27 of the over 400 roadblocks, thus endangering the implementation of measures agreed upon by PM Olmert and Pres. Abbas earlier this week.

- Israel expels Palestinian prisoner Abdullah Saadi, 26, an Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades activist from Jenin, from the West Bank to Gaza, claiming he had posed an "imminent danger" to security in the West Bank.

- Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah, says in his midnight mass in Bethlehem, "We call on Israeli and Palestinian officials to take new steps to put an end to the killing and lead our two peoples to a new period." ►

- ACRI submits a complaint to the Military Police on behalf of Palestinians living south of Mount Hebron due to ongoing harassment by soldiers, incl. rock-throwing, property destruction and being imprisoned in their homes for hours.



Michel Sabbah

- The Israeli DM approves building a new settlement in Maskiot in the northern Jordan Valley, where a few settlers already

live. It is to house 30 families from former Gaza settlements.

- The Israeli CBS finds that as of Christmas Eve Israel's Christian population is numbering 148,000, i.e., 2.1% of the total population. Of those, 120,000 are Arabs, while 28,000 came as immigrants with Jewish relatives from Russia and Ethiopia.

Dec. 25: PM Olmert instructs the security establishment to implement steps to make daily Palestinian life easier, incl. allowing a greater volume of merchandise to be taken across checkpoints, shortening lines at roadblocks, and issuing an increased number of permits for merchants, VIPs and international organization workers.

- GOC Central Command Yair Naveh presents a NIS 70 million plan for building bypass tunnels below Route 60 to make Palestinian movement easier.

- Brig. Gen. Sami Turjeman, head of the operations directorate in the General Staff, tells the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that Israel will soon have to face improved Palestinian weapons capabilities in the Gaza Strip.

- *Ha'aretz* reports that Israel's Coord. of Govt. Activities in the Territories is to publish new regulations concerning family reunification in the West Bank to prevent the forced separation of families and allow thousands of Palestinians married to citizens of Western countries, especially the US, to come to and stay in the West Bank. This would reverse a 2006 decision by Israel to deny thousands of people entrance to the West Bank.

- Simultaneously conducted polls by the Israeli Hebrew University's Truman Institute and the PCPSR in Ramallah find that a majority of both Israelis and Palestinians - 58 and 81%, respectively - favor talks on a final status rather than an interim agreement. Most Israelis opposed the Arab peace plan, apparently due to its vagueness on Palestinian refugees' right of return, and 61% of Palestinians want early elections, in which Fateh would outpoll Hamas for parliament while the Presidential candidates are neck and neck.

- *Ha'aretz* reports on a petition to the High Court of Justice in which the Israeli army offers to "voluntarily transfer" the residents of two villages located adjacent to Alfei Menashe settlement in order to avoid disruption over the route of the separation barrier.

- Israeli DM Amir Peretz says he supports the release of some Palestinian prisoners, even without freeing captured Israeli soldier Galit first, saying every year there has been a humanitarian release of prisoners around holidays and that there should be such a goodwill gesture this year, too.

Dec. 26: After Qassam rockets, fired by Islamic Jihad, injure two boys in Sderot, DM Peretz and army officials call on PM Olmert to suspend the policy of restraint and let the army fire at launcher cells.

- In an interview with *Ha'aretz* Israeli FM Livni confirms her belief in talks with the Palestinians, even under fire. Regarding her diplomatic plans she says "The vision is the State of Israel as a national home for the Jewish people, which provides a solution for the problem of the Jewish people and for Jewish refugees, and provides a national expression for each and every Jew, and alongside it a Palestinian state that is the national home of the Palestinian nation, which provides a total solution for the problem of the Palestinian nation and the Palestinian refugees." Regarding borders she adds that for her the dividing line was the separation fence and that the public would support the evacuation of tens of thousands of settlers who live beyond it.

- Israeli DM Peretz authorizes the repopulation of Maskiot, an abandoned Nahal infantry brigade settlement in the Jordan Valley, with 30 homes for families evacuated from Gaza Strip settlements. ►

- Knesset Education Committee calls on DM Peretz to reverse the sweeping ban on Palestinians studying in Israeli universities.



Dec. 27: *Ha'aretz* reports that Egypt has transferred arms and ammunition to PA security organizations in Gaza, in a move carried out with Israel's approval aiming at bolstering Fateh affiliated groups vis-à-vis Hamas. Pres. Abbas denies the report the next day.

- PM Olmert gives the army permission to attack rocket-launching cells in Gaza Strip as long as they are identified shortly before the launching, but reiterating Israel's commitment to the ceasefire in Gaza still stands.

- PM Olmert meets Egyptian FM Ahmed Abul Gheith at his Jerusalem office to discuss ceasefire violations and their implications as well as other developments in the Middle East. Later Abul Gheith tells a press conference that captured Israeli soldier Shalit was still alive.

- US State Dept. spokesman Gonzo Gallegos states that Israel's plan to settle 30 families in Maskiot base in the Jordan Valley would violate terms of the Road Map. The EU also expresses deep concern about the Maskiot settlement plan.

Dec. 28: Reports from the Israeli Civil Admin. show that since the start of the Lebanon War in July, settlers have placed some 200 mobile homes and trailers in outposts and settlements and that despite declarations by PM Olmert and DM Peretz, there has been no progress toward dismantling outposts.

- At El-Arish airport in Sinai, PM Haniyeh tells reporters that "The issue of Palestinian prisoners will be resolved soon, and they will be released along with the Israeli soldier."

- *Ha'aretz* reports that Israel will impose limits on the transfer of funds from the territories to Palestinians held in its prisons for security-related offenses, starting 1 Feb. 2007: the maximum sum per month per inmate will be NIS 1,300 and control of funds distribution will be moved from the prisoners' leadership to the prison authorities.

- European monitors temporarily close the Rafah border between Gaza and Egypt after PM Haniyeh passes through with his car, in violation of an agreement reached two weeks earlier, under which the PM



must pass on foot, with no special privileges. ◀▲

- PM Olmert is angered about FM Tzipi Livni's diplomatic initiative - advocating an Israeli pullout from the West Bank east of the separation barrier and the establishment of a Palestinian state in the evacuated area - and her recent meetings - without

having briefed him - with Palestinian leaders, incl. Yasser Abed Rabbo and Salam Fayyad.

- According to CBS figures, Israel's population stands at 7.1 million (76% Jewish and 20% Arab), and has grown of 1.8% this year, with 88% of the growth due to natural increase, while 12% were immigrants.

- In *Ha'aretz's* weekend magazine, Israeli FM Tzipi Livni states, "My vision says that the principle of two nation-states is not only an Israeli gift to the Palestinians, but also a promotion of Israel's interests," adding that "The vision is the State of Israel as a national home for the Jewish people ... and alongside it a Palestinian State that is the national home of the Palestinian nation, which provides a total solution for the problem of the Palestinian nation and the Palestinian refugees, and provides a national expression for each and every Palestinian."

Dec. 29: Izzeddin Al-Qassem members Hussam Zamili and Mohammed Al-Masri are killed and three others wounded in an explosion in Gaza

City, probably caused by the mishandling of explosives.

- Dr. Sufian Abu Zayda, senior Fateh leader in Gaza, will help represent the families of those injured or killed in the army's shelling of Beit Hanoun in Nov. in their negotiations with the DM over compensation.

- *Ma'ariv* reports that apartment sales for the period of Jan. to Nov. 2006 dropped by 0.7% in West Bank settlements and that of all apartments sold during this period, only 3.6% (433 apartments) were sold in the West Bank.

- Noam Shalit, father of kidnapped soldier Gilad Shalit, publishes an open letter to his son in *Al-Quds* and talks about his rights as a POW according to international law and Islamic law, quoting verses from the Qur'an on the proper treatment of prisoners.

Dec. 31: Aerial photographs taken by Peace Now show that Amona outpost continues to expand with at least 12 new mobile homes having been added in recent months. ▼



REGIONAL

Jan. 1: Pres. Abbas arrives in Abu Dhabi for talks with Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and others. ►



Jan. 4: Jordan's King Abdullah II urges Israel to allow Palestinians in East Jerusalem to vote in the upcoming PLC elections and calls on "all Palestinian factions to work collectively to end the deteriorating security situation in the territories" and "to work on unifying Palestinian efforts."

- Egypt strongly condemns the actions of "an irresponsible group of Palestinians" that broke through the border wall at the Rafah crossing, calling on the PA to ensure there was no recurrence of such incident, which "weakened efforts to support the Palestinian people in their efforts to establish an independent State."

Jan. 8: After all Palestinian factions sign an agreement with European representatives, pledging to keep peace on the Egyptian border, Egypt reopens the Rafah crossing.

Jan. 17: Addressing a Council on Foreign Relations delegation, Jordan's King Abdullah II says the only alternative to the creation of a Palestinian State was more chaos, violence and instability in the Middle East and that the next two years are particularly critical.

Jan. 20: In Damascus, visiting Iranian Pres. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad meets with Palestinian opposition leaders, incl. PFLP's Maher At-Taher, Islamic Jihad's Abdullah Ramadan Shallah, Hamas' Khaled Masha'al and PFLP-GC leader Ahmed Jibril, and expresses support for Palestinian factions and their struggle.

Jan. 21: In a speech to the Arab Lawyers Union, Syrian Pres. Bashar Assad accuses Israel of assassinating the late Pres. Yasser Arafat 14 months ago "under the world's gaze and its silence, and not one state dared to issue a statement or stance toward this."

Jan. 25: Dozens of Palestinian refugees cast their ballots in symbolic elections in Lebanon's Ein Al-Hilweh RC, voting for the right of return and UNSC Res. 194. ►

- Arab League Sec.-Gen. Amr Musa says Israel should negotiate with the next PA govt. even if it included Hamas.

Jan. 26: IRNA quotes Iranian FM spokesman Hamid-Reza Assefi as saying: "Today, hope has risen in the occupied Palestinian lands and we congratulate the Palestinians, Hamas and all other Palestinian resistance fighters in particular and the Islamic world in general world on this occasion and hope the powerful presence of Hamas will bring great achievements for Palestine".



- In the aftermath of the PLC elections, King Abdullah II of Jordan calls for a "rapid return" to peace talks and stresses that regardless the election results, the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel remained "the only solution for establishing peace and putting an end to violence and extremism".

- Egypt's Pres. Mubarak urges Fateh and Hamas to work together for peace and an independent State.

Jan. 26: US Sec. of State Rice calls Pres. Abbas to praise Palestinian democracy and assert the US administration's continued support for him and his policies.

- Commenting on the PLC elections, Arab League Sec.-Gen. Amr Musa tells the World Economic Forum in Davos, "We cannot promote democ-

racy then lament the results of democracy or object to the results of elections. ... If Hamas is going to form the Government, in the seat of authority, having the responsibility to govern, to negotiate, to reach peace, it's different from Hamas the organization whose people are in the streets." "We have to call on the other side, Israel, after the elections due in one or two months, to help ... the Palestinians, whoever is in Government, to move towards peace."

- Commenting on the PLC elections, EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner tells the European Parliament: "In case Hamas would win or be part of a Government, the most important thing is that we want to work with any Government - if this Government is ready to work for peace in a peaceful manner".

- After consulting on the PLC elections, the Quartet release a statement saying, "The Palestinian people have voted for change, but it is the view of the Quartet that their aspirations for peace and statehood, as articulated by Pres. Abbas in his statement following the closing of polls yesterday, remain unchanged. The Quartet reiterates its view that there is a fundamental contradiction between armed group and militia activities and the building of a democratic State. A two-State solution to the conflict requires all participants in the democratic process to renounce violence and terror, accept Israel's right to exist, and disarm, as outlined in the Road Map."

- Via a video link from the State Dept., Sec. of State Rice tells the World Economic Conference in Davos "Our position on Hamas has therefore not changed ... You can't have a peace process if you're not committed to the right of your partner to exist."

- International voices praise the Palestinians for holding peaceful elections but express concerns over its outcome. FM Ursula Plassnik of Austria, holding the current EU Presidency, urges all factions to disarm, renounce violence and recognize Israel's right to exist. Russia's special Middle East envoy Alexander Kalugin Russia urges Hamas to "speak in favor of a peaceful settlement and, as a result, of the creation of an independent Palestinian State that would live in peace with Israel," adding, however, that Russia's cooperation with the PA would not be affected by the make-up of the govt.. French PM Dominique de Villepin says "We are faced with a situation that causes me concern," but that he hoped "that the conditions that are indispensable for working with the Palestinian Government, whatever it will be, will be fulfilled," being, "of course, first, the renunciation of violence", and second, "the recognition of the State of Israel and the recognition of international agreements". Japan's FM Taro Aso says in a statement: "Japan strongly expects that the PA, following the successful conduct of the elections, will make efforts for peace in accordance with the Road Map, such as to control the extremists."

Jan. 27: In an interview with AP in Damascus, Hamas leader Musa Abu Marzouk says resistance against Israeli occupation would continue and that Hamas would not recognize the Jewish state before the issues of land and expelled people would be settled. He also calls on all Arabs, Muslims and the world to stand alongside Palestinians to "restore their rights and to establish their independent state."

- Hundreds of Lebanese and Palestinian Hamas supporters celebrate the election victory in Sidon, Lebanon. ►



Jan. 28: At a press conference in Damascus, Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al says his group wants a partnership with other Palestinian factions and calls for the world to respect the result of the PLC elections. He outlines three goals: PA reforms, resistance to the Israeli occupation, and 'arranging the Palestinian house.'

- OIC Sec.-Gen. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu calls on Hamas to be "realistic" in politics following its electoral victory.

Jan. 30: A statement issued by the Saudi Arabian Cabinet calls on the international community to accept the results of the Palestinian elections and pressure Israel to make peace.

- Reuters quotes Pakistan's FM Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri as saying that, "Maybe Hamas is well qualified to bring peace to the region, but for that the international community must give it a chance," adding that the West had called for democratic elections in the region, so it should accept the choice of the Palestinian people, and that "Much depends on the Israeli elections (in March)."

- In Damascus, Hamas politburo member Mohammed Nazzal says that "Cutting off funds now will be a punishment of the Palestinian people, not of Hamas."

Jan. 31: After conferring with Pres. Abbas on the Palestinian elections, King Abdullah II of Jordan says: "Hamas' victory is the choice of the Palestinian people and their will should be respected ... All [groups] inside the Palestinian territories should realize the requirements of the present stage, should deal with it in a pragmatic manner and prove to the world that there is a Palestinian partner which can proceed towards the establishment of peace."

- Saudi Arabia's FM Prince Saud al-Faisal tells reporters: "The European Union insisted on having elections in Palestine, and this is the result of what they asked for ... Now to come around and say [they] don't accept the will of the people that was expressed through democratic means seems an unreasonable position to take."

Feb. 1: In Cairo, Pres. Abbas meets Egyptian Pres. Mubarak to discuss the Hamas electoral victory and the forming of a new PA govt. Both urge Hamas to stop violence, to commit to all the agreements signed with Israel, and to recognize Israel.

- After meeting Israeli FM Tzipi Livni in Cairo, Egyptian FM Ahmed Abu Gheit says the Palestinians must stop all violence as a precondition for renewing peace talks with Israel.

- Saudi Arabia and Qatar pledge to transfer \$20 million and \$13 million respectively to the PA to ease the budget crisis. Hamas, meanwhile, has dispatched a delegation on a tour of Arab countries to urge them continue with financial aid to the Palestinian people.

- In Syria, Hamas leader Musa Abu Marzouk rejects Pres. Bush's call on Hamas to disarm and recognize Israel, saying, Hamas will not change its principles and that Bush "should accept the reality, because the Palestinian people have exercised their democratic choice, with mechanisms that are basically Western, and they chose Hamas."

Feb. 3: Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al tells *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida* newspaper, "We will never recognise the legitimacy of the Zionist State that was established on our land" adding that only if Israel was to accept the principle of a long-term truce Hamas would be ready to negotiate over the conditions of such a truce.

- Egyptian Pres. Mubarak tells *Yediot Ahronot* that, "If Hamas wants to establish a government, Hamas must recognize Israel", adding that there was a need to mediate between Hamas and Fateh and that he hoped that a coalition would eventually be formed "in which each side knows what is expected of it."

Feb. 4: In the Red Sea, a ferry disaster leaves some 1,000 dead.

Feb. 5: Hamas' Musa Abu Marzouk tells reporters in Damascus that Palestinian recognition of Israel [as part of the Oslo Accords] was a mistake that needs correction, and reiterates that Hamas would not consider recognizing Israel while the status of the country's borders remained unclear, millions of Palestinian refugees were unable to return to their homes, and Israel continued building settlements and occupying and controlling access to Palestinian territory.

Feb. 7: The Iranian daily *Hamshahri* has launched a contest for the best cartoon about the Holocaust in retaliation for the publication in many European countries of caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed.

- After meeting with Jordan's King Abdullah in Washington, Israel's FM

Tzipi Livni calls Hamas' elections victory "very problematic," emphasizing that Israel "cannot tolerate a situation in which a terrorist organization heads the Palestinian people." King Abdullah says Jordan will deal with the new Palestinian govt. once it is formed, will continue to support the PA, and remains committed to advocating the resumption of peace negotiations.

Feb. 13: Arab League Sec.-Gen. Amr Musa tells reporters in Khartoum that Arab States would persuade Hamas to accept the land-for-peace principle for settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and that it was the duty of Arab States to support Hamas if it formed a PA Cabinet.

Feb. 14: After meeting with Egyptian Pres. Mubarak, EU foreign and security policy chief Solana says "The EU will maintain its support of the PNA financially and economically, but the Europeans should wait and see until the formation of the new Government," adding "The new [PA] Government should maintain the same method adopted by the former Government in a bid to establish peace in the region."

- After meeting with Pres. Mubarak in Cairo, Israeli DM Mofaz says Hamas' control over the PA made it part of the "axis of evil", which began with "Iran, moving to Hizbullah in Lebanon, then on to Hamas in the Palestinian areas," adding that for Israel to have dialogue with Hamas "they should recognize the State of Israel. They should accept all agreements signed with the PA. They should stop calling for the destruction of the State of Israel ... stop all kinds of terrorist activities and collect all arms from Hamas members."

- Turkish FM Abdullah Gül comments on the Hamas election victory saying, "We should respect the decision of the Palestinians. Whoever will be the new leaders of the Palestinians should act in a democratic way and contribute to the peace process."

- At a rally in Khartoum Hamas' Khaled Masha'al says "There will be no recognition of Israel and there will be no security for the occupation and colonization forces. Resistance will remain our strategic option."

Feb. 15: Jordan invites Hamas leaders to make their first visit since the kingdom expelled them in 1999, with PM Marouf Bakhit telling the parliament: "We welcome the visit of a delegation of our brothers the leaders of Hamas in their capacity as Palestinians."

- During a meeting in Amman, King Abdullah tells EU foreign and security policy chief Javier Solana that the new Hamas-led PA govt. must be given a chance, saying: "It is important to await the program of the new Palestinian government ... The future of Middle East peacemaking depends on that and the Israeli elections next month." Abdullah also urges the EU and other donors not to suspend international aid to the PA since it would be the people who suffer.

- In Cairo for meeting with Egyptian officials, Jibril Rajoub reiterates that Fateh would not join a Hamas-led govt. unless it recognizes peace agreements with Israel and drops fundamentalist elements from its political program.

Feb. 16: In Damascus, Hamas politburo dep. chief, Musa Abu Marzouq, calls on the US to remove his group from the list of terrorist organizations and to open a dialogue without preconditions.

- Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al and four other Hamas members arrive in Ankara, Turkey, for talks with officials. Turkish FM Abdullah Gul says he has clarified to Hamas that Turkey stood firmly behind the Quartet's condition to withhold aid from a Hamas-led govt. until it renounces violence and abandons its commitment to Israel's destruction. ▲



Feb. 18: At Khageh-Nasir University in Tehran, numerous Iranians register as suicide bombers, to assist in the Palestinian uprising.

Feb. 19: Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al arrives in Tehran.

Feb. 20: Iran's FM Mottaki denies that Tehran wanted to see Israel "wiped off the map," saying "Nobody can remove a country from the map. This is a misunderstanding in Europe of what our Pres. mentioned."

- Politburo chief Khaled Masha'al leads a Hamas delegation meeting with Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and Pres. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in the latest stop on a tour of Arab and Islamic nations. Khamenei says that "Annual financial assistance to Palestine is one way that Muslim nations can share the responsibility of Palestine," adding that "The Palestinian people voted for Hamas knowing that meant the continuation of the armed struggle and the jihad against the Zionists." ▶



- The Muslim Brotherhood says it would ask its supporters to donate one quarter of their income to support Hamas.

- In Algiers, Arab League FM's discuss the revival of a plan they originally agreed on in 2002 that would provide the PA with some \$50 million a month.

- Due to US pressure, a visit by the Hamas delegation to Jordan is canceled after Masha'al was refused to lead the delegation and Jordan insisted on the more pragmatic Musa Abu Marzouq instead.

- Egyptian authorities also turn down a Hamas request to meet with Pres. Mubarak, most likely due to Hamas' failure to respond to Egypt's demand to recognize Israel, accept signed agreements and end the violence.

Feb. 21: US Sec. of State Rice starts a visit to Egypt and Saudi Arabia to have them pressure Hamas to moderate its policies and recognize Israel. In Cairo she meets Intelligence Chief Omar Suleiman, FM Ahmed Abul Gheit, PM Ahmed Nazif, and Pres. Mubarak. ▲



- Iran's Supreme Leader Khamenei calls on Muslim nations to provide annual financial aid to a Hamas-led govt. and support their refusal to recognize Israel. Pres. Ahmadinejad urges the Hamas visitors to continue their fight against the Jewish state. ▶



- The outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) calls on Turkey to agree to dialogue with their group, accusing Ankara of "double standards" citing its talks with Hamas.

- Turkish PM Tayyip Erdogan criticizes Israel's use of economic sanctions against Palestinians for voting Hamas into power and defends Ankara's decision to hold talks with the group.

Feb. 22: In a meeting with visiting US Sec. of State Rice, Pres. Mubarak reiterates that Egypt would not support efforts to cut off international aid to the PA and stresses the importance of giving Hamas enough time to assess the current situation and define its positions according to the demands of Pres. Abbas.

- Labor Chairman MK Amir Peretz, accompanied by party members Binyamin Ben Elizer, Ophir Paz-Pines and Isaac Herzog, meets with Egypt's Pres. Mubarak in Cairo to discuss how to transfer money to the PA without involving Hamas, one option being transferring funds directly to Pres. Abbas.

- Iran offers to help finance a PA run by the Hamas; in response, Israel says it would do all it could to stop the Palestinians from receiving the money.

- Khaled Masha'al tells the Nazareth-based *Shams radio* that Hamas is "coming into power with an open mind, and are ready to talk to anyone in the world, including the US. Only with Israel we won't talk."

Feb. 23: In Riyadh, US Sec. of State Rice holds talks with Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, meeting with Arab refusal to isolate Hamas.

Feb. 24: Wrapping up her Mideast tour, US Sec. of State Rice meets with UAE FM Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed An-Nahayan in Abu Dhabi and later with Lebanese PM Fuad Siniora in Beirut, failing, however, to mobilize Arab states to isolate a Hamas-led govt.

- In Egypt, Muslim Brotherhood Supreme Guide Mehdi Akef urges Arab countries "not to succumb to pressure from the United States" pressing them to shun a Hamas-led PA. He further accuses Sec. Rice of travelling to "our Arab region to incite Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Gulf countries so that they cut off their support for the Palestinian people." (AFP) ▶



Mehdi Akef

Feb. 27: In an interview with *AP*, Hamas deputy politburo chief Musa Abu Marzouq calls on Europeans to deal with the Palestinian people in a "civilized and democratic way" and says Hamas is ready to negotiate "any issues with the international community seen as necessary for re-launching the peace process," adding that Hamas, after forming a new govt., will consider all agreements signed with Israel "on condition that commitments be mutual." On recognizing Israel, he says "We can't deal with or recognize an occupation state because that means denying the existence of the Palestinian people, their rights and their future."

- Syrian FM Walid Al-Mouallem meets Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al in Damascus to discuss the formation of the new Palestinian govt..

- Gulf charities say they will stick to official channels in offering any aid to Hamas to avoid charges of bankrolling terror which have haunted them since Sept. 11 (2001).

- In an interview with the London-based *Al-Hayat* Arabic daily, Khaled Masha'al says that "Aside from with the Zionist enemy, Hamas is ready for a dialogue with any international party, including the US and Europe, without any preconditions."

Feb. 28: At a news conference in Amman, UNRWA General Commissioner Karen Abu Zayd welcomes the EU's decision to unblock aid to the Palestinians and warns that any serious cutbacks by donors in the aftermath of Hamas election win will further worsen the plight of the Palestinians.

- Pres. Abbas meets Pres. of the UAE Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan in Abu Dhabi and later Qatar's emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Ath-Thani.

March 1: Upon his arrival in Amman, Pres. Abbas is welcomed by Jordanian PM Marouf Al-Bakhit.

March 2: A GCC ministerial meeting in Riyadh calls on the international community to continue giving aid to the Palestinians after Hamas' election win. ▶



- Hamas politburo dep. chief Musa Abu Marzouq says that "Russia can present to the world a fairer and transparent vision of the Palestinian problem, as opposed to those whose positions are based only on the interests of Israel."

March 4: *Al-Jazeera* broadcasts a speech by Al-Qaeda's Ayman al-Zawahiri's urging Hamas to fight on and not accept agreements between the PA and Israel.

- In Cairo, Arab FM's meeting ahead of the Arab summit in Sudan later this month, call on the international community to respect the Palestinian people's choice



in electing Hamas. At the opening session, Sec.-Gen. Amr Musa says that Arab states will adhere to their peace-for-land initiative with Israel despite plans by Hamas to form a govt. and its refusal to recognize Israel. The meeting also pledges to consider allocating more money to the new PA govt. ◀▲

March 5: Pres. Bashar Al-Assad of Syria says that Hamas' election has "decreased pressures on Syria," and urges Hamas not to recognize Israel until Palestinians' rights are restored.

March 10: OIC Sec.-Gen. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu criticizes the EU for what he described as an unsatisfactory response to the furore over the publication of cartoons of the Prophet Mohammad.

- A Hamas delegation led by politburo chief Khaled Masha'al holds talks on political and financial aid to the PA and Palestinian people with Saudi FM Prince Saud Al-Faisal and intelligence chief Prince Muqrin bin Abdul Aziz in Riyadh. The Saudi FM reiterates that Riyadh "stands by its commitment to support the Palestinian people politically and financially." Khaled Masha'al tells reporters that Acting PM Olmert's plan to leave parts of the West Bank and determine Israel's borders by 2010 constitutes a declaration of war.

March 11: In Jordan, two militants are executed by hanging for the killing of US diplomat Laurence Foley in Amman in Oct. 2002. The two were part of an 11-member cell headed by the Jordanian-born Al-Qaida top operative Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi.

March 14: Hundreds of Palestinians gather in Al-Yarmouk RC near Damascus to protest the capture of PFLP leader Ahmed Sa'adat from a Jericho jail.

March 15: During a meeting of OIC FM's in Jeddah, Islamic FM's renew support for Palestinians and blast Israel's raid on Jericho Prison. Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al condemns the Jericho raid as an act of "state terrorism" ignored by the international community. ▶



Ein Al-Hilweh

- Palestinians in Ein Al-Hilweh RC near Sidon, Lebanon, protest the capture of PFLP leader Ahmed Sa'adat and five others during an Israeli



Istanbul

raid on Jericho prison. Similar protests take place in front of Israeli consulate in Istanbul, Turkey, and in Amman. ◀▲

- King Abdullah II of Jordan calls Israel's Jericho prison raid "an unfortunate escalation" that poses a threat to the future of the peace process and to security in the region. He also urges Hamas "to deal with regional and international realities" and warns that a strike on Iran would cause the region "to explode".

- Egyptian FM Ahmed Abul Gheit also denounces the raid on Jericho prison, saying "Using violence to settle pending issues between the

two sides contradicts all previously signed agreements." He also warns Israel against "adopting unilateral measures, using force and obstructing Palestinian security men [from] carrying out their duties" and calls on all Palestinian groups to exercise self-restraint.

March 16: Some 150 Palestinians stage a sit-in before the offices of the Red Cross in Damascus to protest against the recent Israeli raid on Jericho prison, calling for immediate action to ensure the release of the prisoners. ▶



- In Damascus, Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al delivers a speech during a memorial ceremony for the late politician Khaled Al-Fahoum.

March 18: Egyptian Pres. Mubarak says that the Israeli operation in Jericho to arrest Ahmed Sa'adat violates an agreement between Israel and the PA. He also warns Acting PM Ehud Olmert against harming Sa'adat and other detainees and demands they be released into PA custody. - Ten members of the group Breaking the Ice from Iraq, the West Bank and the US trek from Israel across Egypt's Eastern Sahara desert to Libya on a mission to promote Mideast peace.

March 19: Saudi FM Prince Saud Al-Faisal tells reporters after talks with visiting Austrian Pres. Heinz Fischer "The Kingdom invariably supports the PA and Palestinian Government," adding that the fact that "Hamas won the Palestinian legislative elections, which were conducted in compliance with European and international demands, will not make us halt our financial and material aid to the Palestinian Government and people."

March 20: In a statement to the Saudi Press Agency SPA following a Cabinet session, Saudi Min. of Culture and Information Iyad Madani says that his govt. condemns Israeli occupation forces for the raid on Jericho and that Saudi Arabia calls on private and public institutions worldwide to condemn strongly Israel's "policies and arbitrary practices."

- After meeting with Egyptian Pres. Mubarak in Cairo, Terje Rød-Larsen, Special Envoy for the Implementation of UNSC Res. 1559 [on Lebanon], warns that the Middle East was going through one of its most critical periods, citing the crises in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and the Palestinian territories and the US-Iranian standoff over Tehran's nuclear program.

March 21: In Khartoum, the Arab League's annual summit begins under pressure to take a more active role in Iraq and to find a common stance on dealing with a Hamas-led govt.

- In an interview with Reuters in Abu Dhabi Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al warns that its Middle East policy will fuel terrorism.

March 22: On a tour of the Gulf, Hamas chief Khaled Masha'al says he is assured that the UAE will continue to provide financial aid to the Palestinians under a Hamas-led govt.

- In an unrelated matter, Masha'al tells *Reuters* in Abu Dhabi that Hamas would continue to pursue "armed resistance" against Israeli occupation.

March 23: Pres. Abbas meets UN Special Envoy Terje Rød-Larsen in Amman to brief him on the latest developments in the OPT.

March 26: A preparatory meeting of Arab FM's in Khartoum - attended by FM Nasser Al-Qidwa - rejects Israeli plans to unilaterally demarcate its borders, saying such a move would make the establishment of an independent Palestinian state impossible. Al-Qidwa says that three draft resolutions were adopted to be presented to the summit in Khartoum: one on reactivating the Arab Initiative for Peace, one on Arab sanctions against companies helping to build the separation barrier, and one on financial support for the PA should support from donors come to a halt. ▲



- At a meeting with Pres. Mubarak in Sharm Esh-Sheikh in preparation for the upcoming Arab League summit, Pres. Abbas calls on the next Israeli govt. to work with the Palestinians once they are led by a Hamas-run cabinet.

March 27: In Cairo, on his way to attend the Arab Summit in Khartoum, Pres. Abbas asserts that the Palestinian political issues are under the responsibility of the PA Pres. and the PLO Negotiations Dept., adding that the incoming govt. should commit to UNSC Res. 242 and



338 as well as the Oslo Accords, which the PLO had accepted. Later, Pres. Mahmoud Abbas arrives in Khartoum where he meets with Sudanese Pres. Omar Hassan Al-Bashir and warns of the gravity of Israel's unilateral solutions ▲

March 28: In his opening speech at the Arab League summit in Khartoum – attended by only 12 of the 22 members - Sudanese Pres. Omar Al-Bashir praises the Palestinian elections and denounces Israel and Western threats to cut off aid in



response to the victory by Hamas. Pres. Abbas says it was “regrettable” that the Palestinian people were being punished for their democratic choice of Hamas and appeals for an increase in aid “to reinforce the steadfastness of our people” as well as for a resumption of peace talks with Israel. EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner, who attends the opening session, says the EU would stand by the Palestinians but that the EU could only work with a Palestinian govt. “that seeks peace by peaceful means,” adding that “It will be very important what they [the new Palestinian govt.] say and what they do, and we will react according to that”. ▲

March 29: At the Arab League summit in Khartoum Pres. Abbas says the result of the Israeli election “will not change [anything] as long as the agenda of Olmert himself does not change and he does not abandon the question of unilateral agreements”. In their final statement, Arab leaders renew their commitment to the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, call on “the international community to respect the will of the Palestinian people in choosing their leaders and not to interfere in their internal affairs,” and reject unilateral Israeli measures aimed at “ending the peace process.”

April 2: Quartet envoys hold talks in Amman to discuss the next steps after the inauguration of the Hamas-led govt. Jordan's FM Abdul Ilah Khatib urges the Quartet envoys continuation of economic assistance to the Palestinians people.

April 3: In talks with US Asst. Sec. of State for Near East Affairs David Welch in Amman, Jordan's PM Marouf Al-Bakhit urges the US to intensify efforts to restart Middle East peace negotiations.

- Jordanian trucks loaded with humanitarian aid and with signs reading “Under the directives of King Abdullah, food and humanitarian aid for our Palestinian brothers,” depart Amman en route to the West Bank. ►



April 9: Egypt's FM Ahmed Abul Gheith says that recent Israeli strikes on Gaza were excessive and disproportionate, and would lead to further violence.

April 10: OIC Sec.-Gen. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu expresses deep concern over continued Israeli aggression against the Palestinians and calls for the immediate intervention of the UNSC, the UN Sec.-Gen. and the Quartet.

April 11: The Arab League condemns the EU decision to suspend aid to the PA as “reprehensible”, and Arab countries vow to subsidize the shortfall in the Palestinian budget after EU and US aid suspensions. Arab League Sec.-Gen. Amr Musa calls on all Arab govt.s and institutions to speed up their financial aid and even opens an account in a Cairo bank to receive donations

- Hamas sends a delegation to Iran to try to secure financial support for the PA.

- After meeting with Jordanian FM Abdul Ilah Khatib in Amman, Russia's FM Lavrov tells reporters “Of course Hamas must fulfil the demands made by international mediators... But to have that happen, it's necessary to work with Hamas, not boycott it... The rejection of aid to the Palestinians only because they chose a Government made up entirely of Hamas members in the elections is wrong..”

April 13: Al-Qaeda's deputy leader Ayman al-Zawahri says in an Internet video that the elimination of Israel is the duty of every believer, also denouncing Pres. Bush as the “Caesar of Washington” and accusing him of lying about progress in the war on terror.

April 14: At a press conference in Casablanca at the end of his three-day visit to Morocco, Pres. Abbas asks the EU not to suspend their financial help to the PA and urges Arab States to speed up aid to prevent an economic collapse of the PA.

- In Tehran, Iranian Supreme Leader Khamenei, Pres. Ahmadinejad and representatives from Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hizbullah attend the opening ceremony of the International Conference on Al-Quds and Support for the Rights



of Palestinian People. Ahmadinejad calls the existence of the “Zionist regime” “an unending and unrestrained threat” to the Islamic world and, questioning the Holocaust, asks: “If this atrocity is true, then why should the people of the region pay for it by occupation of Palestinian lands and unending suppression of Palestinian people?” ▲

April 15: At a meeting at the Arab League HQ in Cairo, FM Zahar calls on Arabs to fulfill their promises of financial aid to the Palestinian govt. ►

- At the International Conference on Al-Quds and Support for the Rights of Palestinian



People in Tehran, Hamas chief Khaled Masha'al reiterates his vow that the new Palestinian govt. will not recognize Israel, regardless of mounting international pressure on his group to do so.

April 16: Iran pledges to make up for the financial shortfall the PA is facing due to Western aid cuts, with FM Manouchehr Mottaki stating “I am honored to announce that Iran has donated \$50 million to help the Palestinian nation.” ►

April 17: Qatar announces it will give \$50 million in aid to the PA.

- FM Mahmoud Zahar arrives in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on his tour to raise funds.

- During an exhibition about Hamas at the former



Manouchehr Mottaki

US embassy in Tehran, numerous Iranians - women and men - sign up to volunteer as suicide bombers in support of the Palestinian people.

April 18: Dep. head of Hamas' politburo Musa Abu Marzouq tells AP that 'Israel alone is responsible for the current escalation,' incl. the suicide bombing in Tel Aviv. He also criticizes Pres. Abbas for denouncing the attack.

- Saudi FM Prince Saud tells visiting PA FM Zahar that Saudi Arabia will pay its share of US\$92.4 million to the PA.

- In Cairo, visiting French Pres. Chirac tells *Al-Ahram* that it is "unacceptable" for Iran to have nuclear weapons and calls for "necessary gestures" from Israel and the Palestinians for "real negotiations" to resume.

April 19: Jordan cancels FM Zahar's visit to Amman after Hamas activists are found smuggling weapons and explosives into the country. Hamas denies the allegations, saying it "has never targeted Islamic nor Arab countries or any other country in the world" and accusing Jordan of bowing to Israeli and US pressure. ▶

- In its annual meeting in Rabat, attended by Finance Min. and Central Bank Governors from 20 Arab states, the Arab Monetary Fund and four other Arab funds decide to assist the Palestinians directly by funneling about \$50 million in health and education projects, bypassing Hamas-led govt. channels.

- French Pres. Chirac meets Egyptian Pres. Mubarak at the start of his two-day official visit to Egypt to discuss the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Iran's nuclear ambitions.

- Egypt and Saudi Arabia are reportedly pressing Hamas to adopt the Arab League declaration passed in Beirut in 2002, based on the Saudi peace initiative.

April 20: As part of his regional tour, FM Mahmoud Zahar meets Syrian Pres. Assad and FM Walid Muallem in Damascus. The latter announces that Syria would expand its support to the PA by setting a national fundraising day for the Palestinians, upgrading diplomatic ties and establishing direct phone links with the OPT. ▲



April 21: Dep. head of Hamas' politburo, Musa Abu Marzouq, FM Mahmoud Al-Zahar and Palestinian Islamic Jihad head Ramadan Shallah attend a ceremony in Yarmouk RC near Damascus to commemorate the 2nd anniversary of the assassination of Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and Abdul-Aziz Rantisi. At the rally, Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al personally accuses Pres. Abbas, saying senior Fateh officials were "conspiring" to overthrow the govt. and calling them "criminals sacrificing the national interest for their personal interests." He also states: "We can understand that Israel and America are persecuting us, and seeking ways to besiege and starve us, but what about the sons of our people who are plotting against us, who are following a studied plan to make us fail." ▲



April 22: Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al calls Pres. Abbas' condemnation of the Tel Aviv suicide bombing "contemptible" and says it was the "right of the new government to establish new armed groups to protect the people, without financial reward, instead of the existing forces that are bought and sold by enemies of our people."

- In Damascus, Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al, PA FM Mahmoud Zahar, Col. Abu Musa of the Fateh-Uprising, and PFLP leader Maher Taher attend a meeting of the Damascus-based Palestinian factions. ▲



April 23: In an audiotape broadcast, Osama bin Laden says Western efforts to isolate the Hamas govt. are examples of the West's "Zionist crusader war on Islam."

- FM Zahar meets Kuwaiti FM Sheikh Sabah in Kuwait City.

- Speaking at a joint press conference with Spanish FM Miguel Moratinos in Cairo, Egypt's FM Ahmed Abul Gheith calls the Hamas-Fateh clashes "worrisome" and calls on the Palestinians to "take on the responsibility" because such clashes impede their national efforts. ▲



April 24: Three explosions attributed to Al-Qaeda kill at least 30 people and wound more than 100 in the Egyptian Sinai resort of Dahab. Egypt rejects Israel's offer of help with rescue and medical forces.

- Egyptian Pres. Mubarak says it is too early to plan an Israeli-Palestinian summit and that "The success of the talks would require, amongst other things, putting the Palestinian house in order, and an agreement by the Palestinians to speak with one voice."

- Pres. Abbas meets with Turkish Pres. Sezer in Ankara to discuss the Middle East conflict and to seek Turkish political support regarding the freezing of European aid to the PA. ▲



April 25: In an internet video, Al-Qaeda in Iraq leader Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi says any govt. formed in Iraq would be a "stooge", adding that his fighters' eyes "are on Jerusalem, which cannot be regained without a guiding Qur'an and a triumphant sword."

April 26: Reuters photographer Suhaib Salem from Gaza wins the first prize at the Arab Journalism Awards in Dubai for a photo of Palestinian protesters in the southern Gaza Strip. ▶

- In his message at the opening of the UN Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People in Cairo under the auspices of the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Sec.-Gen. Kofi Annan says it was likely that the scale of UN activities throughout the



Suhaib Salem

OPT would increase, but that all concerned must understand that the PA provided the bulk of the irreplaceable basic services necessary to avert a humanitarian crisis.

April 27: In an interview with *As-Safir* newspaper, Hizbullah leader Sheikh Nasrallah acknowledges giving militant Palestinian factions financial and political support but denies arming them.

April 27: Speaking at the UN Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People in Cairo, PLC member Nabil Sha'ath warns the Western suspension of aid to the PA along with Israel's retention of taxes could lead to "mass starvation" and urges an increased UN presence in the OPT as well as the implementation of donor pledges, a resumption of transfer of funds to the PA and a revitalization of the Rafah Agreement on freedom of movement.

April 29: Jordan's King Abdullah meets Egyptian Pres. Mubarak in Aqaba to discuss prospects of Arab-Israeli peacemaking under a new Israeli coalition govt. ▶



April 30: In Damascus, Pres. Assad launches a week-long 'contribution campaign' to collect money for the Palestinians, aiming at enhancing their steadfastness to confront Israel's siege and the cuts of aid.

- The Arab League sends an emergency aid payment of US\$ 150,000 to the Hamas-led govt. for desperately needed medical care.
- PA FM Zahar, on a fundraising tour of Arab States, meets Libyan Pres. Muammar Al-Ghaddafi.

May 1: King Abdullah II tells Pres. Abbas that Jordan "rejected" Israeli PM-elect Olmert's unilateral approach to resolving Palestinian-Israeli conflict, pledging that "Jordan, in coordination with Egypt," would stage a fresh effort at the international level (...) with the aim of mustering support for the resumption of the peace process."

- An Islamic Jihad delegation arrives in Cairo for talks with Egyptians officials.
- Hamas Dep. Head Musa Abu Marzouk says Hamas contacts with representatives of European and Scandinavian countries are taking place in Damascus and other places.

May 2: During talks in Cairo, Islamic Jihad leader Khaled Al-Batsh says that stopping the group's attacks against Israel was "not on the table".

- During talks with FM Zahar, Yemeni FM Abu Bakr Al-Qirbi appeals to the international community to respect the choice of the Palestinian people and support the setting up of an independent Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as its capital.

May 3: Egyptian Pres. Mubarak criticizes Israel's policy of unilateral measures, saying Israelis should respond favorably to peace efforts. He also stresses that negotiations could not begin until the Palestinians resolve their internal disputes. In an interview with *AFP* he says: "Egypt is engaged in consultations with all Palestinian factions in an attempt to get them to close ranks and speak with one voice, which is something that would confirm the existence of Palestinian peace partner."

- Khaled Masha'al says that Hamas could offer a "serious step" towards peace if Israel withdraws from all lands occupied in 1967, incl. Jerusalem, dismantles settlements and recognizes Palestinian refugees' right of return. He adds that since these demands are unanimously rejected by Israeli parties, "there is no chance of a compromise".

- Arab League Sec.-Gen. Amr Musa says in a statement, "The Arab League has no problem [in transferring funds to Palestinians], but there must be an agreement between the Palestinians so that we ensure the money

goes to those who deserve it," referring to disagreements between Pres. Abbas and PM Haniyeh over which branch of govt. should control the donations.

May 4: FM Zahar meets with Arab League Sec.-Gen. Amr Musa in Cairo to find a way to deliver a \$70 million in Arab aid to the Palestinians. Arab League Under-Sec.-Gen. for Palestine Affairs Mohammed Sobeih had earlier said "It is very complicated and (...) there is no guarantee it will work. (...) More than €1.5 million (\$1.89 million) will be wasted on commissions" adding, "We are trying to work with a German bank because all the others have backed off under US pressure."

May 6: In Alexandria, Egyptian FM Abul Gheit says on the sidelines of an international forum that "The Road Map needs to be modified because its expiry date was last year in 2005," adding that he hoped that the upcoming Quartet meeting would help resume the stalled peace talks.

May 7: King Abdullah II of Jordan tells *Al-Arabiya* satellite TV channel says that "Everybody should remember that the time left for us to reach a peaceful settlement will be up two years ... I'm afraid that if this short time is over (...) Palestinians might have nothing left to negotiate."

May 10: In Doha, Qatar's influential Egyptian-born cleric Sheikh Yousef Al-Qaradawi, Head of the Association of Muslim Scholars Sheikh Hareth Ad-Dari, chief of the hardline Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal Sheikh Qazi Hussein Ahmad, Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al, Islamic Jihad Sec.-Gen. Ramadan Abdullah Shallah, and PFLP-GC leader Ahmad Jibril are among the attendees of the opening session of the gathering of Muslim scholars in support of the Palestinians, which intends to draw up a *fatwa*, obliging Muslims to help the isolated Hamas govt..

- It transpires that Jordan has recently detained at least 20 Hamas members for smuggling arms, with Govt. spokesman Nasser Judeh accusing them of plotting to destabilize the Kingdom.
- Hamas denies the accusations by Jordan that it was trying to recruit operatives to undergo military training in Syria and Iran and stage attacks in Jordan. Jordan claims it has found new weapons caches that include Iranian rocket launchers.
- Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al and PLO leader Farouk Qaddoumi make an "urgent call" for calm among Palestinians after renewed clashes in the Gaza Strip.
- The Chairman of Jordan's largest political party, the Islamic Action Front, Hamze Mansour, praises Swiss Pres. Leuenberger for his readiness to meet Hamas officials.
- Egypt's Zamalek football club has invited PM Haniyeh to attend the upcoming match with city rivals Ahli and promised to donate part of the proceeds to the Palestinian people.
- Exiled Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al calls on supporters of the Palestinian cause around the world to send arms, fighters and money to support the fight against Israel.

May 12: Jordan's King Abdullah II says his country's historical ties with the Palestinians will not be shaken by Hamas' alleged plot to stage attacks in the kingdom.

- Hamas politburo member Musa Abu Marzouk, head of the PLO's Political Dept., Farouk Qaddoumi and other Fateh leaders attend a ceremony by the Palestinian Liberation Front (PLF) in a refugee camp near Damascus.

May 13: In a joint declaration, Egyptian Pres. Mubarak and Morocco's King Mohammed VI underline their "rejection of unilateral solutions" and call on the Quartet to renew its efforts for peace in the region.

- After meeting Arab League Sec.-Gen. Amr Musa in Cairo, PA Health Min. Bassem Naim says "We, as an occupied people, are ready to talk to all sides in order to receive aid. This is not to say that we recognize the occupier but our dealings with the other side would be as an occupied people." He also appeals to the Arab League and the international community for \$4.3 million to prevent "a humanitarian and health disaster."

May 14: DFLP and Hamas supporters march at the Lebanese-Israeli border insisting on the Palestinians' right to return to areas from which displaced by Israel in 1948. ▶



- Jordan wants the Palestinian govt. to send a team to search for more weapons believed to be stashed in the kingdom by Hamas activists, Jordanian govt. spokesman Nasser Judeh saying "This must take place before any political contacts with the Palestinian govt. are initiated," and rejecting an offer by Palestinian FM Mahmoud Zahar to visit Amman.

May 15: The PLO reopens its office in Beirut closed since the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. The opening ceremony is attended by Fateh official Abbas Zaki, Lebanon's Labor Min. Tarrad Hamadeh and Lebanon's FM Fawzi Salloukh. ▼



- Jordan reaffirms its refusal to receive a political delegation from Hamas before talks are held with security officials over allegations of plots of violence and the finding of an arms cache in the kingdom.

- According to press reports, some 300 Palestinian refugees are allowed into Syria, ending their six-week ordeal stranded on the Iraqi-Jordanian border after fleeing violence in Baghdad.

May 16: Syria bars Palestinians from entering the country directly from Iraq, after allowing in dozens fleeing the violence but denied entry into Jordan.

- During a rallies in Karachi and Lahore, Pakistani Shi'ite Muslims burn US and Israeli flags to show solidarity with the Palestinian people and their Hamas govt. as well as support for Iran.

May 17: In Damascus, Syrian FM Mu'alleem tells the Syrian parliament that Syrian-US relations are in a 'frozen situation now.' ▶



Walid Mu'alleem

- Lebanese troops clash with Syrian-backed Palestinian guerrillas in the Wadi Al-Aswad area, near the Lebanese-Syrian border. ▼



May 20: Pres. Hosni Mubarak opens the World Economic Forum in Sharm Esh-Sheikh with a warning that the world must overcome the widening gap between rich and poor and block escalating threats of terrorism. Pres. Abbas, who attends the WEF, calls the attack on the PA intelligence HQ a "grave danger." ▲



May 21: After meeting with Israeli FM Tzipi Livni and Israeli Vice-PM Shimon Peres at the sidelines of the WEF in Sharm Esh-Sheikh, Pres. Abbas says the raging Fateh-Hamas power-



struggle must not deteriorate into civil war and that he will open a dialogue with Hamas soon. In his address to the WEF, Pres. Abbas says Israel should refrain from unilateral steps, transfer withheld tax money, and resume negotiations, even with Hamas in power since negotiations were the responsibility of the PLO, which he heads, rather than the PA govt..

- During a public address to the WEF, Egyptian FM Ahmed Abul Gheit proposes to formulate a new and improved peace plan, which he terms a "road map plus," which should include details of the proposed final-status agreement to make it easier for the Palestinians to accept it. Israeli FM Livni rejects the plan, saying the existing road map was sufficient. ▲

- FM Livni tells the WEF that the route of the separation barrier was determined by security considerations but would become part of final status negotiations, once they began, and is thus changeable.

- On the sidelines of the WEF on the Middle East. Turkish PM Tayyip Erdogan says that sanctions meant to convince Hamas to recognize Israel and renounce violence could push Palestinians towards such poverty that they might reach a point where there would be little left to them but hatred.

- At a news conference in Sharm Esh-Sheikh, Malaysian PM Abdullah Ahmad Badawi pledges \$16 million in humanitarian aid and budget support to the PA.

- Palestinian Interior Min. Saed Siam visits Damascus to follow-up on agreements reached recently between the Syrian leadership and Palestinian FM Mahmoud Zahar.

- At an event in Tehran, Iranian students announce that they are setting up a fund to destroy Israel.

May 22: Jordan demands a swift Palestinian inquiry after one of its embassy staffers is killed in renewed Hamas-Fateh fighting in Gaza City.

May 25: In a speech marking the anniversary of Jordan's independence, King Abdullah II says "We will not, on any day, under any circumstances, fail to support and assist the Palestinians until they attain their rights, including the establishment of an independent Palestinian State on Palestinian soil."

May 26: A car bombing kills Mahmoud Majzoub, a senior official of the Islamic Jihad, and his brother, Nidal, in front of their home in the southern Lebanese city of Sidon. Islamic Jihad vows revenge.

- Hamas' leadership in Damascus rejects Pres. Abbas' threat to call a referendum on the plan, with senior official Mohammed Nazzal saying "Hamas will not submit to blackmail and will not compromise its principles."

May 28: Israeli jets attack Palestinian and Hizbullah guerrillas in Lebanon, killing two and sparking gun-battles on the volatile border hours after rockets fired into northern Israel wounded an Israeli soldier near Kibbutz Menara. Israelis in northern areas are ordered to go to bomb shelters.

- Israeli FM Tzipi Livni arrives in Turkey for discussions on bilateral ties, the Hamas govt. and Iran's nuclear program.

- A Moroccan ship carrying 210 tons of humanitarian aid ordered by King Mohammed VI leaves Casablanca for the OPT.

May 29: Israeli fighter jets bomb Palestinian and Lebanese targets in Lebanon after guerrillas fire rockets into Israel. ▶

- In Ankara, Israeli FM Livni calls on Turkey and the international community to support Israel's vision for a two-state solution in which it would unilaterally draw final borders with Palestinians. Turkey's Gul stresses the need for a negotiated solution, saying "The Road Map and the UN documents will guide the parties."

May 30: Pres. Abbas arrives in Tunis for talks with Pres. Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali and with Fateh leaders. ▶

May 31: Saudi King Abdullah is received by Egyptian Pres. Hosni Mubarak in the Sharm Esh-Sheikh for talks on efforts to revive Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

Both urge Hamas to recognize the Arab peace initiative.

- In Tunis, Pres. Abbas discusses his referendum plan on the National Reconciliation Document with Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali and other officials, incl. Tunisian FM Abdelwahab Abdallah and Head of the PLO Political Dept. Farouk Qaddoumi. Ben Ali promises to do all he could to help end the political, economic and financial "blockade" on the Palestinians. Also meeting in Tunis, the Fateh Central Committee agrees on holding such a general referendum if the national dialogue does not reach an agreement.

- Egyptian Pres. Mubarak and Saudi King Abdullah open talks in Sharm Esh-Sheikh in a bid to revive Israeli-Palestinian peace talks and advance "Egypt's push for a summit" between Pres. Abbas and Israeli PM Olmert.

June 1: Pres. Abbas and head of the Fateh Central Committee Farouk Qaddoumi meet in Tunis to discuss recent developments.

- Hamas' Khaled Masha'al opposes Pres. Abbas' referendum call, protesting that it would annul the results of the January elections.

- Suleiman Awad, spokesman for Egyptian, says Egypt rejects unilateral moves and that with Pres. Abbas, a Palestinian partner for negotiations existed.

June 3: In an interview on local TV, Egypt's FM Ahmed Abul Gheit says that any Israeli withdrawal from "occupied Arab land" should be welcome, but should also be carried out as part of negotiations between the relevant sides.

June 4: Senior Fateh official Ahmad Qrei'a arrives in Damascus for consultations with the Syrian leadership on the latest developments on the Palestinian area.



- After talks with PM Olmert in Sharm Esh-Sheikh, Egyptian Pres. Mubarak says that negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians are the way to peace, adding that if no such talks are possible, "we will talk and find solutions," adding that "If the Palestinians and Israel reach an agreement between them, the Arab states will establish official ties with Israel." Olmert says he would urge Pres. Abbas to resume negotiations on the Road Map.

June 5: Ahmed Qrei'a meets Syrian Pres. Bashar al-Assad ahead of planned crisis talks with the exiled leader of Hamas, Khaled Masha'al.

June 6: Representatives of Hamas and Fateh leave for Yemen to continue negotiations with the assistance of Yemeni Pres. Abdullah Salah.

June 7: FM Mahmoud Zahar arrives in Islamabad for talks with PM Shaukat Aziz and FM Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri on cooperation between Hamas and Pakistan. Pakistan announces \$3 million in aid to the Hamas-led govt. ▶

- In Damascus, Dep. Head of Hamas' politburo Musa

Abu Marzouq tells AP that Hamas will not accept a referendum on the 'Prisoners' Document' that implicitly recognizes Israel. ▶

- *Ha'aretz* reports that the Syrian Dep. PM Abdullah Dardari has explored the possibility of renewing negotiations with Israel in contacts with EU officials two months ago.

- PM Ehud Olmert travels to Amman in an attempt to calm down King Abdullah's concerns over the convergence plan's possible detrimental on Jordan's security.

- In an address at the graduation ceremony of the 19th military and police sciences classes of Muta University in Karak, King Abdullah II

of Jordan says, "Anyone who believes that it is possible to settle the Palestinian issue at the expense of Jordan should know that Jordan will never be a substitute homeland for anybody, and that the Palestinians' homeland and their State should be on Palestinian soil, and nowhere else ... Jordan is Jordan, and Palestine is Palestine.... A unilateral step by Israel would raise question marks and a sense of insecurity not only among the Palestinians, but among all the partners of the peace in the region."

June 8: The London-based *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* reports that Egypt and Jordan are promoting a new initiative aimed at thwarting PM Olmert's convergence plan and advancing their Arab peace initiative.

- During a meeting with Israeli PM Olmert in Amman, King Abdullah II urges Israel to renew peace talks with the Palestinians to pave the way for "A negotiated settlement that leads to a viable and contiguous, independent Palestinian State, on Palestinian territories." Olmert says he would seek a negotiated peace with the Palestinians and meet soon with Pres. Abbas.

June 9: In a video aired on *Al-Jazeera* TV, Ayman Al-Zawahiri, considered the No. 2 in the Al-Qaeda network, urges Palestinians to reject the referendum on the 'Prisoners Document' that implicitly recognizes Israel. ▶



Musa Abu Marzouq



Ayman Al-Zawahiri

- Egyptian FM Ahmed Abul Gheith condemns the shelling at the Gaza beach, saying, "The use of force by Israel in the Palestinian territories is a principle unacceptable in itself" and banned by "International law ... in densely populated areas because shelling civilian areas by plane and ship is bound to cause civilian casualties."

- In a telephone call to Pres. Abbas, Morocco's King Mohammed VI voices concern about the chaos in the OPT and offers his mediation towards ending the conflict.

June 10: Lebanon and Syria denounce the artillery strike on the Gaza beach as a "massacre," with Lebanese PM Fuad Siniora calling for an international investigation by the UN and Arab League to punish the perpetrators.

- FM Mahmoud Zahar meets with Iran's FM Manouchehr Mottaki in Tehran. ►

June 11: Iranian Pres. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad meets with FM Mahmoud Al-Zahar in Tehran.

June 12: At the Ein Al-Hilweh RC, Palestinians hold a sit-in in protest against the Israeli shelling that killed a family of seven at a Gaza beach three days ago. ►

- Palestinian FM Zahar arrives in Damascus for talks with Syrian officials and leaders of the Palestinian factions based there. ▼



June 13: The Jordanian Hashemite Charity Commission sends, under King Abdullah's directives, a fifth aid convoy to the OPT, comprising eight trucks laden with drugs, medical supplies and milk donated by the Morocco, the Algerian Physicians' Association, Jordanian medical drugs companies and others.

June 14: Expressing his concern over the flare-up in violence between rival Palestinian factions, Arab League Sec.-Gen. Amr Musa calls for unity.

- During a meeting between Syria's Vice-Pres. Farouk Shara'a and PLO Political Dept. Head Farouk Qaddoumi, Syria renews its call for a constructive national dialogue among all Palestinian factions to avoid any provocative steps.

June 17: Pres. Abbas meets Pres. Mubarak in Cairo for talks on recent developments. ►

- Speaking to reporters in Cairo, Abbas calls for an international investigation into the 9 June Gaza beach blast.

June 18: Jordan's King Abdullah calls for an end to the factional feuding that has blighted the Palestinian territories in recent months and a return to a lapsed freeze on attacks against Israel.



- Pres. Abbas, on a regional tour to rally Arab nations to block Israel's unilateral convergence plan and instead implement the Road Map that envisions a Palestinian state, meets with King Abdullah in Amman.

June 22: At a conference of Nobel Peace Prize laureates in Petra, Jordan, PM Olmert meets with Pres. Abbas for the first time since entering office.

- Egypt's official MENA news agency reports that Egypt was likely to supply power to the Gaza Strip soon according to a new agreement signed between Egypt and the PA.

June 24: Egyptian officials meet with senior Islamic Jihad officials in Damascus to convince them to stop firing Qassam rockets and to accept the 'Prisoners' Document.'

June 25: Egyptian intelligence officers hold talks with Hamas' head Khaled Masha'al, urging the release of the kidnapped soldier.

- China's special Middle East envoy Sun Bigan arrives in Cairo on the first leg of a week-long visit to the region.

June 26: Jordanian Govt. spokesman Nasser Judeh warns the Palestinians that they risked seeing the world lose interest in their cause after a raid on an army post that saw two Israeli soldiers killed and one captured, saying, "This latest escalation, if not contained, will have very negative effects on the situation on the ground".

- En route to Pakistan, US Sec. of State Rice says regarding the captured Israeli corporal: "There really needs to be an effort now to try and calm the situation, not to let the situation escalate and to give diplomacy a chance to work to try to get this release."

June 27: Egypt deploys 2,500 members of the Central Security Forces along its border with Gaza and imposes a night-time curfew on the inhabited areas along the border.

June 28: Israeli sends a warning message to Syria – which harbours Hamas leaders - by having four F-16 fighters flying low over the residence of Pres. Bashar Assad in the coastal city of Latakia.

- The Arab League has praised Palestinian factions for agreeing on a statehood plan that implicitly recognizes Israel.

- Hamas' Musa Abu Marzouq praises the capture of the Israeli soldier but says the political leadership had no role in the kidnapping.

June 29: The Israeli military offensive in Gaza overshadows the national dialogue conference of rival Lebanese leaders, who condemn the attacks and urged the world to help the Palestinians, with Lebanon's Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri saying the "Israeli aggression ... represents the highest levels of state terrorism." ►

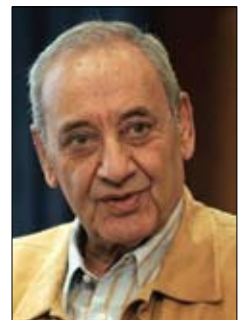
- Arab League ambassadors roundly condemn the Israeli military offensive against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, calling it a crime and state terrorism.

- Egypt accuses Israel of seeking to destabilize the region through undertaking offensives in the Palestinian territories.

- The Jordanian parliament issues a statement, saying "The Parliament, while rejecting this [Israeli] aggression, calls on the international community and the peace-loving parts to defend freedom and justice and to interfere to stop this aggression."

- During a sit-in to show solidarity with Palestinians in Amman, Jordanians from opposition parties burn an Israeli flag. ►

- Palestinians hold a protest against the Israeli military offensive in Gaza at Ein Al-Hilweh RC, near Sidon, Lebanon.



Nabih Berri



June 30: Thousands of demonstrators in Muslim countries protest the Israeli military offensive in the Gaza Strip. ▼



Damascus



Amman

- Pres. Mubarak tells *Al-Ahram* newspaper: "Egyptian contacts with several Hamas leaders resulted in preliminary, positive results in the shape of a conditional agreement to hand over the Israeli soldier as soon as possible to avoid an escalation. But agreement on this has not yet been reached with the Israeli side".

July 1: Turkish PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan criticizes Israel for seizing Palestinian govt. officials, suggesting it was a disproportionate response to the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier.

- In Cairo, hundreds of protestors hold a demonstration to show solidarity with the Palestinian resistance. ►

- Over 4,000 Palestinians - many of them working in Gulf countries on their way home for summer vacation - are stranded

in two Egyptian towns at the Gaza border, unable to return home amid an Israeli assault on the coastal strip.

- During a ceremony at the Malaysian Embassy in Amman to deliver to an official of Jenin US\$ 286,000 in funds for the construction of two elementary schools, Malaysia's FM Syed Hamid Albar condemns the Israeli military operations in the OPT and the detention of Palestinian officials, describing them as unnecessary provocation.

July 2: About 2,000 Palestinians protesting the Israeli military offensive in Gaza march in Lebanon's Ein Al-Hilweh RC.

July 3: Pres. Bashar al-Assad has renewed Syria's support for the Palestinians in the heat of a military escalation sparked by the capture of an Israeli soldier by Palestinians.

- Iranian Pres. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad slams the UN for its slowness to act against violence in the Palestinian territories that followed the abduction of Israeli soldier Shalit.

- Egyptian Pres. Mubarak arrives in Saudi Arabia for talks on the Israeli-Palestinian crisis in which Cairo is mediating.

- Ahmet Davudoglu, an adviser to Turkish PM Tayyip Erdogan arrives in Syria to meet with Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al and mediate in the release of captured soldier Shalit in Gaza.

July 7: In Tehran, Iranian protestors burn an Israeli flag during a pro-Palestinian rally. Pres. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad warns that continued Israeli strikes against Palestinians in Gaza could lead to an 'explosion' in the Islamic world that would target Israel and its supporters in the West. ►



July 8: Turkish FM Abdullah Gul calls on Israel on to end its military operation in Gaza, saying he was horrified by the number of Palestinians killed there.

- The FMs of Arab nations attending a meeting on Iraq in Iran condemn Israel for its "increasing aggression against the Palestinian people" and attack the international community for its "silence".

- The consultative committee of the Arab Maghreb Union issues a statement condemning Israel's incursions into the Gaza Strip and its "inhumane actions" against Palestinians.

July 9: Thousands of Palestinians remain stranded on the Egyptian side of the border with the Gaza Strip since Israeli authorities closed the crossing two weeks ago.

- In Cairo, Egyptian students burn Israeli flags during a pro-Palestinians demonstration organized by the Muslim Brotherhood protesting Israel's military assault on Gaza. ►

- Arab League Sec.-Gen. Amr Musa expresses his support for the demands of the Palestinian factions holding the kidnapped Israeli soldier to swap his release with Israeli-held Palestinian prisoners.

- The Arab League decides to submit a draft resolution on Israel's Gaza Strip offensive to the UNSC.

- Musa Abu Marzouk, Hamas' Dep. politburo head, says Hamas would

not succumb to Israeli pressures and not release the Israeli soldier unless Israel agrees to release Palestinian detainees in exchange.

- About 8,000 Palestinians march in Lebanon's Ein Al-Hilweh RC to protest Israel's ongoing military offensive in the Gaza Strip. ►

- In Tehran, Iranian students attend a demonstration in support of Palestinians and the Hamas-led govt.. ►

- In Istanbul, thousands of Turks protest Israel's offensive in the Gaza Strip, a day after the Turkish FM called the offensive in response to the abduction of an Israeli soldier "horrifying."

- Libya and Yemen jointly appeal to the international community, and the UNSC in particular, to take timely and effective measures to stop Israeli attacks in the OPT and protect the Palestinian people.

July 10: In Damascus, Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al stresses at a news conference that Israel must free Palestinian prisoners in exchange for the captured Corporal Gilad Shalit, accusing Israel at the same time of undermining all mediation efforts, asking "You made prisoner-exchange deals in the past. Why won't you make another deal now?" ►



- Tens of thousands of demonstrators march in Damascus in support of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. ►

- The ICRC in Cairo says some 580 Palestinians in need of medical care are stranded at a terminal on the Egyptian side of the Rafah border crossing with Gaza.



- Pres. Abbas arrives in Jordan for consultations on Palestinian-Israeli developments.

July 11: Pres. Abbas meets King Abdullah in Amman, asking him to use Jordan's influence on Israel to press it to stop the Gaza offensive. Meanwhile, outside the UN office in Amman, Jordanians hold a sit-in to show their solidarity with Palestinians. ►



- Syrian students and trade unionists demonstrate in Aleppo in support of Palestinians facing "Israeli aggression." ▼



- At the Egypt-Gaza border, where hundreds of people remain stranded, an 18-month-old Palestinian boy, Hamza Taleb, dies after suffering a heat stroke and a girl, 19, dies while waiting to return to Gaza after undergoing an abdominal surgery in Egypt.

- Hamas leaders in Syria, incl. Musa Abu Marzouk, hold talks with a PLO delegation, incl. Taysir Khaled, PLO Representative in Syria, Mahmoud Khaledi and Abdullah Horani, on the current situation in the Palestinian territories and ways out of it.

- In an interview with *El-Messa*, Egypt's Pres. Mubarak says that PM Olmert "promised me to free a large number of Palestinian prisoners. But events suddenly escalated." Mubarak also urges the Palestinians to "unify their positions", saying, "Wisdom and logic should prevail. They should work for the sake of the Palestinian people."

July 12: Hizbullah guerrillas capture two Israeli troops in a border raid along the northern border, during which another eight soldiers are killed and five injured. In response, Israel attacks Hizbullah outposts and other targets, incl. several bridges over the Awali River and targets in central and northern Lebanon, causing multiple Lebanese casualties.

- During a press conference in Damascus, Syrian Vice-Pres. Farouk Ash-Shara'a defends Hizbullah's capture of two Israeli soldiers, saying "Occupation is the reason for the provocation against the Lebanese and the Palestinian peoples... that's why there is Lebanese and Palestinian resistance," while visiting Ali Larijani, head of the Supreme Council for the National Iranian Security, says that resistance is "necessary" when the "Zionist entity launches aggression and slaughters the Palestinian people." ▲



- Hizbullah leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah tells a press conference in Beirut, that Israel's military assault in Lebanon would not win the freedom of two captured Israeli soldiers, saying they would only be released as

part of a prisoner swap, which might include Corporal Gilad Shalit and has to include the Lebanese Samir Kuntar, Yehiya Saqaf and Nasim Nasser. Nasrallah also warns Israel against a broad assault in Lebanon, saying "if they choose to confront us, they must be prepared for surprises."

- In Cairo, Hamas politburo member Mohammad Nazzal welcomed the operation in which the Hizbullah captured two Israeli soldiers, saying it would help a campaign to free 1,000 Palestinians.

July 13: Israeli jets pound Lebanon in retaliation for the capture and killing of soldiers by Hizbullah, leaving 46 civilians dead and destroying much infrastructure, incl. Beirut Airport. The bombardment prompts Hizbullah's firing of Katyusha rockets, incl. the first ever rocket attack on Haifa.

- The Arab League announces that an emergency FM meeting would be held in Cairo on 15 July to discuss the Israeli military escalation in Lebanon and the OPT.

- Syrian leaders, incl. Vice-Pres. Farouk Shara'a and FM Walid Moallem, hold talks with the head of the PLO Political Dept., Farouk Qaddoumi, on developments in the Middle East.

- During their meeting in Amman, Japanese PM Junichiro Koizumi and Jordan's King Abdullah II express deep concerns about the escalating Middle East crisis, with Abdullah saying, "It may be exaggeration, but [the current situation] appears close to the one on the eve of the 1967 Middle East war."

July 14: Israel widens its relentless attacks on Lebanon for a second day, bombing, *inter alia*, the home of Hizbullah leader Sheikh Nasrallah and the Hizbullah HQ in Beirut.

- Jordanians protest against Israeli's military offensive in Lebanon and Gaza during a rally after Friday prayer in Amman. ►



- About 6,000 Turkish demonstrators stage protests after Friday prayers in Istanbul and Ankara, burning Israeli flags and shouting slogans in support of Palestinians and also denouncing the killing of Chechen rebel leader Shamil Basayev.

- An Israel navy warship off the Lebanese coast is hit by a missile fired by Hizbullah, killing four crew members and damaging the ship.

- Huda Ghalia, the 12-year-old girl, whose family was killed on 9 June on a Gaza beach, arrives in the UAE, where she will undergo psychological treatment at Sheikh Zayed Military Hospital.

July 15: Israel's air strikes on Lebanon leave at least 32 civilians dead, 20 of them – incl. 15 children – in a van carrying two families fleeing the village of Marwaheen. Israeli planes destroy buildings used by Hizbullah and Hamas, incl. the office Hamas leader Mohammed Nazzal in Beirut - and bombard the ports of Beirut and Tripoli. ►



- At a meeting of Arab FMs in Cairo to discuss ways to end Israeli attacks on Lebanon and Gaza, a unanimous resolution calling on the UNSC to intervene to stop escalating Mideast fighting is passed. Arab League Sec.-Gen. Amr Musa says "The Middle East peace process has failed. The whole process should now be sent back to the Security Council for a complete overhaul," adding, "If the Security Council fails, nobody knows what might happen next." ►





- Egyptian medical and security teams are sent to the Rafah border crossing after some 2,000 Palestinians forced their way back into Gaza.

- In Kuwait, Sa'ad Hariiri, head of the anti-Syrian bloc in Lebanon's parliament, tells reporters that his country "should not become a playground" for Mideast fighting and that "Israel has to understand that Lebanon is not a terrorist state but a state fighting for freedom."

- Anti-Israeli demonstrations are held in front of the UN office in Tehran.

July 16: Israel dramatically escalates the ferocity of its campaign in Lebanon, reducing entire apartment buildings to rubble and knocking out electricity in Beirut.

- Hizbullah's Sheikh Nasrallah vows to wage an unrestrained campaign against Israel as over 50 Lebanese are killed in Israeli strikes and Haifa is hit by an unprecedented rocket attack. In a speech broadcast on *Al-Manar*, he promises "further surprises" for Israel, especially if Israel invades Lebanon with ground forces.

- Lebanon's PM Fuad Siniora calls on Lebanese civilians to host refugees in their homes and blames the Israeli army for using weapons banned under international law, such as phosphorus bombs.

- In Cairo, hundreds of Egyptians participate in a protest against Israeli attacks on Gaza and Lebanon.

- Palestinians at Yarmouk RC, Damascus, protest the Israeli military assault against Lebanon.

July 17: Israeli warplanes pummel Lebanese infrastructure, setting Beirut's port ablaze and hitting a Hizbullah stronghold in attacks that killed at least 17 people. Hizbullah retaliates Israel's airstrikes by firing rockets into Israel.

- In Karachi, Pakistani protesters attend at a rally condemning ongoing Israeli aggression in Lebanon and Palestine and demand that the UN intervene to stop the deadly conflict. ▶

July 18: Around 400 people demonstrate in Cairo in support of Lebanese and Palestinian guerrilla groups fighting Israel.



July 19: Israeli attacks leave at least 59 Lebanese civilians and Hizbullah fighters killed, bringing the death toll in Lebanon to over 300.

- Syria and Turkey deplore the "slow" international response to Israel's military offensive in Gaza and Lebanon.

- In Sana'a, thousands of Yemenis condemn Israel's attacks against Lebanon and the Palestinians.

- In an interview with the weekly *Al-Mussawer* magazine, Pres. Hosni Mubarak says Egypt has resumed mediation with the Palestinians over the captured soldier, predicting a solution to the crisis soon.

July 20: Hizbullah leader Sheikh Nasrallah reiterates on *Al-Jazeera TV* that there was "no way in the world" he would surrender the two kidnapped Israeli soldiers except as part of a prisoner exchange brokered through indirect negotiations.

- Thousands of Syrians, Palestinians and Lebanese gather at Umayyad Square in Damascus in a show of support for Hizbullah in its fighting against Israel. ▶

- During a rally to show solidarity with Palestine and Lebanon outside the UN office in Amman, protesters shout anti-Israel and US slogans.



July 21: In Amman, Cairo, Kuwait and elsewhere in the region, thousands of protestors shout anti-Israel and US slogans during rallies held after Friday prayers in solidarity with the Palestinians and Lebanon.

- The bodies of 76 people killed by Israeli air strikes over the last few days are buried in a mass grave at the Albass RC in Tyre. ▶



July 23: Five people, incl. a female Lebanese photojournalist, are killed by Israeli attacks on Lebanon and some 50 are wounded

- After meeting with Germany's special envoy to the region, Peter Witting, Lebanon's FM Fawzi Salloukh says the two Israeli soldiers abducted by Hizbullah are "in good health and are safe."

- The speaker of Lebanon's parliament, Nabih Berri, tells *CNN* that the govt. of Lebanon, and not Hizbullah, will be the only body to negotiate a prisoner exchange with Israel.

- Syrian Information Min. Muhsan Bilal warns that Syria will not remain idle if Israel invades Lebanon, as this would bring Israeli ground forces within 20 km of Damascus.

- The Kuwaiti govt. announces a donation of US\$ 20 million to help alleviate the sufferings endured by the Lebanese and Palestinian people.

July 24: Fatalities among the Lebanese have reached at least 384 as fighting continues in Lebanon.

- Thousands of Sudanese march in Khartoum in support of Hizbullah and calling on their govt. to allow Sudanese join Lebanese and Palestinian resistance. ▶



- During a conference in Tehran, the Hizbullah representative in Iran, Hossein Safiadin, warns that his group will widen its attacks on Israel until 'no place' is safe for Israelis. The conference is also attended by Palestinian Amb. Salah Zavavi and Hamas representative Abu Osama. ▶



- US Sec. of State Rice visits Beirut in a bid to bring an end to the warfare between Israel and Hizbullah, but does not back the immediate end to hostilities demanded by PM Fuad Siniora. Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri rejects Rice's proposal to deploy the Lebanese army on the border backed by an international force.

July 25: UN observers in Lebanon telephone the Israeli military 10 times in six hours to ask it to stop shelling near their position before a strike on their base near Khiyam kills four observers - Austrian, Canadian, Chinese and Finnish nationals - and sparks international anger with Israel. PM Olmert orders a thorough investigation into the strike.

- Saudi King Abdullah has decided to deposit one billion dollars at the Central Bank of Lebanon to help stabilize the national currency amid Israel's massive onslaught and to give US\$250 million to the Palestinians in aid to rebuild the Palestinian territories.

- Iraq's Vice-Pres. Tariq Al-Hashimi says he had been following "the unjust Israeli aggression on Palestine and Lebanon with extreme anxiety. I strongly condemn this unprecedented bullying and add my voice to those calling for an immediate cessation of violence."

July 26: Following their meeting in Amman, Jordan's King Abdullah II and Pres. Abbas call for an immediate cease-fire in Lebanon and the Palestinian territories. ►



- Anti-Israeli demonstrations are held in Tehran and elsewhere in the region. ◀

July 27: Al-Qaeda's dep. leader Ayman Az-Zawahri warns his group would not stand by and watch Israel bombard Lebanon and the Palestinians, calling on Muslims in a video to fight attacks on their countries.

- Activists from Pakistan's Anti-War Citizen Peace Committee hold a protest against Israel's air strikes on Lebanon and Gaza in Islamabad. ►



- Turkey sends more humanitarian aid to Gaza: a total of 51 trucks carrying 870 tonnes of flour, sanitary and medical equipment.

July 28: In Cairo, Muslim Brotherhood supporters clash with police during a pro-Lebanese and pro-Palestinian rally at Al-Azhar Mosque.

- Jordanian protestors attend a rally against Israel and the US in Zarqa.



July 29: After meetings in Alexandria with Egyptian Pres. Mubarak, Pres. Abbas



says his govt. has no intention of teaming up with Hizbullah to negotiate the release of Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners held by Israel, adding "our brothers in Lebanon have their own special case ... and we have our special case". Abbas later continues to Jeddah to meet Saudi King Abdullah. ◀▲

July 30: Israeli forces significantly expand their operation in southern Lebanon. The bombing of a three-story building in the small community of Al-Khuraybah near the South Lebanese village Qana, which leaves 28 civilians, half of them children, dead, causes an international outcry.

Lebanese PM Siniora denounces "Israeli war criminals" and cancels talks with US Sec. of State Rice. In Beirut, outrage over the Qana attack sparks violent protests outside the UN offices. ▼



Aug. 1: About a dozen Muslim humanitarian groups from around the world meet in Istanbul to coordinate their aid efforts for Lebanon and the Palestinian territories. ►



Aug. 2: Jordanians hold a vigil in solidarity with the Lebanese and Palestinian people in Fehais outside Amman.

- Morocco sends a second shipment of 135 tons of food to the Palestinian people.

Aug. 3: After Israel planes drop leaflets over Beirut, calling on residents to evacuate their homes, Hizbullah Sec.-Gen. Hassan Nasrallah warns in a TV address that his organization would target Tel Aviv if Beirut was attacked by Israel.

- Egypt resumes its efforts to persuade the Palestinians to release kidnapped Israeli soldier Shalit.

- Pres. Abbas meets with Arab League Sec.-Gen. Amr Musa in Amman. Following the meeting, Pres. Abbas told reporters that there were Arab efforts and meetings to pave the way for convening an international conference to solve problems in the region. (WAFI)

Aug. 4: In Istanbul, anti-Israel protests take place after Friday prayers. - King Abdullah II of Jordan tells reporters that Israel's attempt to destroy Hizbullah would not resolve the problem in the region and the only way to achieve peace was to end the Israeli occupation of Arab lands, adding that the US and Israel should acknowledge that war would not bring anything but more problems, violence and extremism to the Middle East.

Aug. 5: As part of a tour to Arab states to seek support amid Israel's offensive in Gaza and Lebanon Pres. Abbas arrives in Sana'a, Yemen, where he briefs Pres. Ali Abdullah Saleh on developments in Palestine. ►



- Hamas Politburo Dep. Chief Musa Abu Marzouq tells AP that Egypt had put forth "many ideas" for resolving the abducted soldier issue "but so far there is nothing that could be a framework to get out of the crisis. The exchange of prisoners is not coming soon."

- The wife of the Tunisian Pres., Leila Ben Ali, calls in the name of the Arab Women's Organization for an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon and the Palestinian territories. ►



Aug. 6: During a visit to Lebanon, Syrian FM Walid Muallem says the Syrian army will respond to any aggression against it, and is ready to join any regional conflagration Israel starts.

- Israeli bombs kill 19 Lebanese civilians, while Hizbullah kills 12 Israeli soldiers.

- Lebanon rejects a draft UN resolution to end the 26-day-old war.

- Egypt's FM Ahmed Abul Gheith calls the arrest of PLC speaker Dweik a "flagrant breach of international norms and contradicted all agreements signed between the Palestinians and Israel."

- Arab League Asst. Sec.-Gen. Mohammed Subeih says with the arrest of PLC speaker Dweik Israel had violated the principles of democracy "to prove that it is a State which has no connection at all to democracy but masters the art of kidnapping, torture and terrorism."

Aug. 8: The Arab League meeting in Beirut decides to send a delegation – UAE FM Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed An-Nahyan and Arab League Sec.-Gen. Amr Musa - incl. to the UN in an effort to secure changes to a US-French draft UNSC resolution on the conflict in Lebanon. The delegation will be headed by the UAE FM and will include also the Qatari FM.

- The Lebanese cabinet decides to deploy its army in the south of the country after the Israeli army's withdrawal from the area.

- Jordan's King Abdullah II moans that the international community was offering a "piecemeal way" to tackle the Middle East crises instead of an overall strategy, saying "...the core issue is the Israeli-Palestinian one, and the Israeli-Arab one, if we don't solve these problems, then for the next 10, 15, 20 years it's going to get worse and worse and worse, Israelis, Arabs, Palestinians are going to pay for it, but also the international community."

- The UAE Red Crescent Society has begun phase II of the distribution of urgent relief supplies to thousands of Palestinian families, particularly those whose breadwinners have not received salaries during the last five months.

Aug. 9: Lebanon's Ein Al-Hilweh RC is struck by Israel's military, leaving at least two people dead and five injured.

Aug. 11: In Cairo, an anti-Israel and anti-US demonstration takes place after Friday prayer.

- EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana arrives in Beirut to meet with Lebanese leaders before heading to Israel.

Aug. 12: Some 200 Turkish demonstrators gather in Istanbul to protest Israel's offensive on Lebanon and Gaza.

- Iranian students hold a pro-Palestinian and anti-Israeli demonstration in front of the UN office in Tehran.

Aug. 15: At a conference of the Syrian Press Association, Syrian Pres. Bashar Assad congratulates Hezbollah for their success in "defeating Israel" and praises their fighters for their "will, determination and faith" to counter Israeli arms. He also says that the way to victory is via resistance to occupation, that the US's plan for a "new Middle East" has collapsed, and that Israel "should know that they are before a historic crossroads. Either they move toward peace and the return of [Arab] rights, or they move in the direction of continued instability until one generation decides the matter."

- After holding talks with visiting German FM Steinmeier, King Abdullah II of Jordan warns that "The Middle East will continue to be subject to a lack of stability and security... unless a just and comprehensive solution is found for the Palestinian cause" and "the Palestinians restore their legitimate rights and establish their independent State."

Aug. 16: A spokesman of Egypt's Energy Min., Aktham Abul Ela, says Egypt would deliver and install electrical transformers to a power station in the Gaza Strip to replace transformers damaged by Israel and thus restore 75% of the electrical output.

Aug. 17: Lebanese troops begin deploying to southern Lebanon in line with the UN ceasefire plan. ►

- Iraq beats Palestine 3-0 during their Asia Cup Qualifying match in Amman.

Aug. 18: Arab League FMs ask to send a delegation to a Min.ial meeting of the UNSC to initiate a new effort for Israeli-Palestinian peace.

Aug. 19: Egypt's FM Ahmed Abul Gheith condemns Israel for trying to force its will on elected Palestinian officials, saying such actions only strengthened extremism and increased tensions and hatred.

Aug. 20: The Arab League holds an emergency meeting at its HQ in Cairo to discuss how to fund reconstruction in war-ravaged Lebanon and defuse Mideast tensions amid rising discord between moderate Arabs and Syria.



- The GCC condemns the abduction of PA Dep. PM Nasser Al-Shaar.
- Turkish demonstrators attend an anti-war protest in Istanbul.

Aug. 21: Saudi Arabia urges the US to prevail on Israel to change the policy of "war" and "kidnappings" it is practicing in the Palestinian territories.

Aug. 22: After their meeting in Islamabad, Pakistan Pres. Pervez Musharraf and King Abdullah II of Jordan call for the quick withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon and the creation of a Palestinian state to solve the 'root cause' of tensions in the Middle East.

- The Speaker of Syria's People's Assembly, Mahmoud Al-Abrash, condemns the arrest of PA officials by Israel as "an obvious violation of the international laws and conventions."

Aug. 23: Pres. Abbas opens a three-day meeting of the Fateh Central Committee in Amman to discuss the formation of a unity govt. with Hamas to defuse internal tensions and ease international isolation. On the sidelines, PM Abbas meets Greece's FM Dora Bakoyianni.

- "Upon his [Pres. Abbas'] arrival, I hope talks would begin or resume from the point that had been reached before Abbas went to the US," Cabinet spokesman Ghazi Hamad told the *Voice of Palestine* radio. The next day, PM Haniyeh said in a statement: "we are going to resume talks on the formation of a national unity government. We have serious intentions to make it succeed, and we hope that the talks will resume soon." (AP, Reuters).

Aug. 24: On the second day of their meeting in Amman, Sec.-Gen. of the Fateh Central Committee Farouk Qaddoumi tells the members that "The next Government must be a Government of national unity in which all factions participate... and not a cabinet of technocrats."

Aug. 25: In Amman, Fateh member Hani Al-Hassan says that the Fateh Central Committee had given Pres. Abbas "all the powers to begin consultations with all the national factions in order to form a national unity government," adding that "it was decided that Abbas ... should present a political initiative to the annual meeting of the UN General Assembly ... based on the resolutions of the Arab summit in Beirut."

Aug. 26: Hezbollah Dep. leader Naim Qassem tells *An-Nahar* daily that the magnitude of Israel's response to the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers took Hezbollah by surprise, saying, "We were expecting the Israelis would respond at the most by bombing for a day or two or some limited attacks."

- Fateh member Nabil Sha'ath tells reporters at the end of three days of talks in Amman: "Palestinian blood is sacred and we will not allow any infighting and have agreed to work towards a National Unity Government... A National Unity Government will strengthen our hands to face the Israeli occupation." Fateh leaders also say they did not intend to set any conditions for joining a coalition govt. with Hamas but to find a pragmatic approach towards resuming peace talks with Israel.

Aug. 27: In an interview on Lebanon's NTV, Hezbollah Sec.-Gen. Hassan Nasrallah says his group would not have abducted two Israeli soldiers had it known that the action would lead to war in Lebanon.

Aug. 28: US civil rights leader Jesse Jackson - leading a group of Jewish, Muslim and Christian leaders on a humanitarian mission - meets Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al in Damascus, offering to mediate an Israeli-Palestinian prisoners' exchange. ▲



- Egypt's Min. of Electricity and Energy Hassan Younis announces that the Min. would start linking the Gaza Strip with the Egyptian electricity network on 29 Aug..

- Jordan's National Electricity Co. and the PA sign an agreement to provide Jericho with electricity by July 2007.

Aug. 29: After visiting buildings destroyed by Israeli bombardment in Beirut, US civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson says that the Israeli soldiers seized by Palestinians and Hizbullah are alive, and that Syria wants to be involved in a prisoner swap.

Aug. 31: After a meeting with Jordan's King Abdullah in Amman, UN Sec.-Gen. Annan condemns the Israeli army's use of cluster bombs in Lebanon, which explode while still in the air and disperse over a broad area. Annan later proceeds to Syria for talks with Pres. Bashar Assad on the release of the kidnapped Israeli soldiers.

Sept. 1: After meeting with Syrian Pres. Bashar Al-Assad in Damascus, UN Sec.-Gen., Kofi Annan says that Syria would step up border patrols and work with the Lebanese army to stop the flow of weapons to Hizbullah. Annan also asks Syria to help win the release of three Israeli soldiers held by Lebanese and Palestinian groups allied with Damascus.

- An Israeli security delegation arrives in Egypt to discuss the release of captured soldier Gilad Shalit in return for Palestinian prisoners.

Sept. 3: An Egyptian report suggests that under secret talks being mediated by Egypt, Israel could release up to 800 Palestinian prisoners in exchange for Corp. Sahlit who is being held in Gaza since early June.

Sept. 4: After talks on the situation in the WBGs with Pres. Abbas in Manama, Bahraini King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa stresses the need to revive peace efforts and urges the international community to help end the current troubles in Gaza.

- Pres. Abbas briefs UAE Pres. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan on the latest developments in the OPT and discusses international efforts to revive the peace process. ▲

- Saudi FM Saud Al-Faisal says with regard to the forthcoming Arab League meeting to discuss a proposal to renew the regional peace process with Israel: "Our hope is that everyone will see the subject from a new perspective, that of seeing the importance to the region of a solution to the problem."

- A Jordanian gunman of Palestinian descent, Nabil Jaura, opens fire on a group of tourists near the Roman amphitheater in Amman, killing a British tourist and wounding five other people, incl. four tourists.

Sept. 5: Pres. Abbas holds talks with UAE Pres. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed An-Nahayan in Abu Dhabi. ►

- Egypt's FM Ahmed Abul Gheith says at a joint press conference with Sec.-Gen. Kofi Annan that "Arab FMs will look at the possibility of the Middle East peace process file going back to the UNSC," and that the Arab League will decide "the strategy adopted when the Arab countries head to the Security Council which will hold a meeting to discuss the peace process on September 21." Sec.-Gen. Annan says: "We need to look at comprehensive peace in the region based on UN resolutions and the concept of 'land for peace'... and this is where the initiative of the Arab League... becomes important and critical."

Sept. 6: Following the broadcast of a video showing the pilot Ron Arad, Hizbullah leader Hassan Nasrallah says that according to his information Arad is dead.

- At the Arab League Min.ial meeting in Cairo, Bahraini FM Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al-Khalifa, says that the League would call on the UNSC "to review the peace process ... and to find a new and effective mechanism to activate it, based on Security Council decisions and the Arab peace initiative." The UAE Min. of State for Foreign Affairs Mohammed Hussein Al-Sha'ali also calls for a time frame for the re-launch of the peace process.



Sept. 7: Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al tells the Lebanese daily *Al-Akhbar* that no serious talks are being held for the release of Gilad Shalit because "Israel refuses to admit its attempts to free the soldier without a price have failed."

- In Amman, visiting Italian FM Massimo D'Alema urges Israel to follow up on its decision to ease its embargo of the Gaza Strip and reiterates calls for the deployment of international observers there.

- In Beirut, visiting Russian FM Lavrov urges to maintain a dialogue with Hamas and Hizbullah rather than isolating them internationally, saying the two "are organizations that reflect the result of the decades-long attempts to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict. This is a manifestation of Arab attitudes toward the problem and an inseparable aspect of political affairs in both Palestine and Lebanon." Later in Damascus, Lavrov meets Syrian Pres. Al-Assad and other officials to discuss ways to end violence in the region.

Sept. 9: The speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, Nabi Berri, says Israel's lifting of the blockade "is the end of the final chapter of the Israeli war on Lebanon."

Sept. 11: Egyptian FM Ahmed Abul Gheith says: "If we agree on a Palestinian State, its borders and its parameters, then we can deal from there, through negotiations, to try and achieve this aim."

- During a meeting with visiting Pres. Abbas, King Abdullah II calls on the Palestinians to form a coalition govt. as an opportunity to resume the peace process.

Sept. 13: In an interview with *Al-Jazeera*, Hizbullah leader Hassan Nasrallah says the two kidnapped Israeli soldiers will be released only if Israel frees Samir Kuntar, a Lebanese Druze who is imprisoned in Israel since 1979, when he participated in an attack by the PLF, in which four Israeli were killed.

- At the Jordan Youth Forum, King Abdullah II calls on Arab leaders to unify their position and give their top priority to the Palestinian issue over the next six months in order "to find a just and lasting settlement to the Palestinian question."

Sept. 14: King Abdullah II calls on Arab leaders to make the Palestinian cause their top priority since it is the reason of all forms of conflict and wars and tragedies.

Sept. 16: Anger at Pope Benedict's recent remarks about Islam is expressed throughout the Muslim world. Morocco's King Mohammed recalls his ambassador to the Vatican in protest, Turkey's PM Tayyip Erdogan calls the Pope's comments "ugly and unfortunate," and Yemen's Pres. publicly denounces the pontiff.

- The Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organization sends a 15-truck convoy carrying 221 tons of relief aid to the Palestinians.

Sept. 21: Saudi FM Prince Saud al-Faisal tells AP: "we have found, for the first time probably, a consensus that is very significant about the need for restarting the peace process" which would "concentrate on the important issues, rather than the process itself. In other words, the final status negotiations, the border, Jerusalem, Palestinian rights and so on."

Sept. 22: Saudi FM Prince Saud Al-Faisal urges Palestinian leaders to find a united stance towards Israel and clarify whether they accept the Arab peace initiative of 2002 which recognizes the Jewish state.

- The Egyptian Red Crescent Society brings seven trucks of food to Palestinians through the Karim Abu Salim (Kerem Shalom) border crossing, carrying 1,500 tons of sugar, flour and rice.

Sept. 23: Pres. Abbas meets Egyptian Pres. Hosni Mubarak in Cairo for talks on the situation in the WBGs. He later moves on to Amman. ►



Sept. 26: In a “strongly worded” letter from Egypt’s Intelligence Chief Omar Suleiman to Hamas politburo head Khaled Masha’al, Egypt calls on Hamas to release captured soldier Gilad Shalit and cooperate fully with Pres. Abbas in forming a national unity govt.

Sept. 29: Pres. Abbas confirms during his visit to Qatar that unity govt. talks are stuck because Hamas retracted its consent to include the Arab peace initiative in the govt.’s platform.

Sept. 30: Representatives from Egypt, Jordan and one Gulf states have expressed their reservations to Pres. Abbas about any Hamas figure as head of a national unity govt., suggesting instead appointing an independent, such as Salam Fayyad or businessman Munib Al-Masri.

Oct. 1: From Amman, Pres. Abbas calls on all Fateh security organizations to avoid strikes and demonstrations, and on the Hamas security forces to withdraw in order to bring calm back to the streets.

- Egypt’s Pres. Mubarak and King Abdullah of Jordan express their concern that the clashes between Hamas and Fateh in Gaza will undermine the possibility that the Palestinians will make headway in the peace process with Israel.

Oct. 2: US Sec. of State Condoleezza Rice begins her Middle East tour, aimed at bolstering moderate Arab leaders and at reviving Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, with a stop in Saudi Arabia. During a press conference in Jeddah, she calls for the Hamas-led govt. to recognize Israel, saying that innocent Palestinians were being hurt by factional infighting.

- Kuwait announces the donation of US\$1 million to UNRWA to help Palestinians meet their daily needs during the holy month of Ramadan, and to “ease their suffering.”

- In an interview with *El Pais* newspaper, Syrian Pres. Bashar Assad says that if peace talks with Israel were to resume from where they left off, they could be concluded within as little as six months, adding that the international community “must have faith in Syria” that it will guard its border with Lebanon.

Oct. 3: In Cairo for talks with Pres. Mubarak and FM Ahmed Abul Gheith, US Sec. of State Rice talks appeals for an end to fighting among Palestinian factions and said she is looking for ways to strengthen Pres. Abbas in his standoff with Hamas radicals. ▶



Oct. 4: During a meeting with US Sec. of State Rice in Cairo, Pres. Mubarak raises the possibility of a snap Palestinian election to overcome a deepening crisis since Hamas’s rise to power.

- At a joint conference with Egypt’s FM Ahmed Abul Gheith, US Sec. of State Rice appeals for an end to fighting among Palestinian factions and says that she was looking for ways to strengthen Pres. Abbas. Abul Gheith expresses his regret over the violence in the OPT, saying it hurt not only the livelihood of the Palestinians, but the future of a political settlement of their cause. He also blames the captors of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit for obstructing the swap deal by always backing off at the final moments of the agreement.

Oct. 5: Egyptian Pres. Mubarak tells *Al-Usbu’a* weekly that “Egypt made a great effort to achieve the formation of a Palestinian national unity government, but this effort was thwarted by Palestinian disagreements”, adding, “Palestinian efforts could lead to new elections for the Legislative Council as a way out of the current crisis.”

- Syrian Pres. Bashar Assad and Qatari FM Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jabr Al-Thani discuss the Palestinian dialogue and the necessity for Palestinian national unity.

Oct. 8: In Damascus, Qatari FM Sheikh Hamad Ath-Thani meets with Hamas leader Khaled Masha’al and other officials to discuss ways to push forward the Palestinian national unity govt. talks.

- In Amman, Jordan’s FM Abdul Ilah Al-Khatib and UN Special Coordinator for the MEPP Alvaro de Soto hold talks on the situation in the OPT.

Oct. 9: Palestinian Interior Min. Said Siyam arrives in Cairo for talks with Egyptian officials regarding Egyptian efforts to end the violent Palestinian standoff.

Oct. 10: In an interview with *Al-Ahram*, Egyptian FM Ahmed Abul Gheith criticizes Hamas for hampering Egypt’s efforts to arbitrate between Fateh and Hamas, saying “The PM rejects this initiative; so why doesn’t he search for another one?”

- In a telephone conversation with Qatari FM Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jabr Al-Thani, Syrian FM Walid Al-Muallem underlines Syrian support to the Qatari efforts regarding the formation of a Palestinian national unity govt..

Oct. 11: Hamas official in Lebanon, Osama Hamdan, tells reporters that Hamas remains committed to a unity govt., but that Fateh was determined to overturn Hamas election victory, accusing them of “providing political cover for American-Israeli sanctions.” ▶



Osama Hamdan

- Jordan’s King Abdullah warns the feuding Palestinian factions that their hopes of statehood could be permanently wrecked unless they put aside internal differences and face other challenges.

- Saudi Crown Prince Sultan and the Jordanian govt. both deny recent reports that an unidentified Saudi has met PM Olmert at the Royal Palace in Amman last month.

- London-based *Al-Hayat* newspaper quotes Palestinian sources based in Damascus as saying that after intensive talks between Hamas political leader Khaled Masha’al and PM Ismail Haniyeh earlier this week Hamas is now willing to recognize prior agreements signed between Israel and the PA and to empower Pres. Abbas to conduct negotiations with Israel over a period of two years.

Oct. 12: In an interview with the *Al-Hayat* newspaper, Hamas Politburo Chief Khaled Masha’al accuses Israel of refusing to release Palestinian prisoners in exchange for the captured soldier, saying PM Olmert was “hindering the agreement.”

Oct. 14: In Damascus, PA Interior Min. Said Siyam and his Syrian counterpart, Bassam Abdel Majid, hold talks on police training.

- Hamas leader Khaled Masha’al meets with Egypt’s intelligence chief Omar Suleiman in Damascus to discuss the conflict between Hamas and Fateh, forming a Palestinian unity govt. and prisoner exchange.

Oct. 15: King Abdullah II of Jordan met Pres. Abbas who arrived in Amman for a two-day visit, *Petra* reported. During the talks, King Abdullah warned Pres. Abbas that inter-Palestinian tensions would have negative repercussions on the Palestinian cause of establishing an independent State and stressed the importance of intensifying efforts to rearrange the Palestinian internal scene and achieving national unity. “Regretfully, the differences are still there”, Pres. Abbas said after the meeting, adding: “Efforts for forming a national unity government are still present.”

Oct. 16: PM Fuad Siniora rejects an offer by PM Olmert to meet directly and sign a peace deal, insisting that Israel must first withdraw from the Shaba Farms area to prove that it seeks peace. ▶

Oct. 17: Saudi King Abdullah and Jordanian King Abdullah II meet in Mecca to discuss the Israeli-Palestinian issue and the crisis in Iraq.

- After meeting with Egypt’s Pres. Mubarak in Cairo, Israeli Infrastructure Min. Benjamin Ben-Eliezer says Israel accepted many of Egypt’s ideas on how to conduct negotiations over the release of soldier Shalit.



PM Fuad Siniora

Oct. 19: In an interview with the *Al-Arabiya* network from Paris, visiting Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri calls for the resumption of peace talks between Israel and the Arab states.

Oct. 23: Hamas Politburo Chief Khaled Masha'al arrives in Saudi Arabia for talks with govt. officials on the formation of a Palestinian national unity govt.
- Pres. Abbas briefly visits King Abdullah II of Jordan to discuss with him and Jordanian PM Marouf Al-Bakhit efforts to form a national unity govt.

Oct. 28: Egypt moves some 5,000 additional security forces to the Philadelphi Route near the Gaza Strip border following a warning that Israel may bomb tunnels used to smuggle weapons.

- The Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organization sends an aid convoy comprising eight trucks donated by the Charity Committee in Bahrain to the OPT.

Oct. 29: The UN-sponsored 6th International Conference on New or Restored Democracies opens in Doha. Israeli FM Tzipi Livni, invited to represent Israel, decides not to attend an international conference in Qatar due to the expected participation of a Hamas delegation in the event.

- Egypt's Min. of Electricity Hassan Younes says that Egyptian engineers had started operating on trial a key Gaza power plant after the completion of the first stage to restore 75% of the power plant's total electrical output.

Oct. 31: A Hamas delegation, headed by Hamas representative in Syria Imad Al-Alami and incl. Hamas FM Mahmoud Zahar and Mushir Al-Masri, arrives in Cairo for talks with Egyptian officials, incl. intelligence chief Omar Suleiman, on a deal to free abducted Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in exchange for Palestinian prisoners.

Nov. 1: Speaking on Dutch TV, King Abdullah II of Jordan says: "The middle of the year 2007 is the time limit for the end of the conflict on the basis of a two-state solution. If this does not happen, there will be no peace between the Arabs and the Israelis, with all the consequences and threats of that, for international peace".

- Egyptian FM Abul Gheit tells the London-based *Al-Awsat* that his govt. would not allow Israel to bomb areas along the Egypt-Gaza border which would violate international treaties.

Nov. 2: In protest over the recent destruction by Israeli troops of structures in the old industrial park in the Erez industrial zone, Turkey postpones a visit by a delegation that was supposed to sign an agreement on developing a joint Israeli-Palestinian industrial park.

Nov. 6: During a press conference in Damascus with Norwegian FM Jonas Gahr Store, Syria's FM Walid Al-Mu'Allem urges the Israeli govt. to listen to voices within Israel calling for the resumption of peace negotiations, and says his country would respond positively to such calls.

- The Cabinet of Saudi Arabia says in a statement that it had become very necessary to call for an international conference attended by all parties to bring an end to the Israeli aggressions against the Palestinian people.

Nov. 8: At a press conference in Damascus, Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al, says in response to the Beit Hanoun shelling that killed 19 people that a temporary halt in attacks inside Israel had come to an end.

- Hizbullah leader Hassan Nasrallah condemns Israel's offensive in Gaza and urges fellow Arabs to supply financial, military and medical aid to the Palestinians, asking: "Where are the Arabs? Where are the Arab rulers?... Where is the scream of anger in the face of the butchers to repel them and make them feel that continuing to kill will bring them to their end?"

- Arab League Sec.-Gen. Amr Musa condemns Israel's "massacres" in Gaza and urges Arab leaders to send a strong message to Israel.

- MENA news agency reports that the Arab League calls for sending peacekeeping forces to the OPT, with Asst. Sec.-Gen. for Palestine and Occupied Arab Territories Affairs Mohamed Subeih expressing astonishment at the US calling for sending UN troops to Darfur, saying, "We have been trying for the last two years to have peacekeepers sent to the OPT."

Nov. 9: Turkish FM Abdullah Gül condemns the Israeli strikes in Gaza that killed 19 civilians, saying: "This amounts to a massacre. Israel is making

a mistake and opening the way to very dangerous developments in the region... This cannot be accepted."

- Saudi Arabia also condemns the Israeli action and reiterates calls for an international conference to end the gruesome massacres and protect the Palestinian people.

- Egyptian FM Abul Gheit condemns Israel's killing of Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip and calls for "an investigation into the massacre ...in Beit Hanoun", adding "The issue should not be left to the Israeli armed forces to merely say that a mistake happened."

- The OIC says that at the request of Pres. Abbas, FMs from seven Islamic States - Azerbaijan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal and Yemen agreed to meet in Jeddah on 18 Nov. to discuss Israel's deadly offensive in Gaza.

Nov. 11: At an Arab League FM emergency meeting in Cairo to look into practical steps and measures to deal with Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people, FM Zahar says that the Beit Hanoun area was "a devastated



zone which will require around \$50 million to rebuild", adding, "I hope you will adopt a common Arab position, declaring the border of Rafah a Palestinian-Egyptian post only, as was asserted by Egypt recently". ▲

- After talks with Fateh Sec.-Gen. Farouk Qaddoumi, Hamas Dep. Chief Musa Abu Marzouq says Hamas and Fateh had agreed on a candidate for PM, but declines to disclose the name.

Nov. 12: In Cairo, Arab League FMs decide to lift the economic boycott of the PA imposed when Hamas took control of the govt. in Jan. in response to the US veto of a draft UNSC resolution denouncing Israel for its operation in Beit Hanoun.

Nov. 14: Egyptian border officials stop senior Hamas politician Mushir Al-Masri from crossing Rafah border as he is trying to bypass the financial boycott on the Palestinians, carrying €2 million, collected on a trip to Saudi Arabia.

- In Cairo, Pres. Abbas meets with Jordanian King Abdullah and US envoy Asst. Sec. of State David Welch for talks on the new Palestinian govt. King Abdullah II calls for lifting the crippling embargo on the Palestinians, saying it will no longer be plausible after a coalition govt. is formed in the WBGS.

- US envoy Asst. Sec. of State David Welch holds talks with Arab League Sec.-Gen. Amr Musa before attending the Quartet meeting, being held at the Russian Embassy in Cairo.

- Hamas politburo chief Khaled Masha'al says that "If Hamas has accepted to be in the opposition and to be a resistance faction only, that means the Hamas movement abandons responsibility ... Hamas cannot do that."

- Hamas dep. politburo chief Musa Abu Marzouq says that Hamas would not recognize Israel even after a national unity govt. took over, but suggests that the emerging coalition would be free to stake out a more moderate position.

- The Jordanian Charity Fund announces two new aid convoys comprising 33 trucks of foodstuff to the OPT.

Nov. 15: Pres. Abbas meets Egyptian Pres. Mubarak in Cairo for talks on the new Palestinian govt. and efforts to reactivate the peace process.

- Quartet representatives meet in Cairo to discuss ways to revive Israeli-Palestinian talks and to draw up a common response to a new Palestinian Cabinet.

Nov. 16: Egyptian Pres. Mubarak says a Palestinian unity govt. would break the international siege on the PA.

- In an interview with the Egyptian news agency *Ash-Sharq Al-Awsat*, Pres. Abbas says he had received clear guarantees from the US that the

economic and diplomatic siege on the PA would cease, along with Israeli military operations, immediately with the announcement of the establishment of the new unity govt.

- US Asst. Sec. of State David Welch holds talks in Amman with Jordanian FM Abdul Ilah Al-Khatib on ways to revive the peace process.

- In Tehran, after talks with Iran's top national security official Ali Larjani, FM Zahar announces that Iran had stepped up its aid by donating \$120 million to the Hamas-led govt. and was ready to give more.

Nov. 17: Kuwait grants \$30 million to the PA Presidency to pay the salaries of police and security services.

Nov. 18: PA Amb. in Amman Atallah Khairy says that the PLA's Jordan-based Badr force prepares for deployment in the Gaza Strip as part of efforts to restore security in the territory.

- Egypt's FM Abul Gheith welcomes the adoption of a UNGA Res. ES-10/16 the previous day, though saying he regretted the US opposition to it. ▶

- Arab League Sec.-Gen. Amr Musa states that the League was ready to cooperate with the EU on holding a peace conference.

- An OIC meeting in Jeddah, called for by Pres. Abbas to discuss Israel's ongoing offensive in Gaza, decides to break the blockade imposed on the Palestinian people.

Nov. 19: An OIC statement says that the UNGA vote calling for the creation of a "fact-finding" body to investigate the deadly Israeli shelling in Beit Hanoun shows Muslim countries had influence and they should use it "to stop Israel acting like a country above the law."

- Former PA PM Ahmed Qrei'a arrives in Syria for talks with Syrian Pres. Bashar Assad to consult on the current situation and the formation of a Palestinian national unity govt.

- In Damascus, former PM Qrei'a meets Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al to discuss the national unity govt. and steps to rebuild the PLO.

Nov. 22: In Damascus, FM Zahar confirms that the Fateh-Hamas talks were postponed for a few days, saying, "We have been talking about a national unity govt., now a technocrat Government was presented on the table. It seems that there would be no Fateh or Hamas representatives in this Government. This is a new step that complies with the Quartet demands."

Nov. 23: Hamas politburo chief, Khaled Masha'al, travels to Cairo for talks with Egyptian Intelligence chief Omar Suleiman on a deal to exchange the abducted soldier Gilad Shalit for Palestinians held in Israeli prisons.

- Hamas representative in Beirut, Osama Hamdan, says Hamas demands that Israel release all women and minors held in Israeli prisons before a deal takes place, while the deal would then be followed by the release of 1,000 prisoners in exchange for Corporal Shalit.

Nov. 28: Visiting Pres. Abbas tells King Abdullah of Jordan that he was encouraged by PM Olmert's Sde Boker speech, and particularly by his favorable reference to the 2002 Arab peace plan. The two further discuss ways of reviving Palestinian-Israeli talks on the eve of a visit by US Pres. Bush. King Abdullah stresses that Jordan would not accept an unjust settlement of the issue, nor any settlement that came at its expense, and reiterates his govt.'s support to the Palestinians, so they could regain their rights and establish their independent State on Palestinian soil.

Nov. 29: PM Haniyeh holds talks with Egyptian officials, incl. FM Ahmed Abul Gheith, in Cairo on prisoner exchange with Israel and the formation of a national unity govt. At a joint press conference with Arab League Sec.-Gen. Amr Musa, he calls on the international community to pressure Israel to force it to accept an independent Palestinian State based on the 1967 borders.

- PLC member Mustafa Barghouthi meets Hamas Politburo Chief Khaled Masha'al in Damascus for talks on a national unity govt.



FM Abul Gheith

Dec. 3: During PM Haniyeh's visit to Doha, the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Ath-Thani, promises to pay the salaries of the PA education and health ministries, covering almost 40,000 employees and amounting to \$22.5 million a month. PM Haniyeh also holds talks in Manama with King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa of Bahrain, who says he would seek to ensure that GCC leaders adopt "decisions in support of the Palestinians" during their annual summit in Riyadh on 9-10 Dec.

Dec. 4: At a meeting with Syrian Pres. Bashar Assad, German FM Steinmeier urges Syria to use its influence with its Lebanese and Palestinian allies to help maintain Lebanon's stability and promote the MEPP.

- In Damascus, PM Haniyeh says that efforts to form a national unity govt. have not reached a dead end and "The door for dialogue must be kept open and talks between the Palestinians must continue." He meets with Pres. Assad and his Dep. Farouk Shara'a to discuss the situation in the OPT. At the Yarmouk RC, Haniyeh tells some 5,000 Palestinians that Pres. Assad had promised to release "any Palestinian prisoner" in Syria and help work on an international telephone code between Syria and the WBGS.

Dec. 5: Representatives of the Egyptian Bar Association offer to represent the victims of the Israeli artillery barrage in Beit Hanoun at the ICJ in The Hague, arguing that Israel is obliged to grant the families financial compensation since it admits that the incident was a mistake and also recognize the unusual nature of the incident.

- PM Haniyeh tells reporters in Damascus: "The door for dialogue must be kept open and talks between the Palestinians must continue. However, if there are sides among the Palestinians who want to close the door on dialogue, then they alone would bear responsibility for the results of their position." He also says: "The Hamas Government wants to preserve the right of Palestinian refugees to return and the right of resistance against occupation until an independent (Palestinian) State is established."

Dec. 6: In an interview with *The Irish Times*, Egyptian Pres. Mubarak says the fact that "key" international players were finally realizing that ending the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was central to broader Middle East peace "represents a window of opportunity we must seize."

Dec. 7: PM Haniyeh arrives in Teheran on a tour of Arab and Muslim countries and meets with Pres. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. ▶

- The Arab League criticizes US attempts to halt financial aid from Qatar to the PA govt., with Under-Sec.-Gen., Mohammed Subeih, saying that the PA govt. needed the money to pay the salaries of about 165,000 employees, who "do not have other means to sustain themselves", adding: "The logic of siege and isolation against the Palestinians is tantamount to aggression. Siege leads to frustration, and this leads to extremism."



Dec. 8: Speaking in Teheran, PM Haniyeh declares that Iran constitutes the Palestinians' strategic depth and that Hamas "has no intention of recognizing the occupation govt." but "support the Palestinian people's right to resistance and its right to cancel the cruel agreements that were signed in the past with the occupation regime." Addressing worshippers at Tehran University, Haniyeh says: "The US and Zionists ... want us to recognize the usurpation of the Palestinian lands and stop jihad and resistance and accept the agreements reached with the Zionist enemies in the past. I'm insisting from this podium that these issues won't materialize. We will never recognize the usurper Zionist Government and will continue our jihad-like movement until the liberation of Jerusalem."

Dec. 9: Saudi King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud opens the annual GCC summit with a warning that the Arab world was on the brink of exploding because of conflicts in the OPT, Iraq and Lebanon, saying "It is like a keg of gunpowder waiting for a spark to explode."

Dec. 10: In an interview with *Ash-Sharq Al-Awsat*, Egyptian FM Abul Gheith says that "foreign elements are trying to link the Palestinian

issue with the Lebanese issue,” hinting that Iran was involved and that foreign elements were affecting Hamas’ decision to delay negotiations on Shalit’s release.

- In Tehran, PM Haniyeh meets with Iran’s supreme spiritual leader, Ali Khamenei, who says afterwards: “The day will yet come when all of Palestine will be under Palestinian rule. Only struggle and resistance will restore all of Palestine, every centimeter of it, to its owners. The Palestinian govt. will receive full support from the Islamic Republic of Iran.” PM Haniyeh warns that early elections would lead to chaos. ▲



- In Amman, a coordination meeting of Arab countries hosting Palestinian refugees opens to work on a unified position ahead of a conference with donors the next day.

- On Jordan Dead Sea shore, Jordan, Israel and the PA - represented by Jordanian Water Min. Zafer Al-Aalem, Israeli Infrastructure Min. Benjamin Ben Eliezer and Pres. Abbas’ economic adviser Mohammed Mustafa - launch a study to examine the feasibility of building a canal to channel water from the Red Sea to the Dead Sea, financed by France, the Netherlands, Japan and the US at a cost of some US\$15 million and managed by the World Bank. Also present are representatives of the World Bank, Europe, Japan and North America.

Dec. 11: At the conclusion of his visit to Tehran, PM Haniyeh announces that Iran promised to give the Hamas govt. \$250 million in 2007 and to build three new hospitals and 10 clinics in the WBGs over the next 10 years.

- Following Israel’s construction of a water reservoir in the Golan Heights, the Syrian Water Min. accuses Israel of being responsible for the low flow in the Yarmouk and endangering the inhabitants of the Quneitra district through possible floods or dam bursts.

- At the opening of the second annual meeting of UNRWA host authorities and donor govt.s, Jordanian FM Abdul Ilah Al-Khatib, urges the international community to exert sustained efforts to support UNRWA. Former UN special adviser Lakhdar Brahimi calls for efforts to secure Israeli-Palestinian peace, saying the policies adopted by the Quartet after the victory of Hamas “have been utterly misguided”, and amounted to “harsh collective punishment inflicted on all Palestinians because ‘they did not vote right’”, adding, “The position of the United States and the EU and even of the United Nations on Palestinian issues renders their pronouncements on human rights and democracy hollow, if not downright hypocritical.”

- Palestinian female novelist Sahar Khalifa is awarded the Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature for this year by the American University in Cairo, for her novel “Image, Icon & Old Era”, which highlights the spiritual atmosphere of Jerusalem and the suffering and frustration of the Palestinian people. ▲



Sahar Khalifa

Dec. 13: Speaking at a press conference in Khartoum, PM Haniyeh says that Sudanese Pres. Omar Al-Bashir had pledged \$10 million to the Palestinian govt. and people.

- Following a meeting in Damascus, Damascus-based Palestinian factions unanimously reject early elections, which “would create excessive tensions and divisions in the Palestinian arena,” urging instead the formation of a national unity govt.. Hamas politburo dep. head Musa Abu Marzouk says the “call for early elections [was] a coup against democracy and legitimacy”.

Dec. 15: After talks with Egyptian Pres. Mubarak, British PM Tony Blair

urges govt.s across the world to support Pres. Abbas after his call for early elections to break a deadlock with his Hamas rivals.

Dec. 16: Representatives of 10 Palestinian organizations, incl. Hamas’ Khaled Masha’al, Islamic Jihad Sec.-Gen. Ramadan Shalah, and Fateh’s Farouk Qaddoumi, meet in Damascus and issue a joint statement blasting Abbas’ declaration about early elections.

Dec. 18: In Damascus, Hamas leader Khaled Masha’al issues a statement, stressing Hamas’ commitment to “avoid inter-Palestinian fighting, dialogue as the only way to solve differences and problems with Fateh, and forming a national unity govt..”

- King Abdullah II of Jordan urges Israel to state its position on Palestinian statehood ahead of hosting PM Haniyeh and Pres. Abbas.

Dec. 19: Saudi Arabia urges Palestinians to overcome their differences.

- Israeli PM Olmert pays a surprise visit to Jordan for talks with Jordanian King Abdullah II on developments in the PA and the broader regional situation. PM Olmert commits “in principle” to a viable Palestinian State.

- Arab League Sec.-Gen. Amr Musa, speaking before his departure to Lebanon, says mediating efforts by several Arab countries could defuse the Palestinian internal conflict.

Dec. 20: Jordanian King Abdullah unofficially invites PM Haniyeh and Pres. Abbas to Jordan to iron out their differences and in an attempt to prevent the violent rivalry between Fateh and Hamas to spill over from Gaza to the West Bank, and from there to Jordan.

- Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iman Az-Zawahiri of Al-Qaeda stress their opposition to early elections called for by Pres. Abbas out of fear that Fateh may lose control of the PLC and the presidency.

- On the sidelines of an environmental conference in Algiers, PA Min. of Environment Yousef Abu Safieh tells reporters, “Analyses carried out in laboratories outside Palestine have shown that Israel has had recourse to banned chemical weapons and depleted uranium” in the OPT and that Israel had “transported major quantities of dangerous chemical products into the interior of the Palestinian territories, thereby seriously polluting the water table.” He adds that the situation had become worse due to the separation barrier, which destroyed “a considerable number of wells and because of the serious effects on fauna and flora and assaults on biological diversity, which includes 3,500 animals and vegetable species in the Palestinian territories.”

Dec. 24: UAE Pres. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan has ordered the transfer of \$30 million to the PA.

Dec. 25: Jordanian news agency *Petra* reports that Jordanian PM Al-Bakhit has invited the Pres. Abbas and PM Haniyeh for reconciliatory talks in a bid to halt political violence in Gaza.

- Pres. Abbas arrives in Jordan to meet PM Al-Bakhit to discuss the proposed talks and the situation in the Palestinian territories.

Dec. 27: In Cairo, Pres. Abbas discusses with Egyptian Pres. Hosni Mubarak the latest developments in the OPT and Abbas’ meeting with PM Olmert. The meeting is attended by PLC Member Mohammed Dahlan, PA Presidency spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeineh, PA Amb. to Egypt, Munther Dajani, and Egyptian Intelligence Chief Omar Suleiman. ▲



Dec. 29: A report by the Damascus-based Arab Water Studies and Water Security Centre states that 65% of two billion cubic feet of water Israel consumed was re-channelled from the Arab areas and that Israel controlled over 80% of the limited water resources in the Palestinians territory, adding that the average individual in Israel consumes three to four times more water than the average Palestinian individual.

GLOBAL

Jan. 3: The US says Palestinian elections should go forward as scheduled on 25 Jan. and that Israel should not bar Palestinians from voting in East Jerusalem.

Jan. 5: Norway's Finance Min. Kristin Halvorsen (Socialist Party) tells the daily *Dagbladet* that she was in favor of a boycott of Israeli products in a show of solidarity with the Palestinian people. FM Jonas Gahr Stoere (Labor Party), however, stressed that a boycott of Israeli products was not official govt. policy.

Jan. 10: In his annual foreign policy address to Vatican-based diplomats, Pope Benedict XVI comments, *inter alia*, on the Holy Land, saying, "There, the State of Israel has to be able to exist peacefully in conformity with the norms of international law; there, equally, the Palestinian people has to be able to develop serenely its own democratic institutions for a free and prosperous future."

Jan. 11: Referring to Hamas, Sec. of State Condoleezza Rice says in a statement that "it remains the view of the United States that there should be no place in the political process for groups or individuals who refuse to renounce terror and violence, recognize Israel's right to exist, and disarm."

- Norway's PM Jens Stoltenberg rejects calls for a boycott of Israeli imports by a party in his cabinet - the Socialist Left Party.

Jan. 17: Addressing a private seminar held at the US Congress and sponsored by the Council for the National Interest, Palestinian Amb. To the US Afif Safieh says he hoped the EU or another third party "would step in decisively" to help end the impasse in the MEPP, adding that "Europe was often disappointed that it was relegated to the status of payer and not player," and that "We need international mediation, but some international mediation with some muscle," which might hold Israel accountable and ensure it fulfils commitments.

- The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) rejects the Palestinian Football Association's request to play its home 2007 Asian Cup qualifiers in Gaza due to the security situation on the ground.

Jan. 18: In a special "message to the Palestinian People," UN Sec.-Gen. Kofi Annan urges Palestinians to exercise their right to vote in the upcoming elections "to help set the course for your future," adding that the elections "will be an important milestone in your long and difficult history. I hope it will set you on the path to a more peaceful future, in which you at last have your own state and can live at peace with all your neighbors."

Jan. 22: The US Admin. has reportedly promised Israel that it will not recognize any Palestinian government in which Hamas participates.

Jan. 25: Pres. Bush says that the US would not deal with Hamas until it renounced its position calling for the destruction of Israel.

Jan. 27: At the WEF in Davos, Turkey's PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan offers that Turkey could act as an intermediary between Israel and the Palestinians following Hamas' surprise sweeping elections victory.

- Speaking at a conference on the PA election results held during the WEF in Davos, Arab League Sec.-Gen. Amr Musa says Hamas will have to accept the Saudi initiative adopted at the 2002 Beirut summit, which, *inter alia*, calls for full Arab recognition of Israel and full Israeli withdrawal from the OPT according to UN Res. 242 and 338. On the same occasion, Israeli Finance Min. Dir.-Gen. Yossi Bachar says that Israel may stop transferring funds to the Palestinians as "We will face practical problems of how you deal with people that call for the destruction of Israel."

- In an interview with *CBS Evening News* at the White House, Pres. Bush, says the US would not deal with Hamas and cut aid to the PA unless Hamas abolished the militant arm of its party and stopped calling for the destruction of Israel.

Jan. 28: At the WEF in Davos, former US Pres. Clinton calls for a "practi-

cal" international response to Hamas' victory in the PLC elections. ►

- PA Economy Min. Mazen Sinokrot tells an audience at the WEF in Davos that "We have to give the new coming [Hamas] leaders a real coordination message. We have to give them a chance, and let us see what will happen".

Jan. 29: EU Common Foreign and Security Policy chief Solana tells *Le Monde* that he hoped Hamas' election victory would lead to positive developments in the region and that Hamas would take its victory seriously and fulfil its responsibility to negotiate and implement a political process.

- In a letter to Hamas leaders, Human Rights Watch urges them to declare a permanent end to attacks targeting Israeli civilians, saying its election victory made such a pledge essential.

- US Sec. of State Rice says other nations should cut off aid to a Hamas-led govt. and only consider humanitarian aid on a "case-by-case basis." US senators, meanwhile, endorse Pres. Bush's position that US aid should be cut unless Hamas abolished its militant wing and stops calling for the destruction of Israel.

Jan. 30: After a Quartet meeting, UN Sec.-Gen. Kofi Annan says that all members of the future Palestinian govt. must be committed to non-violence, rule of law and tolerance, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of existing agreements.

- In Brussels, EU FMs say aid to the Palestinians could continue if a future Hamas-led govt. commits itself to seeking peace with Israel. EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner reiterates that the EU would not have any contact with Hamas, unless it renounced violence and recognized Israel, adding however, that "we have to give them some time ... Let's give them a certain time frame... Hamas has now entered the political arena, and now we have to see whether Hamas, especially under the 'change and reform' platform, is really willing to transform into a political party. We are aware that the Palestinian Authority has financial difficulties. Everybody must make a concerted effort ... so that the PA continues to function."

- *The Guardian* reports that Pres. Abbas has threatened to resign unless Hamas agrees to a govt. and policies that can win international recognition and continued foreign aid.

Jan. 31: EU Foreign and Security Policy chief Solana says it would be very difficult to continue funding the Palestinians unless Hamas renounces violence and recognizes Israel.

- After a Quartet meeting in London, UN Sec.-Gen. Kofi Annan says that a Hamas-led govt. must commit to non-violence, recognition of Israel and acceptance of existing peace agreements as well as to the rule of law, to tolerance, reform and sound fiscal management.

- Russian Pres. Vladimir Putin says the world should not cut off aid to the Palestinians after Hamas' election victory and Hamas should "refrain from extremist declarations, acknowledge Israel's right to exist and put its contacts with the international community in order."

- In Beverly Hills, 'Paradise Now' by Palestinian director and writer Hani Abu Assad is nominated for Best Foreign Film for the 78th annual Academy Awards (Oscars).

Feb. 1: Pres. Bush vowed that the US will rise to Israel's defense if needed against Iran, and denounced Iranian Pres. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's anti-Israel rhetoric in recent weeks.

- World Bank Pres. Paul Wolfowitz says the PA should continue to receive international aid despite concerns over last week's election victory by Hamas and urges the Quartet to allow the Bank to continue working in the region.



- Austria's Dep. FM Hans Winkler tells the European Parliament that the EU continues to be concerned about Israeli activities in and around East Jerusalem, incl. the expansion of settlements and the demolition of Palestinian houses, as such activities contradicted international law.

Feb. 2: In London, architect Lord Richard Rogers hosts the founding convention of Architects and Planners for Justice in Palestine (APJP) which calls for a boycott on construction companies involved in building the separation barrier and settlements in the OPT.

Feb. 3: Brazilian FM Celso Amorim says Brazil would collaborate with Hamas if it formed a "cohesive and economically viable Palestinian State," worked for peace and recognized Israel's right to exist.

Feb. 5: *The Guardian* quotes PA Atty.-Gen. Ahmed Al-Meghami as saying that in the course of an inquiry into official corruption, he had uncovered the misuse of US\$ 700 million of PA funds and suspected that much more had gone missing, adding that his office had ordered 25 arrests and issued 10 international warrants relating to fraud within the PA. He also says he had been asked by Pres. Abbas to delay the investigation results until after the election and that the inquiry included PA-owned oil, tobacco and broadcasting corporations, as well as funds and aid money to a fictitious pipe factory.

Feb. 6: Backing a call by the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem, the Anglican Church's General Synod announces its decision to divest from "companies profiting from the illegal occupation," such as Caterpillar whose bulldozers are used to built settlements and the separation barrier.

Feb. 7: Palestinian Amb. to the EU, Leila Shahid, says cutting aid to the PA would jeopardize the creation of a Palestinian state and the credibility of EU policy in the region, and that the EU should distinguish between funding the PA and funding Hamas instead of confusing a single political party with the state.

Feb. 8: After meeting with Israeli FM Tzipi Livni in Washington, Sec. of State Condoleezza Rice says the new Palestinian leadership must recognize Israel's right to exist or there will be no more international aid. Livni warns of the possible erosion of the international stand against the Hamas leadership and says Israel should not be bound by agreements to give a Hamas-led govt. customs duties and taxes it collects for the Palestinians.

- The Vatican and the Bishops Synod of the Greek Catholic Church have for the first time appointed an Israeli citizen and for the first time in 200 years a Palestinian to preside over Israel's Greek Catholic community: Elias Shakur, 66, a displaced Palestinian originally from the village of Biram, now residing in Kafr A'avlin inside Israel.

- *BBC* quotes Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al as saying that Hamas could "possibly give a long-term truce [to] Israel. This is a position that Hamas could take, but not now; only after Israel recognizes the rights of the Palestinians, [and] to show and confirm its willingness to withdraw to the 1967 borders."

Feb. 9: At the Nato meeting in Taormina, Sicily – to which, for the first time, the DMs of Russia and the seven Mediterranean nations that maintain dialogue with NATO were invited - NATO Sec.-Gen. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer says Israel is not currently a candidate for membership (as had been suggested by Italian DM Martino a week earlier).

- The EU Presidency (Austria) calls "upon Iran to join the international consensus on the need for a two-state solution to the Middle East conflict," and criticizes a meeting between Iranian Pres. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and 10 "radical" Palestinian groups, including Islamic Jihad and Hamas.

- At a press conference in Madrid, Russian Pres. Vladimir Putin announces plans to invite Hamas leaders to a meeting in Moscow, saying "We have never considered Hamas a terrorist organization," ... "Hamas came to power ... as a result of democratic, legitimate elections, and we must respect the choice of the Palestinian people."

Feb. 10: At the Nato meeting in Taormina, Sicily, NATO Sec.-Gen. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer says that talks between the PA and NATO will not be renewed if Hamas forms the new PA govt. as they would require the

agreement of all 26 member countries, including the US.

- Russian Middle East Envoy Alexander Kalugin says his country would try to persuade Hamas leaders at the upcoming visit to Moscow to shun their radical program and engage in peace efforts, stating, "We want them to respect all previous agreements in order to prevent terrorist attacks.... Of course, it is also necessary to embark on the road toward recognition of Israel's right to exist."

- French FM spokesman Denis Simonneau says Russia had not consulted its international partners about its initiative to invite Hamas members to Moscow, but added, "We believe that it is an initiative that can contribute to advancing our positions", adding, "We share with Russia the goal of leading Hamas towards positions that would allow for the goal of two States living in peace and security to be reached".

Feb. 11: In a press release, Russian FM Sergey Lavrov reaffirms that the initiative to forge a dialogue with Hamas rested on the "platform of the Quartet of international mediators, as agreed upon in London on 30 January..." and that "in the interests of providing an avenue for restoring the Palestine-Israel settlement process based on the Road Map it is necessary, without dragging it out, to begin to talk to Hamas as an influential force of Palestinian society."

Feb. 12: As part of his response to the subject of Muslim riots and the Danish caricatures, PLO representative in Washington Afif Safieh, tells *CNN's Late Edition* that "I personally believe, knowing both societies, the Eastern one and the Western one, that the pro-Israeli Likud wing around the world wants to put [us] on a collision course [with] the Western, mainly Christian world."

Feb. 13: Russian newspaper *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* quotes the head of Hamas' politburo, Khaled Masha'al as recognizing the 1967 borders and discussing, for the first time, the possibility that Hamas will disarm: "If Israel recognizes our rights and pledges to withdraw from all occupied lands, Hamas, and the Palestinian people together with it, will decide to halt armed resistance."

- *AFP* quotes Khaled Masha'al as saying that Hamas would end its armed struggle against Israel if Israel withdrew from all occupied Palestinian territories and that Hamas did not feel bound by the Road Map since no one else was abiding by it.

Feb. 14: After talks with Greek Pres. Karolos Papoulias in Athens, Israeli Pres. Moshe Katsav says, "Relations between Israel and the PA have reached a very crucial point. Over the past 12 years, Israel has taken great historic steps for the good of the Palestinians. But I am afraid ... Hamas' election victory will not help, but will instead take us 12 years back... Israel will not put up with the continuation of terrorist acts by Hamas. If Hamas changes its policy then Israel will open contact with Hamas." Pres. Papoulias states, "We agreed that the main target must be the coexistence of two States," as well as a secure Israel and Palestinian democracy.

- The US Admin. denies a *New York Times* report about an alleged American-Israeli plan to topple the new Hamas govt. by creating so many financial difficulties for it that the PA would have to call for new elections.

Feb. 15: Canada's PM Stephen Harper says his country will only provide aid to the new Palestinian govt. if it recognizes Israel and renounces all forms of violence.

- In Moscow, Russian Pres. Putin meets Quartet envoy James Wolfensohn to discuss the situation in the Middle East after Hamas surprise election victory. ►

- The US House of Representatives passes a non-binding resolution "expressing the sense of Congress that no United States assistance should be provided directly to the Palestinian Authority if any representative political party holding a majority of



parliamentary seats within the Palestinian Authority maintains a position calling for the destruction of Israel." The Senate had already passed the resolution on 1 Feb.

- After talks with EU leaders in Vienna, Russian FM Lavrov said that Russia's invitation to Hamas was a realistic way to advance future peacemaking. "We will work toward Hamas accepting the Quartet's positions. This is not just the Quartet's opinion but also that of the majority of nations, including Arab nations."

Feb. 16: Russia announces it had agreed in principle on a meeting with Hamas officials in Moscow in early March.

- EU foreign and security policy chief Javier Solana urges Israel to continue transferring tax money to the PA at least until the new govt. is formed. However, FM Tzipi Livni says that once the new Hamas-led parliament is sworn in, the PA has essentially become "a terrorist entity" even if the new govt. has not yet been formed.

Feb. 17: After a meeting with Norwegian FM Jonas Gahr Store in Moscow, FM Sergei Lavrov says that next month's talks with Hamas leaders "will be guided by the agreed position of the Quartet" and are aimed at bringing the movement into the MEPP.

Feb. 18: In Rome, demonstrators holding a banner reading 'Free Palestine. Independent Palestinian state now' protest against the Israeli occupation. ▶



Feb. 19: The Anti-Defamation League urges that construction of the Jerusalem

Museum of Tolerance be halted until the dispute over Muslim graves discovered at the building site is resolved.

- The US Treasury Dept. orders US banks to freeze the assets of the charity KindHearts, which the US accuses of funding Hamas.

- Swiss FM Micheline Calmy-Rey expresses "concern about restrictive measures by Israeli authorities which could bring about a further deterioration of the economic and social situation of civilians."

Feb. 20: Malaysian PM Abdullah Ahmad Badawi says the OIC plans to provide institutional and financial aid to the PA.

- Sweden's state-run aid group pledges over € five million in additional aid to the WBGs as Israel and the US halt much of their funding following Hamas' election victory.

- Former US Pres. Jimmy Carter cautions the US and Israel against punishing the Palestinian people for electing Hamas, calling the cutoff of international funds "counterproductive" and saying the US should direct its aid through the UN and NGOs.

- In Switzerland, UN Special Envoy Alvaro de Soto calls Israel's decision to withhold PA tax funds premature and unhelpful, saying "These are monies that belong to the Palestinians and should not be withheld."

- After Israel's decision to freeze transfers of tax revenues to the PA, Russian FM Sergey Lavrov offers emergency aid as part of international human relief efforts during a Quartet meeting.

Feb. 21: In Washington, Pres. Bush declares that as long as Hamas does not recognize Israel's right to exist, it is no peace partner and that there is no reason to finance a PA govt. that is no partner to peace.

Feb. 22: At a European Parliament hearing in Brussels, Arab League Sec.-Gen. Amr Musa urges Hamas to recognize Israel by backing the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative and the EU not to isolate Hamas and stop giving aid.

Feb. 23: *Ha'aretz* reports that a few weeks ago a new group, Christians United for Israel, was established in the US to serve as an umbrella organization for Christian congregations that support Israel and will lobby for Israel. The group claims to represent about 30 million Americans.

- British PM Tony Blair rules out meeting Hamas leaders to try to jump-start the stalled MEPP, saying "I think that would cause confusion and it

would make it appear that we were prepared to try to find a way forward without Hamas renouncing its desire to eliminate Israel."

Feb. 24: US Pres. Bush suggests that having to govern might have "a moderating influence" on Hamas in the wake of its victory in PLC elections.

Feb. 25: In an address to US military veterans, Pres. Bush says "The world is waiting to see what choice Hamas makes," adding that "If they want the help of America and the international community to build a prosperous, independent, Palestinian state, they must recognize Israel, disarm, reject terrorism and work for lasting peace."

Feb. 27: To help stave off imminent financial collapse, the EU allocated €120 million in emergency aid, saying, however, it would bypass the PA in a move to sharpen pressure on Hamas to moderate its radical policies when it takes over govt. responsibility. Hamas' Musa Abu Marzouk hails the decision as "a good step in the right direction."

- Quartet envoy James Wolfensohn warns Mideast mediators that the PA is in danger of financial collapse soon, mainly due to Israel's freeze of tens of millions of dollars to the incoming Hamas govt.

- At the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Sec.-Gen. Kofi Annan states: "History is replete with armed movements that have transformed themselves into political parties and are governing democratic countries today. Hamas should aim to join those groups of movements which have gone through that transformation. They won the elections, and we have to respect the choice of the Palestinian people."

Feb. 28: In a speech at a seminar at the Japan Institute of International Affairs in Tokyo, Iranian FM Manouchehr Mottaki calls on the world to step up funding to the Palestinians after Western nations threatened to cut off aid to the incoming Hamas govt.

March 1: Following a meeting with Austrian FM Ursula Plassnik in Vienna, Israeli FM Tzipi Livni reiterates that Israel would not transfer money owed to the PA "because we cannot be sure the money won't go to terrorist organizations," while Plassnik says the EU could see "no reason" to change its stance, which was to "support the economic development" in the Palestinian territories.

March 2: South Africa joins a growing list of countries inviting Hamas leaders for talks, causing annoyance in Israel.

- Former Soviet Pres. Mikhail Gorbachev tells reporters: "I don't agree with Hamas' decision not to recognize Israel, yet I affirm the necessity of respecting the Palestinian people's will."

- Families of Israelis killed in suicide bombings petition the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in the US to have the nomination of the Palestinian film "Paradise Now" for the Oscar for Best Foreign Film withdrawn.

March 3: The US Jewish group Israel Policy Forum lobbies Congress to stop a bill which would prohibit any non-humanitarian aid to a Hamas-led PA on the grounds that it is "punitive rather than preventative."

- Hamas officials led by Khaled Masha'al and incl. Mohammed Nazzal, Musa Abu Marzouq, Siad Siyam, Izzat Al-Risheq and Sami Abu Khater arrive in Russia for their first talks with a major foreign power, reaffirming Hamas' hard stance, saying that its refusal to recognize Israel wasn't a subject for talks. Russian FM Sergey Lavrov warns Hamas that it will have no future if it fails to transform itself into a political institution and abides by all previous agreements with Israel. ▼



-Council of Europe Sec.-Gen. Terry Davis describes the Russian authorities' decision to invite a Hamas delegation to Moscow as quite constructive, saying dialogue with Hamas does not necessarily mean support for their stand and hinting that a Hamas delegation could be invited to Strasbourg at some point in the future. ▲



March 4: Hamas' leaders visiting Moscow say Hamas will have to "change its manners" as an elected body, with politburo chair Khaled Masha'al saying Hamas may recognize agreements between Israel and the PA and extend the period of the cease-fire but it will not recognize Israel itself nor accept the road map plan. Deputy leader Musa Abu Marzouk tells *Reuters* that recognizing Israel would negate all Palestinian rights. ►



March 5: Palestinian Hani Abu Assad - being among the foreign directors nominated for the Foreign Language Film Award (Oscars) - attends the award ceremony in Hollywood though his film 'Paradise Now' does not receive the prize. ▼



- In Moscow, the Hamas delegation meets with the Russian Orthodox Patriarch Alexy II who call on Hamas to enter dialogue with Israel, saying he hopes for dialogue in the Middle East between Muslims, Christians and Jews. ◀

March 6: EU Commissioner of External Relations, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, says in an interview with Austria's daily *Der Standard*, "It would be important in that the Israelis are paying out what is actually Palestinian money".

- In Stockholm, Quartet representative James Wolfensohn says that cutting off aid to the Palestinians would lead to a humanitarian disaster, adding that the "international community will have to adjust and try to find ways in which the Palestinian people can survive".

- French Pres. Jacques Chirac says he is 'hostile' to any international sanctions against the Palestinian Authority under the leadership of militant group Hamas.

March 7: The EU External Relations Commissioner says the EU will rely on Pres. Abbas to persuade Hamas to accept Western demands of renouncing violence and recognizing Israel.

- The World Bank announces a 42-million-dollar grant to the PA to help ensure it can continue providing basic services.

- During a visit to Canada, Russian FM Sergey Lavrov says "It is important that Hamas does not rule out the possibility of restarting the negotiation process. The leadership of the movement is considering the possibility

of taking a position in support of the Road Map. They are concerned by the fact that Israel has made numerous reservations concerning the Road Map that essentially prejudice final status issues."

March 8: UNCHR Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, John Dugard, suggests in a report that "the Road Map be revised to take account of present realities and the 2004 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice," adding that the Road Map, which envisaged an end to the conflict by late 2005, was "hopelessly out of date." He also denounces Israeli settlers terrorizing Palestinians with impunity, incl. intimidating children on their way to school and destroying farmers' trees and crops.

- During talks in Berlin with Israeli DM Shaul Mofaz, German DM Franz Josef Jung says that Germany is "completely on the side of Israel" in dealing with Hamas.

March 10: At an informal meeting of EU FM's in Salzburg, EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner tells reporters, "We want to remain a reliable partner for the Palestinian people, but we will not go soft on our principles... Money will not flow to the new Authority unless it seeks peace by peaceful means."

March 11: The US presses Palestinian moderates not to join a coalition govt. led by Hamas, threatening to sever contacts with them if they do.

March 12: En route to Indonesia, US Sec. of State Rice says the US is considering increasing humanitarian aid to the Palestinians and urges Hamas to choose a peaceful path in government.

March 13: Pres. Abbas arrives in Vienna at the beginning of a European tour to appeal for continued aid to the PA despite Hamas' election victory.

- After meeting his Austrian counterpart Heinz Fischer in Vienna, Egyptian Pres. Mubarak says that cutting aid to the PA would encourage terrorism.

- Western diplomatic sources say Washington plans to curtail contacts with Fateh and other parties if they join a Hamas-led govt..

- Egyptian Pres. Mubarak meets Pope Benedict XVI in the Vatican, wrapping up a European tour that included discussions about the new Hamas-led PA government and concerns over Iran's nuclear program.

March 14: Pres. Abbas and chief negotiator Saeb Erekat meet with Austrian Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel in Vienna for talks on ways to continue financial aid to the PA after Hamas' election victory, but cancels the rest of his European visit to return to Palestine upon hearing of Israel's prison raid in Jericho.

- UK Foreign Sec. Jack Straw tells the House of Commons: "It is the prime responsibility of the PA to ensure the personal security of the US and United Kingdom [Jericho prison] monitors ... these conditions have not been met and we have terminated our involvement with the mission today, March 14."

- US State Dept. Spokesman Sean McCormack says the US has been in touch with both sides following the Jericho prison raid to urge calm, adding that the monitors had been withdrawn out of concern for their safety.

March 15: European parliamentarians criticize Israel for the raid on the Jericho prison, which forced Pres. Abbas to cut short his visit to Europe. The EU Presidency in Austria states it is "gravely concerned" by the events in the PA and urged both Israelis and Palestinians to exercise restraint.

- European Parliament Pres. Josep Borrell says he met with Pres. Abbas for brief talks to voice support for "the majority of Palestinians who still support a negotiated solution to the conflict."

- The daily *Vremya Novosteyas* quotes Russian FM Lavrov as saying that he expected Hamas to move closer to meeting international demands within two weeks - incl. setting up foreign aid monitoring and recognizing Israel. He also warns against attempts to isolate Hamas, saying they could lead to chaos.

- Russian FM spokesperson Mikhail Kamynin calls on Israel and the PA to do everything possible to prevent the situation in the WBGS from spiraling out of control.

March 16: The Quartet meets in Brussels to discuss how to extend aid directly to the Palestinian people and bypass the PA. They also reiterate that any Hamas-led govt. must recognize Israel, renounce violence and accept past agreements or lose international assistance.

- The World Bank warns that the Palestinian economy will be devastated if Israel and the international community fulfill threats to stop financial assistance once Hamas assumes power, and Quartet envoy for Gaza disengagement James Wolfensohn warns the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations that suspending aid risks "increased radicalization of Palestinian society."

- Three years after she was killed by an Israeli bulldozer, the Palestinian rights activist Rachel Corrie is sparking controversy in New York, where a theater has been accused of censorship for postponing a play ("My Name is Rachel Corrie") about her.

- A study by researchers from Harvard University and the University of Chicago concludes that the current US Middle East policy is not in America's national interest and is motivated primarily by the country's pro-Israel lobby.

March 18: Anti-war protesters march through cities across the world three years after the invasion of Iraq, calling for US and British troops to pull out.

March 19: In Seville, the 2nd World Congress of Imams and Rabbis for Peace - sponsored by the Paris-based Hommes de Parole - establish an interfaith task force to lead the struggle against hatred of Jews and Muslims. The idea had been formulated by the conference organizers



in conjunction with Labor Party MK Rabbi Michael Melchior and chief imam of Gaza Sheikh Imad Al-Falouji. The meeting is attended by 72 rabbis and 72 imams from 34 countries, incl. 20 from Gaza. ▲

- The EU holds back from deciding the fate of its financial aid to the Palestinians, giving the Hamas militant group more time to act on calls to moderate its stance on Israel.

March 20: After talks with French Pres. Jacques Chirac in Paris, Jordan's King Abdullah II calls on the international community to support the Palestinian people, saying "All parties have a responsibility to create an environment favorable to a peaceful settlement" and a two-state solution. He also speaks of his fears of a religious war in the Middle East and urges the creation of a Palestinian state in the next two years. Pres. Chirac suggests that Pres. Abbas could be in charge of distributing European aid to the Palestinians after the formation of a Hamas-led PA Cabinet, saying: "We must not punish the Palestinian people economically. They have enough problems and difficulties."

- After meeting with US Sec. of State Rice. in Washington, Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa of Bahrain says that a Hamas-led govt. had no alternative but to deal with Israel. "How can they deal with Israel if they don't recognize Israel?"

- Former US Pres. Jimmy Carter writes in *The Guardian*, "we need not give up hope for permanent peace for Israelis and freedom for Palestinians", adding that "The pre-eminent obstacle to peace is Israel's colonization of Palestine."

- Following a meeting of EU FMs, the EU presents UNRWA with a check for \$78 million in urgent aid.

March 21: At the 2nd World Congress of Imams and Rabbis for Peace in Seville, a panel discussion on holy sites proposes to establish a permanent committee to discuss issues affecting the "Temple Mount" in Jerusalem, to consist of an equal number of Jewish and Muslim clerics.

- The German press quotes Palestinian Finance Min.-designate Omar Abdul Razeq as saying the Palestinian territories could survive without aid from the EU and would find funding elsewhere if necessary.

March 22: The US Admin. has decided to halt funding for PA infrastructure development projects and to provide Palestinians with only humanitarian aid to ensure that US aid did not reach a Hamas-led govt. and to prevent US officials from having to make contact with representatives of a terrorist organization.

- After meetings with visiting Israeli FM Tzipi Livni in Rome, Italian PM Silvio Berlusconi stresses the EU line that EU aid to needy Palestinians must not end up helping extremist organizations.

March 23: Harvard University distances itself from a recent study denouncing the pro-Israel lobby's impact on US foreign policy, removing its logo from the publication and stressing that it reflects the views of its authors only.

March 27: The US rejects Hamas' offer of a dialogue with the West, saying it has first to meet conditions laid out by the international community.

- EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner says that the EU would not "turn our backs on the Palestinian people, too many of whom live in dire poverty. The EU respects their democratic choice but can only work with those who seek peace by peaceful means."

March 28: *Ha'aretz* reports that the US Admin. has recently started talks with the House of Representatives leadership over the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006, which aims "to promote democracy in the areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority."

March 29: After the new Hamas-led govt. is sworn in, the US orders its diplomats and contractors not to have any contacts with PA ministries or ministers, whether or not Hamas members, as well as with those who work for them, since US law forbids any exchange with members of a "terrorist organization."

- In a joint statement, Canadian FM Peter MacKay and International Cooperation Min. Josée Verner say: "The PLC has approved the formation of a Hamas-led govt.. The stated platform of this government has not addressed the concerns raised by Canada and others concerning non-violence, the recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Roadmap for Peace. As a result, Canada will have no contact with the members of the Hamas cabinet and is suspending assistance to the PA."

March 30: US Sec. of State Rice tells reporters: "Our review of Palestinian assistance programs is drawing to a close... the principle is very clear: We're not going to fund a Hamas-led govt.. We are going to see what we can do to increase humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people and what mechanisms we can use to do that to make certain that the money is not indeed supporting the Hamas-led govt.."

- South African Pres. Thabo Mbeki tells his Parliament: "We are likely to make a meaningful contribution to the peace process through constructive engagement with all the people of Palestine, including Hamas... Any intended engagement with Hamas must, in the first instance, be premised on the recognition and unconditional acceptance of the reality that the people of Palestine have freely and democratically elected Hamas to represent their interests."

- The Dutch FM announces that while the Netherlands would not maintain contact with the new Hamas-led Cabinet, it would do so with Pres. Abbas.

March 31: In a BBC interview, former U.S. Pres. Clinton calls for a dialogue with the Hamas-led Palestinian govt. if several conditions are met, in particular a halt to violence.

- *The Guardian* publishes a column by PM Haniyeh, saying: "No plan will ever work without a guarantee, in exchange for an end to hostilities by both sides, of a total Israeli withdrawal from all the land occupied in 1967,

including East Jerusalem; the release of all our prisoners; the removal of all settlers from all settlements; and recognition of the right of all refugees to return... On this, all Palestinian factions and people agree, including the PLO, whose revival is essential so that it can resume its role in speaking for the Palestinians.... The message from Hamas and the PA to the world Powers is this: talk to us no more about recognizing Israel's 'right to exist' or ending resistance until you obtain a commitment from the Israelis to withdraw from our land and recognize our rights."

April 1: Pres. Abbas visits South Africa.

April 3: In London, an inquest into the death of British filmmaker James Miller, who was shot dead by an Israeli soldier in Rafah in 2003, opens.

April 4: Testifying before the House Appropriations Committee, US Sec. of State Rice says that Hamas must get "a very strong and consistent message from the world that until they have accepted certain requirements, they are not going to be welcome into the international community."

- Russian FM Lavrov meets the Sec. of Saudi Arabia's Security Council, Prince Bandar Bin Sultan, in Moscow to discuss Israeli-Palestinian relations as well as the situation in Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq.

April 5: EU Foreign and Security Policy chief Solana tells the European Parliament in Strasbourg: "Obviously, until Hamas shows unequivocal willingness to respect the international community's principles, we cannot do business as usual with the PA. The EU will, however, continue its aid for the Palestinian people, firstly because this is a moral imperative which the EU cannot shirk, and secondly because the humanitarian crisis and instability in the occupied territories do no good to anyone, starting with Israel itself." He adds that "Hamas cannot change its past, but it can and must change its future."

- Chris Cobb-Smith, who investigated the death of British journalist James Miller, who was shot dead by an Israeli soldier in May 2003, tells a jury in London that the killing was "calculated, slow, deliberate, cold-blooded murder, without a shadow of doubt" and not an accident. In a statement, the Israeli Embassy in London claims, "After a very thorough investigation using laboratories in Israel and abroad and after reviewing all the available evidence, it was not possible to reach a reliable conclusion that could provide a basis for proceedings under criminal law."

April 6: Soccer's world governing body FIFA says it is considering possible action over an Israeli air strike last week on a soccer field in the Palestinian-run Gaza Strip.

April 7: The US decides to cut \$300 million from its aid package to the PA, and the European Commission announces they are halting aid payments to the Hamas-led govt.

- In Prague, visiting German FM Frank-Walter Steinmeier says that the EU had to find new ways of providing aid to Palestinians because "Unfortunately, we can't see any clear signal that would make it possible for us to continue financing in the same way as we did in the past."

- In Brussels, the EU said it had suspended direct aid payments to the Hamas-led Cabinet because of its failure to meet the EU's conditions for continued aid. The European Commission confirmed that it had temporarily halted aid payments to the Palestinian Government pending a decision by EU FMs next week on future assistance. ►

April 9: Norway's FM Jonas Gahr Stoere says the attitude of Hamas made it difficult to envisage the continuation of direct aid but that his country would continue to support the Palestinian people indirectly by contributions to NGOs and the UN.



April 10: After meeting with Turkish FM Abdullah Gul, US congressman Robert Wexler criticizes a recent decision by Turkey to host Hamas leaders, but says this should not overshadow US-Turkish relations.

- A British inquest jury rules that Tom Hurndall, a British peace activist shot in the head by an Israeli soldier in the Gaza Strip three years ago, as he shepherded Palestinian children to safety during a gunfight, had been deliberately killed.

- Austrian FM Ursula Plassnik – holding the current EU presidency – says that the EU govt.s have endorsed the suspension of direct aid to the Hamas-led PA, but adds that they would seek alternative ways of providing money for humanitarian purposes. ▲



- A letter sent by Hamas' FM Zahar earlier this month to UN Sec.-Gen. Annan referring to a "two-state solution" becomes an official UN document despite Zahar claiming that the wrong version of the letter was distributed.

- German FM Steinmeier says the EU's decision to halt aid to Hamas showed its being serious about the need for Hamas to accept the demands of the Quartet.

- In Luxembourg, EU External Affairs Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner says the EU - despite its decided aid cut - would continue to support the Palestinian population by helping with basic needs such as water, food, electricity and education, and would look for new ways to channel some support by-passing the govt., adding "And we will want also to support Mahmoud Abbas."

April 11: Russian FM Sergey Lavrov criticizes the West's 'boycott' of Hamas, warning that the aid cut will only destabilize the situation in the region.

- The US and other permanent members of the UNSC reject a draft statement that Arab states wanted the council's President to make, which would condemn Israeli military actions in Gaza but not mentioning Palestinian rocket fire.

- The UN advises its aid agencies to avoid contact with Hamas' political leaders, but stops short of US calls to isolate PA govt. to ensure there is no disruption in the delivery of humanitarian aid and services to the Palestinian people from UN agencies.

- A British legislator says sanctions should be imposed against Israel if it does not hand over those responsible for the killing of two British civilians, peace activist Tom Hurndall and filmmaker James Miller.

- The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopts a resolution calling on Hamas to "renounce violence, recognize the State of Israel within secure internationally recognized borders, and express support for the Middle East peace process." It also calls on the Israeli govt. to "halt military operations and extrajudicial executions of militants of Palestinian extremist organizations without delay, refrain from unilateral action," and "put an immediate end to the expansion and construction of illegal settlements."

April 12: German Min. for Economic Cooperation and Development Heidemarie Wiczeorek-Zeul announces that bilateral humanitarian assistance for the Palestinian people would continue and be "primarily concerned with drinking water supply and sanitation and with local employment."

April 13: Russia's Pres. Putin attends a ceremony in the Kremlin in which PA Amb. Baker Abdel Monem, who had previously served in Canada, receives his credentials. ►



April 14: Representatives of the five permanent member nations of the UNSC and Germany meet in Moscow in preparation for the UNSC debate to formulate a resolution on Iran's nuclear program.

- US federal authorities decide to deport former University of South Florida Prof. Sami Al-Arian, a longtime Palestinian rights activist, after failing in Dec. 2005 to convict him on charges of helping finance terrorist attacks on Israel. ►
- The US govt. bans Americans from dealing with the PA now that it is led by a "terrorist entity."



Sami Al-Arian

April 16: In his first "Urbi et Orbi" Easter message, Pope Benedict XVI calls for an "honorable solution" to the nuclear standoff with Iran, global co-operation to combat terrorism and an independent Palestinian state, saying: "May the international community, which reaffirms Israel's just right to exist in peace, assist the Palestinian people to overcome the precarious conditions in which they live and to build their future, moving towards the constitution of a state that is truly their own." ▲



April 17: University of South Florida Prof. Sami Al-Arian pleads guilty to aiding Islamic Jihad and agrees to be deported from the US.

- The Tel Aviv suicide bombing is internationally condemned with German FM Frank-Walter Steinmeier saying "It would be a fatal start for the new [Hamas] government if it did not clearly and energetically act against acts of terror," White House Press Sec. Scott McClellan calling it, "a despicable act of terror for which there is no excuse or justification," and British Foreign Sec. Jack Straw "senseless and totally unjustified."

April 18: Norwegian Aid Min. Erik Solheim says his govt. is considering meeting Hamas representatives during their visit to Oslo in May. ►

- Japan decides to halt new aid to Palestinians via the PA until it became clear that Hamas was committed to the peace process, though emergency aid, such as a payment in March of US\$6 million to the WFP would continue.



Erik Solheim

April 19: While urging the Hamas-led govt. to reject violence, recognize Israel and embrace peace, France announces that it would not halt relief aid to the Palestinians, with FM Philippe Douste-Blazy saying such a move "would be a major political mistake," adding "If we don't help the Palestinian territories, others like Iran will do so. And, on the other hand, we risk pushing the Palestinian people toward radicalism."

- *The Guardian* reports that an Iranian group is seeking to recruit Muslims in Britain for attacks on Israel.

- British PM Blair tells the House of Commons that the Hamas govt. must recognize Israel and forego violence, as well as denounce the "wicked and irresponsible" suicide bombing in Tel Aviv if they want "to further the process of peace in the Middle East or the two-state solution that we all want to see."

April 21: France refuses to grant a visa to PA (Hamas) Planning Min. Samir Abu Aisha, saying in a FM statement "This decision derives from the European policy... that is, the suspension of contacts with the Palestinian Government."

April 22: Oleg Ozerov, Dep. Head of Russia's FM's Middle East and North Africa Dept., says "If we cannot convince Hamas to accept the demands

of international Quartet mediators, we cannot rule out a large-scale armed conflict between Israel and Palestine or clashes between Palestinians," adding that "Both options are bad and dangerous."

April 24: Britain's PM Blair tells a news conference: "Let me again make it clear I support entirely the mandate of Hamas; they won the election fair and square... But ... I don't know how I approach the Israelis and say, let us enter into a negotiation about two states when one side to the negotiation is saying that we want the other side eliminated. I can't do that."

- UN Special Envoy Alvaro de Soto says in a statement to the UNSC, "We are witnessing a potentially dangerous deterioration of the situation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.... It is no exaggeration to say the prospects for achieving a two-state solution along the lines envisaged in the Road Map have receded through a combination of factors".

- Norwegian FM Jonas Gahr Støre tells *NRK* radio that his govt. would be prepared to meet Hamas representatives in the future despite pressure from the US, adding "I believe in dialogue."

April 25: Pres. Abbas travels to Oslo to meet King Harald and Premier Soltenberg of Norway.

- *Ha'aretz* quotes Washington sources as saying that the US will not recognize a border created after a unilateral withdrawal from the West Bank as Israel's permanent border, saying this would need to be established through negotiations between Israel and the PA.

- French FM Philippe Douste-Blazy praises Hamas' condemnation of the attack in Dahab, calling it "a major development of foreign policy".

April 26: During talks in Oslo with Norwegian PM Jens Stoltenberg, FM Jonas Gahr Stoere, Min. of Development Erik Solheim, and Pres. of the Parliament Thorbjorn Jagland, as well as Norway's Crown Prince Haakon, Pres. Abbas calls for direct negotiations to be held "immediately" at an international conference,



saying he was ready to lead them and that the election of a Hamas govt. was not an obstacle. He also states, "The international community needs to move fast. Israel's unilateral measures through which it strives to impose its vision and expansionist map... eliminating any chance of establishing a viable independent Palestinian State". Norway pledges a US\$20 million aid package to Palestinians to be channelled through the UN or Norwegian NGOs. Later, Abbas continues his trip to Helsinki. ▲

- In Paris, Pres. Chirac meets Arab League Sec.-Gen. Amr Musa, who urges European nations to renew financial aid to the Palestinians, saying they should not be penalized for democratically electing Hamas.

- In an interview with *Al-Jazeera* Swiss Pres. Moritz Leuenberger says the EU was too hasty when it decided to suspend aid to the Palestinian govt.. "Many EU countries have granted themselves the right to set down conditions for Hamas... It would be wiser to give Hamas a trial period and judge it according to its acts."

- Indonesian Pres. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono expresses disagreement over the aid cut to the Palestinians, saying he will join a new forum with Saudi Arabia and Turkey to find a solution and adding that "Hamas should be given a chance to solve the Palestinian problem, so don't add their burden by halting aid".

- The WCC denounces two attacks on Christian volunteers helping Palestinian children on their way to school in Hebron and calls the Israeli authorities to punish the settlers responsible.

April 27: Pres. Abbas meets Finnish Pres. Tarja Halonen during a one-day visit to Finland. Later he proceeds to France.

- Sweden's Amb. to Israel Robert Rydberg is summoned to the FM to clarify Stockholm's decision both to withdraw from a NATO air force exercise due to Israel's participation and to grant visas to two Hamas representatives. Rydberg says Hamas officials had not requested visas

and therefore were not granted them and that Sweden had “technical and financial” reasons for dropping out of the NATO drill though the decision is believed to be in response to Israel’s lack of participation in peace-keeping missions, a prerequisite for this particular exercise.

- In London, an informal donors meeting discusses ways to continue humanitarian aid to the Palestinians despite the Hamas-led govt.. but does not issue a formal declaration.

- After returning from the Gaza Strip, Médecins Sans Frontières head Pierre Salignon says the situation in the OPT was “explosive” after the suspension of aid, that “social and hygienic conditions” had worsened, and that there was “a lack of medicines of primary medical importance.”

- Indonesia’s Pres. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono announces that Indonesia will appoint a special representative to the PA.

April 28: Pres. Abbas meets France’s Pres. Chirac in Paris on the final leg of a European tour aimed at securing continued financial support for the Palestinian people. Chirac suggests that the World Bank could channel funds to the PA to help it pay salaries. ►

- Quartet Special Envoy James Wolfensohn decides to step down.



May 1: The US Treasury Dept. Under-Sec. for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, Stuart Levey, arrives in Israel to coordinate efforts by the US to isolate Hamas.

May 2: In his final report to the Quartet, Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement James Wolfensohn questions the decision of western powers to cut all aid to the PA.

May 3: Swedish PM Göran Persson tells the media that Hamas PLC spokesman Salah Mohammed Al-Bardawil and Hamas official Mohammad Rantissi would not be allowed entry into Sweden, saying “We have no national interest in inviting them and will therefore follow the guidelines that Hamas leaders cannot have visas to visit Schengen countries.”

- French Pres. Jacques Chirac writes to the Quartet members asking them to back the creation of a World Bank account to channel aid to the Palestinians.

May 4: *Ha’aretz* reports that officials at the Jewish-sponsored Brandeis College have removed artwork depicting injured and bloodied Palestinian children from a school exhibit.

- It transpires that one of the reasons for Quartet envoy James Wolfensohn’s resignation was the US’ objection to several initiatives by donor states to bypass the Hamas govt. and get money directly to the Palestinians, for instance through the Holst Fund.

- At the American Jewish Committee centennial dinner, Pres. Bush vows to have no contact with Hamas leaders, saying “Democratic leaders cannot have one foot in the camp of democracy and one foot in the camp of terror,” and that Hamas must accept the demands of the international community to recognize Israel, disarm and reject terrorism. Speaking at the same occasion, Sec.-Gen. Kofi Annan expresses the hope that within his lifetime, two states, Israel and Palestine, will live side by side in a peaceful Middle East and with mutual respect.

May 5: Following Israeli criticism over Stockholm’s decision to grant an entry visa to PA Refugee Affairs Min. Atif Adwan to attend a conference, Swedish PM Goeran Persson tells the *TT News Agency* that while his govt. views Hamas as a terrorist organization, it did not mean that individuals could not be granted visas.

May 6: The Russian Federation sends \$ 10 million in pledged emergency aid to the Palestinians via the office of Pres. Abbas.

May 8: The Quartet meets in New York to discuss the humanitarian situation in Gaza and the deteriorating relations between Israelis and Palestinians.

- *The New York Times* reports that a recent internal report by the WHO portrayed a health crisis that was bound to worsen as the financial ban of the Hamas-led PA continued.

May 9: The Quartet endorses a new program to temporarily send humanitarian aid directly to the Palestinian people through the office of Pres. Abbas. Quartet members also restate their commitment to the Road Map and its goal of a two-state solution and reiterate the three demands posed to Hamas if cooperation is to be resumed. The Quartet also meets with Egyptian FM Abul Gheit, Jordanian FM Abdul Illah Al-Khatib, and Saudi FM Saud al-Faisal to exchange views on regional issues.

- US Sec. of State Rice announces that the US would provide \$10 million in new medical assistance to Palestinians from money it had taken back after Hamas won elections in January.

- A new UNCTAD study entitled “The Palestinian war-torn economy: aid, development and state formation” states that deteriorating economic performance and declining living conditions under more intensive restrictions have left Palestinians frustrated by higher levels of poverty and unemployment and have damaged the already weak PA Govt., recommending that the PA complement short-term emergency responses with long-term planning and policies that focus on poverty reduction and employment growth.

May 10: At a news conference in Stockholm, PA Refugee Min. Atef Adwan criticizes the Quartet decision to have humanitarian aid bypass the Hamas govt..

- US Amb. to the UN, John Bolton, expresses concern regarding a new Quartet initiative to transfer financial assistance to the Palestinians while bypassing the PA’s Hamas-led govt., saying that most of the funds would be spent on overdue salaries.

- Quartet diplomats express concern that Israel will carry out a rapid unilateral withdrawal from the West Bank. UN Sec.-Gen. Kofi Annan says “such a withdrawal ought to be coordinated with the Palestinians.”

May 11: Rabbis for Human Rights is honored in Japan with the Niwano Peace Foundation prize for battling abuses by soldiers and settlers in the Palestinian territories.

May 12: Norway announces a 50%-increase in its funding for UN Palestinian relief efforts, to 150 million kroner (\$24.5 million).

- UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour, warning that the region was on the brink of a human rights and humanitarian crisis, calls on Israel and the PA to respect core international human rights standards, saying “The rising number of lives lost, whether as a result of targeted killings or suicide attacks, home-made missiles or artillery fire, is unacceptable.”

May 13: In Oslo, Norwegian FM officials meet with PA Cabinet Min. Atef Ibrahim Adwan of Hamas, calling on his movement to renounce violence and recognize Israel. Israeli spokesmen criticize Norway’s decision to hold govt.-level talks with a Hamas official.

May 14: Pres. Abbas arrives in Moscow for talks with Russian Pres. Vladimir Putin aimed at securing political and economic support for the beleaguered PA.

May 15: The EU expresses hope to have a new aid mechanism in place by June to channel funds to Palestinians while bypassing the Hamas-led govt., adding that a new aid mechanism would require Israeli support.

- Pres. Abbas meets Russian Pres. Putin in the Black Sea resort of Sochi. Putin stresses that “Russia has always been a reliable and consistent friend of the Palestinian people.” ►

- In a speech before the European Parliament, Pres. Abbas says: “I tell our Israeli neighbours that we want to make a just and lasting peace with you... Let’s sit together at the negotiating



table, away from dictation and unilateral solutions. Stop saying there is no Palestinian partner; the partner is there, and we extend our hands to make peace through negotiations only." He s "These absurd [Qassam] rockets are giving Israel an excuse to escalate its offensives against our people in the Gaza Strip. Israel seeks to drag us into a trap and then refuses to negotiate under the pretext of having no partner."

- Swedish Min. for International Development Corporation Carin Jämtin announces an increase in Sweden's financial support for UNRWA.

- PA Min. for Refugee Affairs, Atif Adwan, meets with MPs from Norway's Labour and Socialist Left parties and the Head of the FM's Section for Middle Eastern Affairs, who reiterates that the PA must take steps to comply with the demands put forward by the Quartet and that Israel must respect previously concluded agreements, key UN resolutions and demands from the international community.

May 16: In Strasbourg, Pres. Abbas delivers a speech to European Parliament deputies, appealing for the EU to give the Hamas-led govt. a chance to adapt to international requirements and not cut off aid to the PA. At a news conference afterwards, Abbas warns of a Palestinian "explosion of anger" if international donors did not move fast to restore aid cut off in recent weeks, saying "Life will be frozen ... and this would lead to a chaotic situation of which we cannot foresee the results". ▼



May 17: UNSC members consider a draft resolution sponsored by the US and France urging Syria to recognize Lebanon, establish diplomatic ties and demarcate the frontier with its neighbor.

- Palestinian director Elia Suleiman is a Jury member at the 59th International film festival in Cannes, starting today.

- German Chancellor Angela Merkel describes an unannounced visit by a minister of the Hamas-led govt. to Germany as "vexing".

May 18: Spokeswoman for EU security affairs chief Javier Solana Cristina Gallach states that "it is the EU position that we want a negotiated solution" to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and that the EU was hoping the US will persuade Israel in talks next week to resume peace talks instead of carrying out a unilateral pullout from the West Bank.

- Saudi FM Prince Saud Al-Faisal meets US Sec. of State Condoleezza Rice at the US State Dept. in Washington, reiterating a call on the Bush Admin. that shutting off aid to the PA and isolating Hamas will radicalize a destitute population and set back the cause of peace with Israel. ▲



- British Professor Richard Seaford, head of the Dept. of Classics and Ancient History at the University of Exeter, UK, refuses a request to write an article for an academic journal funded by Israeli universities, saying that he is taking part in a boycott of Israel.

- During a meeting with visiting Egyptian Pres. Mubarak, Spanish PM José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero says that his country would help the Palestinian people in their efforts to seek peace.

May 21: Italy's new FM, Massimo D'Alema, tells the Italian daily *L'Unita* that his country would follow the rest of Europe in isolating Hamas. "We

do not believe that a Government that denies Israel's right to exist can be a part of a peace process," adding, however, that "It would not be acceptable for the international community or convenient for Israel for there to be a humanitarian collapse in the territories," and that it would be "wrong" for Israel to act unilaterally on redrawing its borders.

May 21-22: Israeli PM Olmert visits the US to meet with Sec. of State Rice and Pres. Bush, seeking endorsement for his 'convergence plan' to draw final borders by evacuating West Bank settlements and discussing Iran's nuclear program as well as the situation in the PA.

May 23: In Washington, PM Olmert discusses his 'convergence plan' with Sec. of State Rice and Pres. Bush. At a joint press conference at the White House, US Pres. Bush hails Olmert's plans for Middle East peace as "bold ideas" that could be "an important step toward the peace we both support" but saying a negotiated agreement "best serves Israelis and Palestinians and the cause of peace." Olmert says that if Hamas should abandon its refusal to recognize Israel and its embrace of violence, "they will find us a willing partner in peace."

- The House of Representatives passes with a vote of 361:37 the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006 (H.R. 4681) to further restrict US aid to the Hamas-led PA, drawing the displeasure of the Bush Admin., which says the legislation, which must still be considered in the Senate, was unneeded and overreaching in its restrictions.

- Chinese FM spokesman Liu Jianchao said the Chinese govt. hoped China-Israel relations would be unaffected by the attendance of FM Zahar at the 2nd Min.ial Meeting of the China-Arab Cooperation Forum to be held in Beijing on 31 May and 1 June, saying all members of the forum had been invited, incl. Palestine, according to its rules and conventions and the Palestinians' decision on the representative would be respected.

- EU govt.s back a new €34 million emergency humanitarian aid package for the Palestinian people to be spent through UN aid agencies and the ICRC.

- The Annual Amnesty International report indicates a drop in violence between Israelis and Palestinians in 2005, although it reports a continuation of attacks by both sides with 190 Palestinians killed by Israel in the past year, many of them unlawfully, and 50 Israelis killed by Palestinians. It also reports the continuation of illegal settlement construction in the West Bank and the harassment of farmers to prevent them from cultivating their land.

May 24: PM Ehud Olmert tells a joint meeting of the US Houses of Congress that the internationally-brokered road map initiative "remains the right plan," but warned that Israel would be prepared to "seek other alternatives to promote our future and the prospects of hope in the Middle East " if it found no partner for peace in the Palestinians.

- The Church of Scotland has called on European authorities and the World Council of Churches to identify clearly products from settlements in the West Bank.

May 26: Indonesian FM Hassan Wirajuda welcomes a visit by FM Zahar to discuss future bilateral relations. Speaking at a press conference, Zahar says, "We are not the government of Hamas. We are the government of Palestine." Indonesia also expresses the intention to establish a representative office in Palestine.

- The annual ILO report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories states that poverty and unemployment continued to worsen, with four out of every ten Palestinians living under the official poverty line of less than \$2.10 per day.

May 28: Switzerland donates 1 million Swiss francs (\$819,000) to buy medicine for the OPT and send two health experts there. The funds would go directly to medical providers, with the distribution of medicines to be carried out in close cooperation with the WHO and other partners.

May 29: At its annual conference the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) in Britain votes with 106:71 and 21 abstentions on a motion recommending that its 69,000 members boycott Israeli lecturers and academic institutions that who do not pub-

licly dissociate themselves from Israel's "apartheid policies".

- At the Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the NAM at Putrajaya, Malaysia, Malaysia's PM Abdullah Ahmad Badawi accuses the West of double standards for trying to squash Iran's nuclear program and imposing sanctions on the



Mahmoud Zahar, Abdullah Badawi

Hamas-led Palestinian govt.. Palestinian rivalries are laid bare at the meeting as Hamas FM Mahmoud Zahar walks out in protest over the arrival of PLO political head and FM Farouk Qaddoumi. ◀▲

May 30: At the closing ceremony of their Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau in Putrajaya, Malaysia, the NAM emphatically backs Iran in its nuclear standoff with the US and condemns Israel for occupying Palestinian lands. Malaysian FM Syed Hamid Albar urges Hamas and Fateh to sort out their difference, saying: "We support the Palestinian cause, the Palestinian struggle, the result of the free election, but we don't want to get involved in any dispute between them."

May 31: In Beijing, Chinese Pres. Hu Jintao meets with a group of Arab FMs and officials attending a conference to strengthen Sino-Arab economic and political ties and stresses China's interest to "further develop cooperation in all areas and earnestly promote the rapid development of our continuing friendly ties." Palestinian FM Zahar also meets with Chinese FM Li Zhaoxing. In an interview, he says there was no urgency to recognize the Arab peace initiative but that his govt. would study it with a "serious and positive attitude". Zahar's presence angers Israel.

- The Canadian Union of Public Employees, with 450,000 members the largest labor union in the Canadian province of Ontario, has voted unanimously to boycott Israel "until it recognizes the Palestinians' right of self-determination" and accepts all UN resolutions including the right of return.

June 1: FM Zahar holds talks with Chinese FM Li Zhaoxing in Beijing, after the closing of the China-Arab Cooperation Forum. Liu says that China would "continue to try its best to provide humanitarian aid to the Palestinians" and had "never labelled Hamas a terrorist organization".

June 7: Sweden has begun to mark wines produced in the Golan Heights as originating in "Israel, occupied Syrian land."

June 8: The 14th International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East, entitled "New Challenges in the Middle East Peace Process and Israeli-Palestinian Dialogue" and organized by the UN Dept. of Public Information, in cooperation with the Russian FM, opens in Moscow.

June 9: Russia's FM Sergey Lavrov tells reporters that Russia supported Pres. Abbas' idea of holding a referendum on establishing a Palestinian State alongside Israel.

June 10: In Tokyo, veteran Japanese film director Makoto Sato launches his new documentary 'Out of Place,' dedicated to the late Edward Said, tracing his steps through Lebanon, Israel, the West Bank, Egypt, and the US.

June 11: While on a visit to Bulgaria, Israeli Pres. Moshe Katzav sharply criticizes the Hamas-led govt., saying it had made the rift with Israel

"deeper than ever."

- The Bush Admin. is reportedly pressing the EU to scrap a plan to pay Palestinian health workers and possibly others to avert the collapse of essential services, trying to put its own plan which would instead provide welfare payments to poor Palestinians, who could then use the money to cover doctors' bills and buy food.

June 12: At a press conference following their meeting in London, British PM Tony Blair refrains from endorsing PM Ehud Olmert's plan for a unilateral withdrawal, although he recognizes that the absence of a viable partner on the Palestinian side would mean "another reality." Blair says there was broad international agreement on the need to negotiate an agreement between Israel and Palestinian officials, and promised PM Olmert "every support and every impetus we can from the international community" toward that goal. Olmert says he would make "every possible effort" to negotiate peace with the Palestinians but will act unilaterally if no agreement can be reached.

June 13: At the close of visit to London, PM Olmert tells a group of British MPs that Israel "will never agree to withdraw from the entire West Bank, because the pre-1967 borders are not defensible." He also tells the MPs that he had authorized a shipment of weapons to Pres. Abbas "to strengthen his Presidential guard, so he can strengthen his forces against Hamas", adding, "I did this because we are running out of time and we need to help Abu Mazen".

- At a meeting with the EU, Israeli FM Tzipi Livni remains noncommittal about an EU plan to craft an international aid facility for the Palestinians, wary it may end up 'legitimizing' their Hamas govt..

- At a press encounter at UN HQ in New York, Sec.-Gen. Kofi Annan says that he was shocked and saddened by the latest missile attack by Israel, which killed nine people and wounded about 40.

June 14: In an interview with *Al-Hayat* in London, UN Sec.-Gen. Kofi Annan expresses doubt over an Israeli army probe determining that the blast on a Gaza Strip beach five days ago that killed seven civilians was caused by a mine or explosive device, placed by Palestinians to prevent Israeli troops from reaching the area.

- In response to the Israeli army probe blaming the blast on a Gaza beach on an explosive device placed by Palestinians, Human Rights Watch states that interviews with eyewitnesses, visit to the scene and victims' injuries "strongly supports the theory" that the blast was caused by an Israeli shell. Marc Garlasco, a former US intelligence officer and bomb expert now associated with HRW, calls for an independent inquiry into the deaths, saying that physical evidence, including shell fragments, shrapnel and the type of injuries "made Israeli shelling easily the likeliest cause."

- PM Olmert meets with Pres. Chirac in Paris as part of his ongoing effort to drum up international support for his West Bank convergence plan.

- Pope Benedict XVI calls on Israelis and Palestinians to "bravely restart the path of negotiation," saying, "The Vatican follows with much apprehension and pain the growing and blind episodes of violence that are currently covering the Holy Land with blood," and calling on all parties to respect human life, particularly of unarmed citizens and children.

- A delegation of the Arab Group, the NAM, the OIC and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People meets Sec.-Gen. Kofi Annan to discuss the killing of Palestinians on a beach in the Gaza Strip.

June 15: Israeli PM Olmert concludes two days of talks with French leaders, leaving with mutual declarations of affection but no endorsement for his plan to set Israel's borders with the Palestinians unilaterally if peace talks stay stalled.

June 16: At the Conference on Interactions and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, in Almaty, Kazakhstan, Vice-PM Shimon Peres presents a plan to increase economic cooperation among Israel, Jordan and the PA to the conference as a whole and to Russian Pres. Putin, whom he meets separately. Palestinian delegate, Mohammed Saud Oudeh, ridicules the idea, saying: "How can Peres talk about economic cooperation?" he

asked. "We remain under occupation. End occupation and that will help constructive dialogue in all spheres of life."

- European leaders endorse a substantial aid package - an estimated €100 million - for the Palestinians, to be paid via a new funding mechanism, focusing on health, social services and utilities like heating and sanitation, while maintaining a funding freeze on the Hamas-led govt..

- With regard to the Fateh-Hamas tensions, Mohammed Dahlan tells *The New York Times*, "[Hamas] say they're besieged, but Arafat [and Fateh were] besieged ... but never did anything to provoke civil war, and we never stopped salaries either."

June 17: Three British newspapers, the *Guardian*, the *Independent* and the *Times* of London, publish their findings regarding the Gaza beach blast eight days ago, saying it was caused by an Israeli army shell.

- The Middle East Quartet says in a statement it endorsed an EU proposal for a temporary mechanism that includes aid for the Palestinian health sector and utilities while bypassing the Hamas-led govt..

June 19: FMs of Islamic nations gather for a OIC meeting in Baku. Malaysia's FM Syed Hamid Albar says at the opening that "Palestinian forces should not allow a civil war take place". Yemeni FM Abu Bakr Al-Kurbi



says the election victory of Hamas was being exploited by Israel. ▲

June 21: In the wake of the recent deaths of Palestinian bystanders, British Foreign Sec. Margaret Beckett says "The killing of innocent civilians, and particularly children, is completely unacceptable," adding: "We call on the Israeli authorities to respect their obligations under international law and ensure that civilians, particularly children, are not harmed. In addition we call for an immediate halt to all rocket fire from the Gaza Strip on Israeli targets." Along the same line a Russian FM statement expresses understanding for Israel's security concern but adds "nevertheless, we believe that the use of force against the civilian population is unacceptable," and Ibrahim Gambari, the UN Undersec.-Gen. for Political Affairs, tells the UNSC "We would like to once again underscore the need for Israel to cease targeted killings, which continue to claim civilian lives."

- The EU-US summit held in Vienna issues a statement saying, "We will continue to closely cooperate in the Middle East, notably through the Quartet. We welcome the temporary international mechanism to deliver assistance directly to the Palestinian people. We will continue to deliver humanitarian assistance and promote Palestinian democracy and civil society. Whilst recalling Pres. Abbas' commitment to a platform of peace, we will continue to urge the new Palestinian Government to commit to non-violence, recognise Israel's right to exist and accept existing agreements and obligations. We will continue to call on Israel to ease restrictions on access and movement and to take additional steps including with respect to the Palestinian tax and customs revenues, to improve the humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people."

- John Dugard, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the OPT, who had recently visited the region, says in a statement, "There has been a substantial deterioration in respect of human rights in the OPT since Hamas won the elections... Palestinians understandably find it difficult to comprehend the response of the Quartet and many Western States... They argue that Israel is in violation of major Security Council and General Assembly resolutions dealing with unlawful territorial change and the violation of human rights... and should accordingly be subjected to international sanctions. Instead, the Palestinian people have been subjected to possibly the most rigorous form of international sanctions imposed in modern times."

June 22: Amidst objections of Arab and Muslim states, Magen David Adom is accepted as a full member into the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies at its 29th international conference in Geneva.

- A group of MPs in Chile launches a campaign to gather aid and medicine for the Palestinian people.

June 26: The French and German govts separately call for the immediate release of captured soldier Shalit and urge both sides to take steps to prevent the conflict from escalating.

June 27: A UN International Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace begins in Vienna to review the situation in the OPT and discuss the peace process as well as international efforts to support it.

June 28: World leaders condemn the use of violence by both Israelis and Palestinians sides, stress the importance of restarting the peace process, and express their deep concern about the current deterioration of the security situation, urging all parties to show restraint.

- Sec.-Gen. Kofi Annan tells reporters that although it is understandable Israel wants to protect its citizens against rockets and get its kidnapped soldier back "it has to do so with restraint" and "in such a way that the civilian population are not made to suffer".

- Concerning the reported agreement on the Prisoners' Document, EU Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner states: "This agreement is not an end in itself but has to be the start of a process that will see the different factions commit themselves to the principles of non-violence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations. We stand ready to work with a Palestinian Government committed to these principles".

- British PM Blair tells the House of Commons that the Quartet would back talks with Hamas if it recognized Israel, renounced violence and committed itself to a negotiated settlement.

June 29: G-8 FMs urge restraint from all sides in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A G-8 statement reads: "We condemn the extremist groupings responsible for these acts, and also those who put peace prospects in jeopardy. We also call on Israel to show maximum restraint in the conditions of the current crisis. The practice of detaining elected Government members and legislative bodies of Palestine arouses special concern. We urge all the parties to defend civilians and not to increase their common suffering."

- Russia's FM Sergey Lavrov says at a news conference that he and his G-8 counterparts were "united" in their demand that the kidnapped Israeli soldier be released.

- Leaders around the world urge Israel to show restraint and call on the Palestinian to secure the release of the kidnapped soldier as soon as possible.

- Norway's FM Jonas Gahr Støre condemns Israel for arresting members of the Hamas-led govt. as an "aggressive use of power", adding "It is unacceptable to take hostages but that does not justify taking hostages on the other side.... We distance ourselves from that and find it alarming and unacceptable".

- UN Under-Sec.-Gen. for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Egeland warns that hundreds of thousands of civilians in Gaza were on the brink of a humanitarian crisis after Israel bombed the area's only power plant, which also affects the water supply and which he calls a violation of humanitarian law.

- An UNCTAD report says that the impact of an aid embargo on the Hamas-led govt. had been so great that "Poverty and humanitarian degradation in the OPT could reach unprecedented levels and will last much longer than the term of any single Government, irrespective of its political program."

- EU Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid Louis Michel laments Israel's destruction of a Gazan power station as "particularly serious because of the knock-on effects on other sectors."

- In Strasbourg, an agreement to launch a Palestinian-Israeli parliamentary

dialogue with the participation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) is reached.

June 30: An emergency UNSC debate on the Israeli incursion into Gaza, requested by Arab nations, ends without a resolution. At the meeting, Asst. Sec.-Gen. for Political Affairs Angela Kane says that while nothing justified the holding of hostages and the PA must act to stop rocket attacks, Palestinian civilians should not pay the price of those actions, and Israel must cease the destruction of civilian infrastructure.

- France calls on Israel to free arrested Palestinian Min.s, with FM spokesman Jean-Baptiste Mattei saying: "The Israelis must be very vigilant about the consequences of their actions" and "A de-escalation must be started.... We await the liberation of these political officials".

- Amnesty International states that Israel's deliberate attacks against civilian property and infrastructure in Gaza violated international humanitarian law and constituted war crimes, adding: "Israel must now take urgent measures to remedy the long-term damage it has caused and immediately restore the supply, at its own cost, of electricity and water to the Palestinian population in the affected areas."

July 2: Speaking to reporters in Banjul, Gambia, at the sidelines of an OAU summit, UN Sec.-Gen. Annan says, "I remain very concerned about the need to preserve Palestinian institutions and infrastructure. They will be the basis for an eventual two-state solution and are thus in the interest of both Israelis and Palestinians. It would, therefore, seem inadvisable to carry out actions that would have the opposite effect."

July 2-3: Outside the US Embassy in Jakarta, thousands of people rally against Israel's ongoing military operation in the Palestinian territories. ►



July 3: After meeting with Israeli FM Tzipi Livni, Russian FM Sergey Lavrov calls for Palestinians to release the captured Israeli soldier and stop attacking Israeli cities, and on Israel to exercise restraint.

- The Swiss FM says in a statement that Israel's destruction of the main Gaza power station and its attack on the PMO had been unjustified and Israel was violating international law by inflicting heavy destruction and endangering civilians in acts of collective punishment banned under the Geneva Conventions.

July 4: British PM Blair tells senior British MPs that the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians could not be resolved without international intervention and that the West would pay "a very heavy price" with the Muslim world if it failed to find a solution to the conflict.

- The Malaysian Parliament's Dewan Rakyat (Lower House) unanimously approves an emergency motion, calling on the UN to convene an emergency meeting to discuss the Palestine issue.

July 5: After a meeting with Turkish FM Abdullah Gul and PM Erdogan's adviser Ahmet Davudoglu in Washington, Sec. of State Rice praises the diplomatic efforts of Turkey with Syria's govt. to ease accelerating tensions between Israel and the Palestinians.

- In Strasburg, EU officials say that prospects for the MEPP looked "slim" in light of the escalating violence, but pledge to continue with efforts to find a solution to the conflict.

- EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner calls on Israel to ease the worsening humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian territories, saying both Israelis and Palestinians must "step back from the brink" and that "Israel has to understand its responsibilities for the well-being of the Palestinian population. An immediate step has to be the restoration of electricity to the Palestinian territories."

- In Kuala Lumpur, PA Amb. to Malaysia Abdel Aziz Abu Ghosh calls for an international peace conference to discuss the Palestine issue, stop Israel's continued aggression and realize the two-State solution as envisaged in the Road Map, stressing that Palestinians are also in dire need of international protection.

July 6: The UN Human Rights Council adopts a resolution by a vote of 29:11 and 5 abstentions, demanding that Israel end its military operations in the OPT and expressing concern at the detrimental impact of the current Israeli military operation on the already deteriorating humanitarian conditions of the Palestinians. It also asks Israel to release the arrested PA Min.s and PLC members and decides to dispatch an urgent fact-finding mission headed by the Special Rapporteur.

July 7: The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) publishes a report entitled "Failing the Palestinian State: The human rights impact of the economic strangulation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory", which condemns the scale of the "economic sanctions" imposed on the Palestinians through the suspension of direct international aid recommends that the Europeans should re-evaluate the political costs of participation in the Quartet.

- UN Sec.-Gen. Kofi Annan calls for an immediate stop to what he calls Israel's "disproportionate use of force" in Gaza but also presses for the release of the Israeli soldier snatched by Palestinian activists.

- At a symposium in Madrid organized by the International Freedom Fund, internationally acclaimed Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa says he was ashamed to be Israel's friend, calling Israel's response to the abduction of a soldier "excessively severe," adding that "Israel had become a powerful and arrogant country, and it is the role of its friends to be highly critical of its policies."

July 8: A UN statement strongly blames Israel for a burgeoning humanitarian crisis, incl. deaths, injuries and harm to children, from its offensive in Gaza.

July 9: UN Sec.-Gen. Kofi Annan calls for an immediate stop to what he calls Israel's "disproportionate use of force" in Gaza and also presses for the release of Israeli soldier Shalit.

- The London-based *Al-Hayat* quotes Dep. of Hamas' politburo, Musa Abu Marzouk, as saying that once Israel would recognize the principle of prisoner exchange, negotiations could begin on the number of Palestinian prisoners to be freed, and that Hamas was willing to accept the release of some 100 female prisoners and 30 men who have already served long sentences, in addition to observing a complete ceasefire.

- A statement by the Finnish EU Presidency "expresses its grave concern about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip," and "strongly urges Israel to facilitate and ensure transfer of assistance for humanitarian needs."

July 10: UN Sec.-Gen. Annan demands immediate access for UN workers and humanitarian relief supplies to the Gaza Strip.

- A spokeswoman for EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner says that "The situation is clearly extremely tense and getting worse," and that "we have urged Israel repeatedly to assume its responsibilities to avoid actions that would make the situation worse for the civilian population."

- The Pres. of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), Willie Madisha, says that the "apartheid Israel State" was worse than the apartheid in South Africa was.

July 11: The EU has begun sending emergency fuel supplies to the Gaza Strip through the Temporary International Mechanism (TIM) set up to meet the basic needs of Palestinians.

- About 300 Palestinians who live in Greece, attend a rally in Athens, marching to the Israeli embassy to demonstrate against attacks in Gaza.

- *The Washington Post* prints an opinion piece by PM Haniyeh, in which he says: "The current Gaza invasion is only the latest effort to destroy the results of fair and free elections held early this year. It is the explo-

sive follow-up to a five-month campaign of economic and diplomatic warfare directed by the United States and Israel," adding, "If Israel is prepared to negotiate seriously and fairly, and resolve the core 1948 issues, rather than the secondary ones from 1967, a fair and permanent peace is possible."

- Qatar circulates a revised draft UNSC resolution demanding the unconditional release of a captured Israeli soldier as well as Israel's immediate withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

- Norway, Sweden, Spain and the UN Under-Sec.-Gen. for Humanitarian Affairs, Jan Egeland, have called on the main donor countries to consider new measures to help easing the humanitarian situation the people of the Gaza Strip, which is "extremely worrying."

- The COSATU and other organizations call on the govt. to end diplomatic relations with Israel and establish boycotts and sanctions.

July 12: Speaking in Brussels to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, Erkki Tuomioja, FM of Finland that holds the current EU Presidency, asks Israel to stop its armed assault on Gaza, also demanding the unconditional release of the Israeli soldier as well as the arrested Palestinian legislators and Min.s. and an end to firing of rockets by Palestinians.

- In response to the COSATU statement a day earlier, Dep. FM Aziz Pahad says South Africa was not planning to break diplomatic ties with Israel and calls to do so could not be taken seriously, but also calls on Israel to stop the assault and on the Palestinians to release the captured Israeli soldier.

July 13: Leaders around the globe universally condemn Hizbullah's attack a day earlier, but also urge Israel to respond with restraint. The White House demands the immediate release of two Israeli soldiers captured by Hizbullah, blaming Syria and Iran for the attacks.

- UN Sec.-Gen. Kofi Annan also condemns "without reservation" the Hizbullah attack and demands the release of the kidnapped soldiers, warning of an escalation of the conflict.

- The US vetoes a UNSC resolution sponsored by Qatar, that accuses Israel of a disproportionate use of force endangering Palestinian civilians and demands Israel halt its military offensive and withdraws from Gaza. ▶



- Finland, which holds the EU's rotating presidency, issues a statement accusing Israel of using "disproportionate" force in response to the Hizbullah raid, adding "The presidency deplores the loss of civilian lives and the destruction of civilian infrastructure. The imposition of an air and sea blockade on Lebanon cannot be justified."

- At a news conference after a meeting with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, US Pres. Bush says that "Israel has the right to defend herself. Secondly, whatever Israel does should not weaken the ... government in Lebanon."

- French FM Philippe Douste-Blazy denounces Israel's strikes on Lebanon, and particularly the "bombardment of an airport of an entirely sovereign country, a friend of France," calling it a "a disproportionate act of war."

- Russian FM spokesperson Mikhail Kamynin also condemns both Israel's strikes and Hizbullah's abduction of the soldiers, saying "The continued destruction of civilian infrastructure in Lebanon and the Palestinian territories and the disproportionate use of force by Israel, which causes suffering to the civilian population, can be neither understood nor justified," adding, "Equally unacceptable are any manifestations of terrorism and the taking of hostages, who must be released immediately and unconditionally." Russian FM Sergey Lavrov is quoted by *Interfax* as warning of a "very dramatic

and tragic" outcome to the Middle East violence, saying: "One cannot justify the continued destruction by Israel of the civilian infrastructure in Lebanon and in the Palestinian territory, involving the disproportionate use of force in which the civilian population suffers."

- The UK urged Israel to keep its military action in Gaza and southern Lebanon "proportionate."

July 14: The US donates US\$50 million to Palestinian refugees.

- In Dhaka, Bangladesh, activists burn US and Israeli flags in a protest condemning Israel's offensive on Lebanon.

- In Geneva, UN Under-Sec.-Gen. for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Jan Egeland denounces the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territory. ▶



Jan Egeland

- Venezuelan Pres. Hugo Chavez says that the US' backing of Israel is responsible for flaming tensions in the Middle East and putting the world on course toward another "holocaust."

- Spanish PM Zapatero says in a radio interview, "In my opinion Israel is making a mistake and its response will probably only cause intensification of the violence ... It is one thing to defend yourself legitimately, another to launch a generalized counter-attack on Lebanon and Gaza," adding that an escalation would "set us back decades."

- Indonesian FM Hassan Wirajuda deplores the "unilateral acts conducted by Israel which have left many victims, including innocent civilians."

July 15: The NAM condemns as "disproportionate" Israel's military offensive in the Gaza Strip and calls for the revival of the Road Map. NAM Chairman, PM Abdullah Ahmad Badawi of Malaysia, says "We would urge the G8 ... to make serious efforts to resuscitate the Road Map. This still represents the best hope for progress towards a final settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict."

July 16: In Jakarta, thousands of Muslim protesters stage a rally against Israeli attacks on the Palestinian territories and Lebanon that have killed scores of civilians. ▶

- The G8 Summit held at St. Petersburg adopts a set of documents including one on the Middle East, which expresses "deepening concern about the situation in the Middle East, in particular the rising civilian casualties on all sides and the damage to infrastructure" and offers "full support for the UN Sec.-Gen.'s mission presently in the region." To create conditions for the cessation of violence, it urges, *inter alia*, the return of Israeli soldiers in Gaza and Lebanon unharmed; an end to Israeli military operations and the early withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza; and the release of the arrested Palestinian Min.s and MPs. At the Summit, US Pres. Bush and European allies urge Israel to show restraint after four days of steady bombing against Lebanon. Russian Pres. Putin says, "We will do everything we can to ensure peace as quickly as possible in the Palestinian territories, Israel and Lebanon," while Sec. of State Rice rejects calls for a temporary truce in the Middle East, saying that not addressing the underlying causes of conflict just made things worse.



July 17: In Berlin, some 1,200 Lebanese and Palestinian protesters attend a rally against Israel. ▶

July 18: In Karachi and Jakarta, Pakistani and Indonesian protesters respectively, attend rallies against Israel's attacks in Gaza and Lebanon.

- In front of the Israeli embassy in Athens, some 1,500 protesters take part in rallies to demand an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon. ▶

- Irish FM Dermot Ahern tells the Parliament's foreign affairs committee, "Israel has an absolute right to peace and security. But Israel is a

strong military power. We share the belief within the EU that its military response in Gaza and in Lebanon has been harsh and disproportionate. Israel has a legitimate right to defend its citizens, but this must not be at the expense of the lives and welfare of Lebanese and Palestinian civilians. All military operations must be carried out in strict accordance with international law. And all parties must act on their responsibility to protect civilian lives. It has to be said that Israel is clearly failing to do so."

- Indonesian Pres. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono tells reporters after a meeting with ambassadors from 10 Middle Eastern countries, "We are calling for a ceasefire under the auspices of the United Nations" and that the UNGA should convene a session to discuss the conflict if the UNSC was unable to make a decision.

July 19: The NAM condemns Israel's offensives in Gaza and Lebanon and calls for an international force to be deployed to prevent the violence from spiralling into a regional conflict.

- UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour expresses grave concern over the continued killing and maiming of civilians in Lebanon, Israel and the OPT. The Human Rights Council's Special Rapporteur on the right to the highest attainable standard of health, Prof. Paul Hunt, calls for an independent investigation into whether the bombing of Gaza Strip's power station was a war crime.

July 20: In an interview published in the Italian daily *Corriere della Sera*, Lebanese PM Siniora comes out against Hizbullah for the first time saying that it "is maintaining a state within a state" and that the international community must help disarm the organization.

- Bangladesh accuses Israel of "state terrorism" in Lebanon and the Palestinian territories, describing the Jewish state's bombardment of Lebanon as a "heinous act."

- Palestinian students in Moscow hold an anti-Israeli rally outside the Israeli Embassy.

- In Santiago, Chile, members of the Palestinian community attend a campaign to collect signatures demanding an immediate ceasefire between Israel and Hizbullah. Similar rallies are held in front of the Israeli Embassies in Brasilia and San Salvador, El Salvador.

- UN Sec.-Gen. Annan renews his urgent appeal for an end to the civilian carnage in Lebanon, northern Israel, and Gaza, where Palestinians "are suffering deeply, with well over 100, many of them civilians, killed in the last month alone". He calls for "an immediate cessation of indiscriminate and disproportionate violence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and a reopening of closed crossing-points, without which Gaza will continue to be sucked into a downward spiral of suffering and chaos, and the region further inflamed".



- India's External Affairs Min. spokesman Navtej Sarna urges the immediate release of PA Min.s and PLC members arrested by Israel and expresses India's deep concern about Israel's "disproportionate retaliation for the abduction of an Israeli soldier."

July 21: Indonesia and Malaysia say they could send troops as part of a UN deployment to the Middle East as Asia showed mounting concern and urged the international community to intervene.

- In Santiago, Chile, Palestinian protestors demand an immediate ceasefire between Israel and Hizbullah. ▶

- In Kuala Lumpur demonstrators burn Israeli flags in front of the US embassy in protest over Israel's actions in Palestinians and Lebanon.

- Several thousands Lebanese and Palestinian protesters gather in Berlin to protest against the Israeli airstrikes in Lebanon and Gaza.

- Speakers at a UNSC debate demand a quick end to the bloodshed in Lebanon and Gaza as UN relief coordinator Jan Egeland announces a trip to the region to assess a worsening humanitarian crisis.

July 22: Peace activists march in several European cities to demand an end to Israel's strikes against Hizbullah. In London alone, some 7,000 protestors demonstrate. ▼ ▶



- *The New York Times* reports that the Bush Admin. is rushing a delivery of precision-guided bombs to Israel, which requested them last week after beginning its air campaign against Hizbullah.

July 24: After meeting with visiting Malaysian PM Abdullah Ahmad Badawi in Jakarta, Indonesian Pres. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono calls on the UNSC or UNGA to produce a solution to the escalating conflict in the Middle East.

July 25: Visiting Saudi FM Saud Al-Faisal states during his meeting with Pres. Putin: "We consider the fact that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains unresolved to be at the basis of the current conflict in Lebanon."

- In a joint communiqué at their meeting in Kuala Lumpur, ASEAN FMs express concern over "the deteriorating situation and the escalation of violence in the Middle East, particularly the disproportionate, indiscriminate and excessive use of force by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in Lebanon," and call "for an immediate ceasefire", also urging "the international community and the United Nations Security Council to get all parties in the conflicts to adhere to the ceasefire under UN supervision with the participation of countries that are able to do so."

July 26: Hundreds of demonstrators gather outside Israel's embassy in Washington, protesting the ongoing violence in the Middle East and pressing for humanitarian aid for its victims.

- The Rome summit on the situation in Lebanon – attended by 18 states, incl. US, Russia and European and Arab nations - ends with no clear results, after the US rejects a joint European-Arab demand for an immediate cease-fire. A joint statement vows to work immediately to reach a cease-

fire and calls for an international force to be deployed in South Lebanon under a UN mandate in order to help the govt. implement UNSC Res. 1559, which calls for disarming Hizbullah and deploying the Lebanese army in the south. ►

- Anti-Israeli demonstrations are held in Lahore, Srinagar, and Kashmir.

July 27: During a meeting with Italian PM Romano Prodi in Rome, Pres. Abbas says he believed the Israeli soldier held by Gaza militants could be released soon. ►

- At the confirmation hearings in Washington, US Permanent Representative to the UN John Bolton says there should “absolutely” be a “viable, contiguous Palestinian State.”

- In New Delhi, hundreds of people attend a protest organised by the left parties of India, protesting against Israeli attacks on Lebanon and the Palestinian territories. ▼



- Demonstrations protesting against the escalating conflict between Israel and Hizbullah are held in Managua, Nicaragua.

- The Association of United Arab Nations in Panama asks the UN to help stop the violence in Lebanon.

July 28: Hundreds of Muslims and South African Communist Party supporters march to the Israeli embassy in Pretoria, denouncing Israel’s attacks on Lebanon and the Palestinian Territories. ►

- The FM’s of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, Indonesia, Bangladesh and Pakistan hold talks on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum in Kuala Lumpur to discuss “their grave concern over the deteriorating situation and unabated violence” in Lebanon and the OPT.

- A group of 21 Indonesian religious leaders of different denominations, incl. the Indonesian Churches Association, visits the UN office in Jakarta and meets with UN representative George Petersen to call “on the United Nations to hold a special session by either the Security Council or the General Assembly” to end conflicts in the Middle East.

July 29: Demonstrations against Israel’s war against Lebanon and the Palestinians continue in many places around the globe.

July 30: The UNSC holds consultations over the Israeli airstrike in Qana, expressing in a statement its “extreme shock and distress” at the bombing and offering its condolences for the dead.

- The Qana airstrike is condemned by numerous countries and NGOs and results in public demonstrations in a number of countries around the globe.



Aug. 1: A meeting of the EU Council in Brussels deplores the continuing violence in the WBGS and reiterates its call to return to the peace process on the basis of the Road Map, adding that “an unequivocal commitment by all parties to a viable independent Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours is a key to stability and security in the whole region”.

Aug. 2: In Valparaiso City, the Chilean Congress holds a session to discuss Israel’s military offensive in Lebanon.

- Russians protest in front of the Israeli embassy in Moscow against Israel’s attacks in Lebanon and Gaza.

Aug. 3: At an OIC emergency meeting in Putrajaya, Malaysia, attended by Palestinian FM Farouk Qaddoumi, Muslim nations demand an immediate ceasefire in the Middle East, expressing outrage at international “double standards” over Israel’s offensive in Lebanon and warning of disastrous consequences if the assault continued. Malaysian PM and current OIC chair Abdullah Ahmad Badawi says “What is happening to Lebanon and Palestine cannot be tolerated... Clearly, Israel has bigger objectives other than freeing their captured soldiers. Clearly, Israel is being supported by some others in pursuing their secret design,” and urges Islamic leaders to play “a more proactive role” in the crisis by contributing forces for peacekeeping efforts.

Aug. 4: Indian Muslims protest against Israeli attacks on Lebanon and the Palestinian territories in Mumbai.

- Venezuela has recalled his Amb. to Israel to protest Israeli attacks on Lebanon and against the Palestinian people, with Pres. Hugo Chavez also moaning that “The US has prevented the Security Council from taking any action to stop Israel’s genocide against the people of Palestine and Lebanon”.

Aug. 5: The US and France finally agree on a resolution calling for fighting between Israel and Hizbullah to end and present it to the UNSC.

- In a written statement, Britain’s PM Tony Blair says that world leaders “cannot and must not lose sight of the Palestinian dimension, which is the root cause of this conflict. I will work tirelessly to re-energize the Middle East peace process, which is the only way to provide a viable, long-term solution to this situation, with a Palestinian State alongside a secure Israel.”

Aug. 6: European Parliament Pres. Josep Borrell states: “I firmly condemn this new act perpetrated against the PLC. In the name of the European Parliament, I demand that the Israeli authorities immediately release Mr. Dweik.”

- In a TV address Venezuela’s Pres. Chavez says: “[Israel] is attacking, doing the same thing to the Palestinian and Lebanese people that they have criticized, and with reason, the Holocaust. But this is a new Holocaust.”

Aug. 7: In Santiago, Chile, members of the Palestinian community attend a protest against Israel’s military offensive in Lebanon and Gaza.

- France condemns the arrest of PLC Speaker Abdel Aziz Dweik, with FM Spokesman Denis Simonneau saying it “is not likely to favour the appeasement of the current crisis. France reiterates its call for their release.”

Aug. 8: The UNSC holds a session on the crisis in the Middle East, requested by Qatar.

- Pres. Bush’s opposes Lebanon’s demand to amend the proposal for a UNSC resolution to include a demand for an immediate Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon.

- The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) urges Israel to release PLC members, saying in a statement it was “alarmed at the arrest and detention of Mr. Abdel Aziz Dweik, Speaker of the PLC.”

Aug. 9: In Karachi and Lahore, Pakistani demonstrators attend rallies in support of Hizbullah and condemn the ongoing Israeli air strikes against Lebanon and Palestinian territories.

- A Russian FM statement denounces the arrest of PLC Speaker Dweik and warns that “Such actions far from contribute to the defusing of the situation.”

- UN Sec.-Gen. Annan issues a statement expressing his great concern about the events in Lebanon and Gaza, saying "The continued killing and injuring of hundreds of civilians, including children, in Gaza, by Israeli forces is utterly unjustifiable. Further, the arbitrary arrest of many senior Palestinians – including Dr. Aziz Dweik, the speaker of the Palestinian Council – is a cause of particular concern, since it further undermines the Palestinian institutions which must be preserved if a two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is to be achieved."

- After meeting with Finnish Pres. Tarja Halonen in Helsinki, Jordan's King Abdullah II says "Europeans play a very vital role" in helping solve the Mideast conflict and urges "to reactivate the peace process. If we do not, the future will look very dark indeed."

Aug. 10: Malaysia calls on all nations to cut diplomatic ties with Israel over its "illegal war" in Lebanon that violates international law.

- AT&T Inc. says its charges for dialing the WBSG will be designated as "PA" on bills rather than appearing as calls to Israel and that the rates for these calls will be raised sharply.

Aug. 11: The UNSC unanimously passes a revised US-French resolution for a cease-fire in South Lebanon - Resolution 1701 - requiring Hizbullah to cease all attacks against Israel and Israel to "end all offensive operations." The UNSC also authorizes 30,000 soldiers, half from a reinforced UNIFIL and half from the Lebanese Army, to enforce it.

- UNSC adopts unanimously Res. 1701, which stresses the importance of, and the need to achieve, a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on all its relevant resolutions including Res. 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1515 (2003).

- The Indian govt. decides to provide the Palestine Red Crescent Society with medicine and medical supplies worth US\$2 million.



Aug. 12: Several thousand people demonstrate in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and in front of the White House, to condemn US policy in the Middle East and appeal for an end to the bloodshed in Israel's war with Lebanon and the Palestinians. ◀

- Indian Muslims protest in Bombay against the killing of innocent civilians in Lebanon and Palestinian territories by Israel. ▶

- In Asuncion, Paraguay, Lebanese and Palestinian residents protest against the attacks by Israel in Lebanon.

Aug. 13: In Madrid, demonstrators carrying Palestinian and Lebanese flags attend a march from the Israeli embassy to the US embassy to urge the govt. of Israel to stop attacks on Lebanon. ▶

Aug. 15: Germany's FM Frank-Walter Steinmeier cancels a trip to Syria in protest of Pres. Assad's speech, calling it a "negative contribution that is not in any way justified in view of the current challenges and opportunities in the Middle East."



- The Swedish FM announces that Sweden, Spain and Norway would jointly host a conference on the humanitarian situation in the OPT in Stockholm on 1 Sept. 2006.

- UNICEF warns that thousands of Lebanese children were at risk from unexploded bombs as they returned home in the wake of the ceasefire.

- Israeli, Palestinian and Lebanese doctors, researchers and scientists, joined by delegates from Iran, gathered to discuss the AIDS problems in the Middle East at the 16th International AIDS Conference in Toronto.

Aug. 16: Finnish FM Erkki Tuomioja, whose country holds the EU presidency, says lasting peace in Lebanon can only be attained once the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is resolved.

- In his state of the nation address before the House of Representatives plenary session, Indonesian Pres. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono reaffirms his country's stance "in supporting the struggle of the Palestinian people to realize a Palestinian State that is independent and sovereign."

- Costa Rica's Pres. Oscar Arias announces his country's plan to move its embassy in Israel from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv, saying it was needed in order to bring his nation into line with international law and mend relations with Arab nations: "it's time to rectify an historic error that hurts us internationally and deprives us of almost any form of friendship with the Arab world, and more broadly with Islamic civilization, to which a sixth of humanity belongs."

Aug. 17: South Africa's Dep. FM Aziz Pahad says that a comprehensive solution to the Mideast crisis must now be sought, based on "all relevant UN resolutions", adding that the Question of Palestine, which to the South African Government remained the nexus of all conflict in the Middle East and further afield, must also receive comprehensive attention. He adds: "Increasingly, many analysts are concluding that the Road Map is dead ... and therefore, now, we must move to the final stages of discussions between Israel and Palestine."

Aug. 19: Russia's FM spokesman Mikhail Kamynin states that "an inter-Palestinian deal could be of great importance for calming the situation, ending the Palestinian-Israeli military standoff, creating a favourable atmosphere for resuming political dialogue..."

Aug. 20: Protesters at a rally in Madrid denounce the recent Israeli military offensive against the Palestinian people and in Lebanon.

- In an interview published by *Bild am Sonntag*, German FM Steinmeier proposes a permanent peace conference in the Middle East similar to the 'Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe' that defused some of the tension of the Cold War.

- In an open letter published in the Greek newspaper *To Vima*, Socialist International Pres. and former Greek FM George Papandreou and Norwegian FM Jonas Gahr Støre call for a dialogue with Hamas and Hizbullah as a way out of the crisis in the Middle East and for the "immediate opening of talks for the creation of a Palestinian State, and to press for immediate talks on a peace accord between Israel and Syria."

Aug. 20: South Africa condemns the arrest of PA Dep. PM Nasser Al-Shaar.

Aug. 22: A new Amnesty International report accuses Israel of war crimes, saying it broke international law by deliberately destroying Lebanon's civilian infrastructure during its recent war with Hizbullah.

Aug. 23: In remarks to the Jakarta Foreign Correspondents Club, Indonesian FM Hassan Wirajuda says that the inability to resolve the Palestinian issue and Israel's recent military operation in Lebanon had further radicalized Muslims around the world and increased the threat of global terrorism, adding, "Once the problem of Palestine is solved, much of the wind in the sails of terrorism will come down."

Aug. 24: After meeting with Israeli FM Tzipi Livni in Rome, Italian FM Massimo D'Alema tells *Ha'aretz* that if the planned multinational force in Lebanon succeeds, it might be possible to create a similar force for the Gaza Strip, adding that since the US's aggressive approach to the Middle East has failed and caused serious damage, Italy and Europe must now prove to Israelis that only international intervention can bring them security.

- At its extraordinary meeting, the Bureau of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly decides to send an EMPA delegation to Lebanon, Israel and the Palestinian territory.

Aug. 25: Italy's FM Massimo D'Alema tells *Ha'aretz* that if the planned multinational force in Lebanon succeeded, it might be possible to create a similar force in Gaza.

Aug. 28: French Pres. Jacques Chirac tells a gathering of French ambassadors in Paris that the war in Lebanon had flared partly because of deadlock in the MEPP, urging world powers to revive talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

- The WFP warns that the situation in Lebanon must not be allowed to overshadow the rapidly deteriorating living conditions of the people in Gaza.

Sept. 1: EU FMs meet in Finland to discuss the latest developments in the standoff with Iran and ideas for reviving peace efforts between Israel and the Palestinians. EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner calls for head-to-head talks between Israeli PM Olmert and Pres. Abbas.

- At the 'Stockholm International Donor Conference on the Humanitarian Situation in the Palestinian Territories,' held at the Grand Hotel in Stockholm, Pres. Abbas' economic advisor Mohammad Mustafa urges the world to help ease the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Countries pledge US\$500 million in aid, incl. €50 million (US\$64 million) from the EU, which also calls for a revival of the MEPP. The WHO warns the conference participants that the health component of the revised humanitarian appeal was critically underfunded, despite growing humanitarian needs, especially in Gaza. ▲



- EU foreign policy chief Solana says the EU would be willing to talk to a Palestinian unity govt., incl. Hamas members.

Sept. 4: French Pres. Jacques Chirac meets with Ahmed Qre'i'a, who serves as special envoy from Pres. Abbas, in Paris. ►



- UN Sec.-Gen. Kofi Annan holds talks with Egyptian Pres. Mubarak in Alexandria and with Saudi FM Prince Saud Al-Faisal in Jeddah in a bid to secure the release of Israeli soldiers held captive by Palestinian and Lebanese groups.

Sept. 6: In a press release from the EU Presidency, the EU demands that Israel "freeze its settlement activity in Palestinian territories," saying "any new construction project in the area would compromise chances for peace and constituted a violation of international law."

- Addressing a plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, FM Erkki Tuomioja of Finland, which holds the rotating EU presidency, calls on Israel to free members of the Hamas govt. to help restart the MEPP.

Sept. 9: Italian PM Romano Prodi says Syrian Pres. Bashar Assad agrees in principle to the deployment of unarmed EU inspectors along his country's border with Lebanon in order to prevent the smuggling of arms to Hizbullah.

Sept. 12: A day after returning from a three-day trip to the Middle East, British PM Tony Blair says, "Yesterday's announcement of a government of national unity in Palestine is precisely what I hoped for," adding "on

the basis [that] it is faithful to the conditions spelled out by the Quartet, that is the UN, EU, US and Russia, we should lift the economic sanctions on the PA."

- In a meeting with visiting Kuwaiti PM Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, French Pres. Jacques Chirac stresses the importance to resume dialogue between Pres. Abbas and PM Olmert.

Sept. 13: FM Tzipi Livni meets Pres. Bush, Sec. of State Rice and other officials in Washington for talks focusing on Lebanon, Iran and the Palestinians.

- An Amnesty International report accuses Hizbullah of "serious violations of international humanitarian law, amounting to war crimes" due to its "deliberate targeting" of Israelis during the recent war, which left 43 civilians, incl. 7 children, dead.

- In a report to the UNSC, Sec.-Gen. Kofi Annan writes that Israel has already withdrawn from two-thirds of southern Lebanon and that both Israel and Hizbullah have so far honored the ceasefire almost totally.

Sept. 14: After meeting Israeli FM Livni, Sec. of State Rice says the Palestinians cannot expect that the international community recognize their unity govt. if it does not condemn terror, and recognize Israel's right to exist.

- In a phone call, French Pres. Chirac affirms his support to the efforts of Pres. Abbas on forming a national unity govt. and says he hopes the siege would be lifted and Israel would hand over the overdue tax revenues so that the humanitarian conditions in the WBGs would improve.

Sept. 15: An EU Council meeting in Brussels welcomes Pres. Abbas's efforts to establish a national unity govt. and "expresses the hope that its political platform will reflect the Quartet principles and allow for early engagement." It also calls for an immediate end to violence, an immediate release of the abducted Israeli soldier and the Palestinian Min.s and legislators, and a freeze of all settlement activity. It further bemoans the humanitarian situation in the WBGs and repeats its call on Israel to resume transfers of withheld Palestinian revenues and open permanently all border-crossings.

- The US calls on the EU not to be in a hurry to resume economic aid to the Palestinians until it was clear what the policy of the new govt. and the status of Hamas will be.

- In response to the wave of resentment spurred in the Muslim world by Pope Benedict XVI's recent statement, where he called on Europe to confront the modern extremism, the Vatican spokesperson says the Pope respects Islam but wanted to make clear that religious motives should not be used as justification for violence.

- US officials inform envoys of Pres. Abbas that the US would not lift the economic siege on the PA and nor work with the planned unity govt. so long as it failed to meet the three conditions set for the Hamas regime by the international community: recognizing Israel, recognizing agreements previously signed by the PA and the PLO, and renouncing violence.

Sept. 16: As anger and protest grows throughout the Muslim world, Vatican Sec. of State Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone says in a statement that the Pope was sorry that certain passages of his recent speech in Germany "could have sounded offensive to the sensitivities of the Muslim faithful." In the speech, Pope Benedict had referred to criticism of the Prophet Mohammed by 14th Century Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus, who said everything Mohammed brought was evil "such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached."

- At the 14th Summit Conference of NAM Heads of State or Government, members adopt a Final Document, reaffirming their support for the peace process based on UNSC Res. and the principle of land for peace, condemning "the ongoing and intensifying Israeli military campaign against the Palestinian people, Israel's continued imposition of collective punishment upon the Palestinian people, and Israel's continuing construction of the Wall." They urge the international community to intensify their efforts to ease the current crisis and revive the peace process, incl. "the full and honest implementation of the Road Map towards ending the occupation

of the Palestinian Territory” and taking into consideration “the decisions of the recent Arab Summit in Khartoum, especially the call for reinvigoration of the Arab Peace Initiative adopted in Beirut in 2002.”

Sept. 18: In an interview with *Al-Arabiya* TV, French Pres. Jacques Chirac says the situation in the OPT was “dramatic” and calls for an international conference aimed at restarting aid to the OPT.

Sept. 19: Israeli FM Livni and Pres. Abbas meet at the UN HQ to revive dialogue between the sides in order to begin implementation of the Road Map and to pave the way for meetings between Abbas and PM Olmert.

Sept. 20: The Quartet issues a statement, welcoming Pres. Abbas’s efforts to form a national unity govt. and expressing the hope that its platform would reflect the Quartet principles and allow for early engagement. The Quartet also underlines the need to implement fully the Agreement on Movement and Access, endorses the continuation and expansion of the TIM, and asks Israel to consider the resumption of tax and customs revenue transfers via the mechanism.

- After their meeting at the sidelines of the UNGA, Pres. Bush describes Pres. Abbas as a “man of peace,” while Abbas says “We are in dire need of your help and support,” adding, “the Palestinian people desire peace, and there is no power on earth that can prevent the Palestinian people from moving toward the peaceful solution and living and coexisting in peace.”

- In a speech to the UNGA, Israeli FM Livni says that Israel believed in a vision of two states, each of which should be home to its own refugees, adding that “Instead of giving false hope, it is time to end the exploitation of the refugee issue.”

- At the opening of the Clinton Global Initiative conference in New York, Pakistani Pres. Pervez Musharraf says: “We cannot put the cart before the horse by going for Iraq or Lebanon or Afghanistan without solving the Palestinian dispute.”

Sept. 21: At a meeting in New York, Vice-PM Peres tells Pres. Abbas that Israel demands the release of abducted soldier Gilad Shalit and an end to rocket attacks before a meeting with PM Olmert would be scheduled.

- Addressing the 61st session of the UNGA in New York, Pres. Abbas says that any new Palestinian govt. would recognize Israel and renounce violence. ▶

- In New York, Pres. Abbas meets separately with French Pres. Chirac, Danish FM Per Stig Moeller, Egyptian FM Ahmed Abul Gheith, and South African Pres. Thabo Mbeki to discuss the situation in the OPT and the formation of a national unity govt..

- At a UNSC Min.ial meeting on reviving the Middle East peace process, UN Sec.-Gen. Annan and Arab leaders urged for a serious involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

- A group of 18 activists from the OPT and Israel march together along the demilitarized zone between the North and South Korea, as part of a four-day peace festival which also featured cultural performances by the Israeli and Palestinian activists, a peace seminar and an art project.

Sept. 22: The US reiterates the conditions for a resumption of aid to the Palestinians, after Hamas warns any unity govt. would not recognize Israel.

- Addressing the UN Human Rights Council, Hina Jilani, Special Representative of the Sec.-Gen. for human rights workers, criticizes Israel for cracking down on rights monitors and peace activists working in the OPT, saying, *inter alia*, “The practice and policies of the occupation result in conditions that place those defenders at grave risk and present serious obstructions to every aspect of their work.”

- In the wake of Costa Rica’s announcement on 16 Aug. that it would move



Pervez Musharraf

its Embassy in Israel from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv, diplomatic relations have resumed with Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Bahrain and Yemen.

- Addressing the 61st session of the UNGA, Chinese FM Li Zhaoxing says that the Question of Palestine was at the core of the Middle East issue and that “The peace process should be restarted in keeping with the relevant UN resolutions and the principle of ‘land for peace’ in the interest of reaching an early and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East issue including the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, so that the countries involved can live in peace and the region can enjoy durable peace.”

- The World Bank has approved a \$13 million grant to help combat the threat of avian flu in the WBGs.

Sept. 23: The US House of Representatives passes a bill strengthening cooperation between the US and Israel in the war on terror. The bill now requires Senate approval.

Sept. 24: *Der Spiegel* quotes Syrian Pres. Bashar Assad as saying that he wants to make peace with Israel and does not support wiping Israel off the map.

- Sixty-one Irish academics sign a letter, stating “The Israeli govt. appears impervious to moral appeals from world leaders and to long-standing United Nations resolutions,” and calling on the European Community to place a moratorium on support for Israeli institutions of higher learning “until Israel abides by UN resolutions and ends the occupation of Palestinian territories.”

- The London-based Portland Trust publishes a poll showing that PA civil servants, unpaid for six months, had accumulated an average personal bank debt of \$2,000, with 13% of them saying they had another source of income, while three fourths borrowed from friends and over 50% from relatives.

Sept. 25: At a forum held on the sidelines of Labor’s annual conference, former British foreign Sec. Jack Straw says that Israeli-Palestinian peace should be the Labor Party’s top foreign policy priority as it was crucial to stabilizing the region and “at the heart of so many of the international problems.” He adds that Britain must push the US to help achieve it.

- Addressing the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, Pakistani Pres. Pervez Musharraf calls for the world to urgently address the Palestinian issue, saying the root of all conflicts between the West and the Muslim world, “whether Iraq or Afghanistan or Lebanon, lies in Palestine. I think we should fight at solving Palestine first.” ▶



Sept. 26: UN Human Rights rapporteur John Dugard says the situation in the WBGs has deteriorated to a new low, where “Gaza is a prison and Israel seems to have thrown away the key,” and Israel perpetrates “indiscriminate killing prohibited by international law.” Dugard also blames the US, Canada and Europe for contributing to the ‘tragic’ situation by cutting off funding to the PA after Hamas’ election victory, saying, “In effect, the Palestinian people have been subjected to economic sanctions - the first time an occupied people has been so treated.”

- The US Congress has authorized \$500 million for joint American-Israeli security projects, which is in addition to the regular defense aid to Israel (currently over \$2 billion). The next day, the Senate also approves the allocation.

- Syria’s FM Walid Al-Muallem tells the UNGA that Syria supports “the efforts of our Palestinian brothers to unite their ranks and encourage them to form a government of national unity.”

- In a series of interviews with New York newspapers, US Sec. of State Rice suggests that internal divisions within Hamas could be the key to ending the stalemate in the MEPP, blaming the Damascus-based Hamas members for blocking the latest efforts to revive the peace talks.



- Australian PM John Howard said: "there must be unconditional acceptance throughout the entire Arab world... of Israel's right to exist in peace and security behind recognized borders," adding that Israel would also have to accept a Palestinian State for the troubled region to make progress.

Sept. 27: Spain's FM Miguel Angel Moratinos writes in an article published in *Al-Hayat*: "in my opinion, the role of the EU and the US should lead to a revival of the Quartet, which could incorporate the added value of some key countries from the region, thus multiplying the Quartet's capacity to bring a new chance to the peace process. It may be timely for all the stakeholders to meet again, as they did in 1991, to re-affirm their commitment to seeking a global solution". ▶



Miguel Angel Moratinos

Sept. 28: Two US Congressmen - Steve Rothman (D-NJ) and Mark Kirk (R-IL) - accuses UNRWA of allegedly distributing funds to members of terrorist organizations by employing Hamas members and giving funds to Palestine refugees with connections to terrorist groups.

Sept. 29: Israel prevents UN investigators from speaking with army commanders who were involved in the bombing of a UNIFIL outpost in South Lebanon during the war (25 July) which killed four UN observers.

- In Geneva, John Dugard, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territories occupied by Israel since 1967, tells the Human Rights Council that Israel was guilty of "collective punishment" of the Palestinian people through its "brutal military operation[s]" in Gaza.

Sept. 30: In Athens, about 1,000 people call for the withdrawal of coalition troops from Iraq and an end to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

- The London-based newspaper *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* reports that recently Jordanian intelligence chief Mohammed Al-Dhahabi, another Jordanian official, Egyptian intelligence chief Omar Suleiman, two officials from Gulf states, and Shin Bet head Yuval Diskin secretly met in Aqaba, Jordan, to discuss ways of dealing with Iran, Syria, Hamas and Hizbullah.

Oct. 4: In France, Russian FM Sergei Lavrov tells a visiting delegation of MKs that the two Israeli soldiers held by Hizbullah in Lebanon are alive and in good condition.

- In a statement issued by the International Crisis Group, over 100 former world leaders and politicians call for urgent international action to end Arab-Israeli conflict, warning that the Middle East faced its "worst crisis for years," and proposing an international conference to agree the outlines of a comprehensive peace deal and prepare for detailed negotiations.

Oct. 10: Jose de Venecia Jr., Speaker of the Philippines House of Representatives, and visiting Knesset Speaker Dalia Itzik agree on the need to revive the Arab-Israeli peace process, with the former repeating a proposal he had presented at the 14th NAM Summit in Havana in Sept. that called for "focused and non-stop negotiations among the parties intimately concerned to settle the Israeli-Palestine problem once and for all."

Oct. 11: An investigative report on Italian *Rai24news* TV based on the eyewitness accounts and tests carried out in an Italian laboratory raises the possibility that Israel has used an experimental weapon in the Gaza Strip, causing especially serious physical injuries, such as amputated limbs and severe burns. In the report, Dr. Habas Al-Wahid, head of the emergency room at the Shuhada Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir Al-Balah, tells the reporters that the legs of the injured were sliced from their bodies "as if a saw was used to cut through the bone." There were signs of heat and burns near the point of the amputation, but no signs that the dismemberment was caused by metal fragments.

- US Sec. of State Rice tells a dinner organized by the American Task

Force on Palestine that "The Palestinian people deserve a better life, a life that is rooted in liberty, democracy, uncompromised by violence and terrorism, unburdened by corruption and misrule and forever free of the daily humiliation of occupation," also reiterating the US commitment to the goal of a Palestinian state where the people lived in peace alongside Israel.

- US Asst. Sec. for Near Eastern Affairs David Welch says that he was not aware of any US pressure on Israel aimed at preventing it from holding talks with Syria, adding that "every state operates on the basis of its own interests."

- Under-Sec.-Gen. for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Egeland tells reporters in Geneva that the frustration of Palestinians would grow and lead to more extremism unless border crossings were opened, saying "It cannot continue like it is now without a social explosion that will hurt everybody, incl. Israeli security".

- European Commission spokeswoman Emma Udwin says that around 60,000 more Palestinians, defined as "social hardship cases", would receive social allowances through the TIM, bringing the total to 160,000 recipients. ▶



Emma Udwin

Oct. 13: US Pres. Bush waives provisions of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1987 that prohibited the PLO from having an official presence in Washington, thereby extending for six months permission for the PLO to maintain an office there.

Oct. 17: The US govt. has lodged a vigorous protest with Israel over its restrictions on the entry of Palestinian-Americans, many of whom own homes and businesses, into the WBGS.

- EU FMs endorse plans to send Foreign and Security Policy chief Solana to the region to assess efforts to revive the MEPP. They also reiterate calls for a unity govt. and call on "all Palestinian factions to end their internal strife."

Oct. 18: Following a meeting with Israeli PM Olmert, Russian Pres. Vladimir Putin says "The only way to break out of the vicious circle of violence is to end mutual accusations, free the hostages and resume peaceful negotiations."

Oct. 23: According to the annual survey of the American Jewish Committee (AJC) 81% of American Jews believe that the real goal of the Arabs is the destruction of Israel and not the return of occupied land, 54% support the establishment of a Palestinian state, but only 38% think Israel and the Arabs could solve the conflict peacefully, while 56% believe the conflict could not be resolved.

- Venezuela has ceased issuing tourist visas to Israelis, accenting Venezuelan Pres. Hugo Chavez's harsh criticism of Israel, incl. recalling his envoy to Israel to protest what he called the "genocide" Israel was committing in Lebanon during the war with Hizbullah guerrillas. Israel, in response, calls its Amb. to Venezuela to Israel for consultations.

Oct. 24: Spanish FM Miguel Ángel Moratinos tells a parliamentary panel in Madrid: "I don't think the Road Map is the best path to get out of the stagnation. I don't think it is in condition now to resurrect the Middle East peace process, nor do I think small confidence-building measures can work." He further says that Europe had a historic opportunity to take the lead in promoting a fresh approach to the Middle East conflict, and that negotiations should include Syria and take into account the Iranian nuclear dispute. "

- Delivering the University of Maryland's "Sadat lecture for peace", IAEA Dir. Gen. Mohamed ElBaradei, says that conflicts like those in the Middle East "cannot be solved through military force" and calls for a new broad approach focusing on human security rather than state security. He also says that a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict "is within our grasp, provided that the conditions are created to enable this solution to come into being".

Oct. 27: The Spokesman for the UN Sec.-Gen. announces the publication of a report of the Sec.-Gen. pursuant to UNGA Res. ES-10/15 on the Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the OPT.

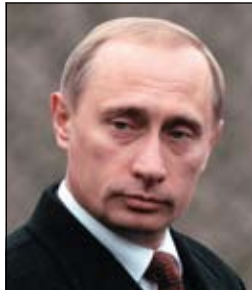
Oct. 28: At the close of the two-day Mediterranean Forum meeting in Alicante, attended by FMs from 11 states (Algeria, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Turkey and Tunisia), participants issue the "Declaration of Alicante," calling for a multilateral approach to resolving the Middle East conflict, proposing an urgent revision of the Road Map process and an international conference to end the current state of stagnation.

- UN Sec.-Gen. Kofi Annan says on the basis of the UNGA decision to accept the ICJ's recommendations, a "Register of Damage" will be set up in Vienna, which will be responsible to register damages to Palestinian homes, businesses and agricultural holdings caused by the separation barrier to serve for possible future international adjudication.

Oct. 30: The Bush Admin. has reportedly undertaken efforts to arm and train the Presidential Guard of Pres. Abbas in order to prepare it for a potential violent confrontation with Hamas forces in the Gaza Strip. US security coordinator General Keith Dayton has recently presented Quartet representatives in London with a program for bolstering the guard, which calls for Egyptian, British and perhaps even Jordanian instructors to train the force loyal to Abbas.

Nov. 2: The British govt. is promoting a plan to bypass Hamas and strengthen the PA by bolstering four institutions directly answerable to Pres. Abbas: the Border Crossings Authority, the Monetary Authority, the Presidential Guard and the legal system.

- In statements to the press after their meeting in Moscow, Pres. Putin says the Quartet's work could "only be successful if the influential forces in the region – and we undoubtedly include Egypt in this category – join in this work.", while Egyptian Pres. Mubarak says the Russian and Egyptian positions coincided "on the need to re-establish the Middle East peace process, especially to unblock the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and open the way to finding a solution." ►



Pres. Putin

Nov. 3: The US and UN Sec.-Gen. Kofi Annan openly disagree on the cause of rising violence in Gaza, with Annan's office saying it was due to Israel's operation in northern Gaza, which left at least 34 Palestinians killed in the past three days, while the State Dept. blames "continuing attacks on Israel from PA areas."

Nov. 4: In a press release, the Finnish EU Presidency deplores the violence and growing number of civilian casualties caused by the Israeli military operation in Gaza, saying the right of all States to defend themselves did not justify the disproportionate use of violence or actions which are contrary to international humanitarian law. The Presidency also calls on the Palestinians to bring an end to terrorist activities.

Nov. 5: In an interview with *Sunday Telegraph*, the newly appointed Min. Avigdor Lieberman calls Israel's Arab minority a "problem" that requires "separation" from the state, adding that "Cyprus is the best model. Before 1974, the Greeks and Turks lived together and there were frictions and bloodshed and terror. After 1974, they constituted all Turks on one part of the island, all Greeks on the other part of the island and there is stability and security."

- In his weekly blessing in Rome, Pope Benedict XVI condemns the violence in Gaza and calls for a return to direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. ►



Nov. 6: British PM Tony Blair says his govt. would be willing to negotiate with a Hamas-led govt. if it met international demands that it renounce violence and recognize Israel.

- Chinese FM spokesperson Jiang Yu says: "China has always insisted that Palestine-Israel disputes should be solved through peaceful negotiations and opposes any move which could escalate tension in the region."

Nov. 8: Israeli artillery shells killing 18 Palestinian civilians in Gaza is worldwid condemned. The White House urges restraint after also saying, "We deeply regret the injuries and loss of life in Gaza today. Britain's Sec. of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Margaret Beckett, says she was gravely disturbed by the deaths and that "Israel must respect its obligation to avoid harming civilians. It is hard to see what this action was meant to achieve and how it can be justified". And a statement by UN Sec.-Gen. Annan expresses shock about the operation and "deep concern about the rising death toll caused by the Israeli military operation in northern Gaza," and reminds "both sides of their obligations under international humanitarian law regarding the protection of civilians in armed conflict."

- John Dugard, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, says in a statement: "On 25 June 2006, Israel embarked on a military operation in Gaza that has resulted in over 300 deaths, including many civilians; over a thousand injuries; large-scale devastation of public facilities and private homes; the destruction of agricultural lands; the disruption of hospitals, clinics and schools; the denial of access to adequate electricity, water and food; and the occupation and imprisonment of the people of Gaza. This brutal collective punishment of a people, not a Government, has passed largely unnoticed by the international community," which "has done little to halt Israel's attacks. Worse still, the Security Council has failed to adopt any resolution on the subject or attempt to restore peace to the region. The time has come for urgent action on the part of the Security Council."

Nov. 9: The US vehemently rejects the Qatari initiative for a UNSC draft resolution to establish an international committee to "investigate the massacre that took place in Beit Hanoun" as well as to deploy UN observers to supervise the ceasefire between Israel and the Palestinians.

- In an open UNSC session, called jointly by the Arab League, the OIC and the NAM, representatives of 30 nations condemn of the Israeli military operation in Beit Hanoun that killed 19 Palestinian civilians. Palestinian observer Riad Mansour rejects Israel's apology for the attack, saying, "Every time Israel does something like this, it apologizes." UN Asst. Sec.-Gen. for Political Affairs Angela Kane says, "Men, women and children, who posed no threat, were killed as they slept in their home. While this incident is unusual in scale, however, it is not the first time an Israeli military operation in the occupied Palestinian territory has resulted in a high number of civilian casualties."

- Italian members of the European Parliament ('Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe') intend to embark on an international campaign to further a proposal to include Israel in the EU after peace agreements are signed in accordance with international law, arguing that if Israel joins Europe, it will be safer because an attack on Israel will constitute an attack against Europe, "an attack against London or Rome."

Nov. 9: UNICEF spokesman Michael Bociurkiw says in Geneva that 19 Palestinian children had been killed in the past 10 days, making November already the second deadliest month of the year for young people in the WBGS.

- In an interview with *L'Unita* newspaper, Italian FM Massimo D'Alema says that the US should make resolving the Palestinian conflict its priority. He also says that "The formation of a Palestinian Government of national unity is the only way to jump-start negotiations," and that once it is formed "a mechanism must be activated that passes through a Security Council resolution to resume the Road Map, giving it added legal force and accelerating its implementation."

Nov. 11: The US vetoes a UNSC draft resolution, condemning Israel for the Beit Hanoun shelling, in which 19 Palestinian civilians were killed, and urging a quick withdrawal of Israeli troops from the area.

Nov. 12: Spanish PM Rodríguez Zapatero and Turkish PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan call on the international community to act urgently against Israeli attacks on Palestinians, with Erdogan telling a news conference: "It's not possible to accept what's happening in Palestine. Innocent people, women, children, and old people are killed ... The world can't stay silent against these atrocities, against this use of excessive force," and Zapatero underlining the necessity for an "urgent" intervention by the international community to stop the Israeli bombings of the Palestinians. ▲



Nov. 13: After meeting with PM Olmert in the White House, Pres. Bush calls for the world to unite in isolating Iran until it "gives up its nuclear ambitions." Olmert publicly praises the US operation in Iraq, which he says brought stability to the Middle East. On the Palestinian question, both leaders reiterate their commitment to the two-state solution and the need for the Palestinian govt. to adopt the road map and the Quartet principles: recognizing Israel, renouncing terror and abiding by previous agreements.

- The EU decides to extend the mandate of the EU Border Assistance Mission for another six months and urges Israel to make sure the Rafah border terminal stay open.

- According to the first report released by an UN-sponsored group called the Alliance of Civilizations, created in 2005 to find ways to bridge the growing divide between Muslim and Western societies and co-sponsored by the PMs of Spain and Turkey, "The Israeli-Palestinian issue has become a key symbol of the rift between Western and Muslim societies and remains one of the gravest threats to international stability." The report calls for an international meeting of all concerned parties as soon as possible to reinvigorate the MEPP, and urged the development of a white paper analyzing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict dispassionately and objectively.

Nov. 14: Spanish FM Moratinos says that Spain had informed the UN that it was to unveil an initiative to revitalize efforts to bring peace to the Middle East.

Nov. 15: The UNHRC votes with 32:8 and six abstentions to send an urgent mission to examine the impact of Israel's deadly attack on Palestinian homes in Beit Hanoun.

Nov. 16: In Girona, Spain, French Pres. Chirac and Spanish PM Zapatero announce that their countries were launching with Italy a European initiative seeking to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which includes a mission of international observers in Gaza and a peace conference with the aim to end all violence, form a Palestinian national unity govt., and implement an exchange of prisoners.

- Chinese FM spokeswoman, Jiang Yu, said that China was deeply concerned about the tensions between Israel and the Palestinians, and was paying close attention to the deteriorating human rights situation and humanitarian crisis in the OPT.

- In Strasbourg, the European Parliament adopts a resolution calling on EU member states to send international observers into the Gaza Strip, urging Israel to end its military actions there immediately, condemning the Israeli army's use of disproportionate action, which is also undermining attempts to initiate the peace process, calling on Palestinians to stop firing rockets into Israel, and on Israel to lift its economic embargo on Gaza and resume the transfer of withheld Palestinian revenues. The resolution further regrets the lack of a strong and clear stance by the international community on the current crisis and calls on Washington to reassess its

role in the Quartet and in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

- Médecins du Monde reports that only one in three people in Gaza had access to running water after the offensive by Israel in late June, and chronic illness, trauma and mental health cases increased sharply. Médecins du Monde Pres. Pierre Micheletti tells reporters that "Gaza is being intentionally kept on artificial respiration, and the population is suffering from collective depression Under these conditions it is hard to see how the population has an alternative to violence."

Nov. 17: The UNGA votes with 156:7 and six abstaining for Res. ES-10/16, calling for the creation of a "fact-finding" body to investigate the killing of 19 Palestinians by an Israeli barrage on Beit Hanoun on 8 Nov. Permanent Observer of Palestine to the UN, Riyadh Mansour, welcomes the



Riyadh Mansour

resolution, saying it sent a significant message to the Israelis that they have to comply with the law and the principles of the UN Charter, while Israel's Dep. Permanent Representative Daniel Carmon deplores it, as it condemns Israel simply for fighting for its survival. ▲

- The European Commission welcomes the Middle East peace initiative proposed by Spain, France and Italy, saying any ideas which could give fresh impetus to the peace process were welcome, especially those giving the EU an important role in a united international initiative.

- Spanish FM Miguel Ángel Moratinos said that there was nothing in the European peace initiative that Israel could reject.

- British PM Tony Blair tells *The Washington Post* that new initiatives could be presented soon to address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, adding that leaders of Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia were among the nations eager for progress in resolving the conflict. ►



Tony Blair

Nov. 18: During a meeting with Russian Dep.

FM and Middle East Envoy Alexander Sultanov, visiting Jordanian FM Abdul Ilah Khatib welcomes the European peace initiative as indicative of the world's "serious interest" in the region's affairs. The two also discuss the Russian proposal for convening an international conference on the Middle East.

Nov. 22: In a joint conference with Egyptian PM Ahmed Nazif, Italian PM Romano Prodi says it was still too early for a Middle East peace conference and that the initiative of the French and Spanish govt.s was premature and should also get commitment from the UK and Germany.

- Ten members of the Palestinian contingent of disabled athletes arrive in Malaysia for the weeklong Far East and South Pacific Games for the Disabled, which begins on 25 Nov.; the remaining 23 athletes of the team are stranded in Gaza due to a curfew imposed by Israel.

Nov. 23: EU Commissioner for External Relations and the European Neighbourhood Policy Benita Ferrero-Waldner says "I think any initiative that really is a positive stepping stone towards mitigating the conflict and towards peace is certainly to be seen positively," adding, "But we have to find a united position, because only then we can make a difference."

- South Africa's Dep. FM Aziz Pahad calls on Hamas and Fateh to urgently set up a national unity govt. as "the only basis on which the international community will reassess the sanctions policy and indeed create the climate for normalization of relations with the Palestinian authorities, which will then allow for a better climate to find the peaceful solution, based on the two-State solution."

Nov. 24: In Lucca, Italy, Italian PM Romano Prodi and French Pres. Jacques Chirac, reaffirm their backing for the Middle East peace initiative,

saying though that it needed to be endorsed by the UK Kingdom and Germany to be effective. They also call for the formation of a Palestinian national unity govt., saying it would help end the bloodshed in Gaza and open the door for peace efforts.

Nov. 27: UN Sec.-Gen. Annan welcomes the reported agreement between Pres. Abbas and PM Olmert, to establish a mutual ceasefire in Gaza.

- The UNHRC adopts a resolution with 45: 1 (Canada) and one abstention, calling on Israel to reverse its settlement policy in the OPT, incl. East Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan, to stop immediately the expansion of the existing settlements, to prevent any new settlements and to confiscate the arms of settlers. Another resolution passes 32:1 and 14 abstentions, criticizing Israel for its occupation of the Golan Heights and declaring Israel's 1981 annexation of the Golan Heights illegal.

Nov. 28: In a speech at Cornell University, US, Israeli Vice-PM Shimon Peres says he was optimistic that peace could be restored in the Middle East following recent developments between Israel and the Palestinians.

- Ending two days of talks in Tampere, chaired by Finland, the 8th Euro-Mediterranean Conference of FMs issues a joint statement entitled "Tampere Conclusions", which states that a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict should include a safe and secure Israel and a viable, sovereign and democratic Palestine, living side by side in peace and security, as foreseen in the Road Map.

Nov. 29: The UN observes the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in the New York HQ and the offices at Geneva and Vienna, with special meetings of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

- EU Foreign and Security Policy chief Javier Solana says the international community, incl. the Quartet, should respond positively to the national unity govt. once it is formed.

- UNHCHR Louise Arbour says in a statement to the Council that transparent and credible investigations by Israel in the killings of Palestinian civilians in Beit Hanoun were key to breaking a climate of impunity in the region, adding that while Israel had both the right and the duty to defend its population against rocket attacks it must do so within the bounds of human rights and humanitarian law. ▲

- UNHRC Pres. Luis Alfonso De Alba says Nobel Laureate Desmond Tutu would head a UN fact-finding mission to Beit Hanoun to "assess the situation of victims, address the needs of survivors, and make recommendations on ways and means to protect Palestinian civilians against further Israeli assaults." The next day, the Anti-Defamation League criticizes the appointment as an extension of the anti-Israel kangaroo court tactics.

Nov. 30: UN Sec.-Gen. Kofi Annan launches the Humanitarian Appeal 2007, asking for \$3.9 billion to provide food, water, medicine and other emergency assistance to help 27 million people struggling to survive in areas of conflict and natural disasters in 29 countries or regions in 2007. The consolidated appeal concerning the OPT is set at \$454 million.

Dec. 3: *Ha'aretz* reports that the Dutch bank ASN has decided to divest itself of its holdings in a French company Veolia, whose subsidiary Connex Israel is participating in building Jerusalem's light rail system, on the grounds that the project "is not in line with the United Nation's demand to stop all support for Israel's settlement activities."

Dec. 6: The Baker-Hamilton Study Group, a bipartisan advisory panel on Iraq, concludes that the US is unable to achieve its goals in the Middle

East without direct involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict, recommending Israeli talks along two main axes: Syria-Lebanon and on a final settlement with the Palestinians, so that a two-state solution in line with Bush's ideas can be achieved. The report states: "Concerning the Palestinian issue, elements of that negotiated peace should include: adherence to UN Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and to the principle of land for peace, which are the only bases for achieving peace; strong support for Palestinian Pres. Abbas and the PA to take the lead in preparing the way for negotiations with Israel; a major effort to move from the current hostilities by consolidating the ceasefire reached between the Palestinians and the Israelis in November 2006; support for a Palestinian national unity government; sustainable negotiations leading to a final peace settlement along the lines of Pres. Bush's two-state solution, which would address the key final status issues of borders, settlements, Jerusalem, the right of return, and the end of conflict."

- In a statement to the press, UNSC Pres. Amb. Nassir Abdul Aziz An-Nasser of Qatar, welcomes steps taken by the Israeli and Palestinian sides to maintain the mutual ceasefire in Gaza and calls to avoid any actions that could jeopardize further progress.

Dec. 7: The US House of Representatives passes a bill that would cut off aid to the PA unless it acknowledges Israel's right to exist and accepted all the PA agreements with Israel. In passing the bill, which the Senate had already passed, the House drops a much harsher bill of its own.

- The Singapore Islamic Scholars and Religious Teachers Association has sent letters to Israeli Amb. to Singapore Ilan Ben-Dov and Palestinian Amb. to Malaysia Ahmad Al-Farra in Kuala Lumpur, praising the ceasefire between Israel and Palestinian militants, while noting that the current situation was "very delicate" and urging the two sides "to quickly pursue a more effective peace process so that true peace shall prevail".

Dec. 8: At a joint news conference with visiting German FM Steinmeier, US Sec. of State Rice says the Bush Admin. "could begin to deliver" on its promise of a Palestinian State living in peace alongside Israel, stressing that "No American Pres. has ever dared to say it as a matter of policy."

- The UNHRC Pres. Luis Alfonso de Alba appoints Christine Chinkin, Prof. of international law at the London School of Economics, a member of the fact-finding mission into Israel's 8 Nov. attack on Beit Hanoun that left 19 civilians dead.

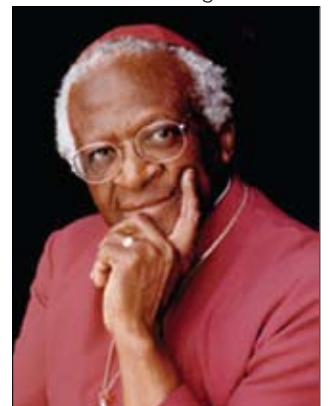
Dec. 9: German Chancellor Angela Merkel says she wants to "revitalize" the Quartet's work when Germany takes over the EU Presidency in Jan. 2007 with a focus on the political process.

Dec. 10: In an open letter to EU leaders, Amnesty International Sec. Gen. Irene Khan calls for urgently addressing "the downward spiral of human rights abuses" in Israel and the OPT and for the deployment of international monitors in the region to document and investigate human rights violations.

Dec. 11: Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Prof. Christine Chinkin – set to undertake an fact-finding mission to Gaza to investigate last month's killing of 19 civilians – issue a statement, saying "We find the lack of cooperation by the Israeli Government very distressing," which prevents them from proceeding on their mission as planned. ►

- UN Sec.-Gen. Kofi Annan calls on international donors to make up "the current, worrying shortfall" in the UNRWA budget, with an operational deficit of over \$100 million already looming.

- EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner has suggested a three-month extension of the TIM, saying "The situation in the Palestinian territories is deteriorating," also urging Israel to unblock the transfer of Palestinian revenues to alleviate the territories' cash crisis.



Desmond Tutu

Dec. 12: At a news conference ahead of a trip to the Middle East, British PM Blair says there was “nothing more important” in world politics than the MEPP, adding that it was thus “important we make every effort to break the deadlock.”

- In Berlin, visiting Israeli PM Olmert meets with German Chancellor Angela Merkel to discuss the revival of the Quartet.

- Briefing the UNSC on the situation in the Middle East, UN Sec.-Gen. Kofi Annan says “Mistrust between Israelis and Palestinians has reached new heights... The international community must develop a new understanding of the uncertainty engulfing the Middle East, and then shoulder its full responsibility in resolving it and stabilizing the region,” adding that “One of the most frustrating aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the apparent inability of many people on both sides to understand the position of the other, and the unwillingness of some to even try”. He further says that due to ongoing Israeli settlement activity and the construction of the wall the Palestinians’ “despair at the occupation only grows, as does their determination to resist it. As a result, some tend to invest much of their trust in those who pursue the armed struggle, rather than a peace process that does not seem to yield the coveted goal of an independent State”.

- Former US Pres. Jimmy Carter writes in *The Guardian*, “My new book, *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*, is devoted to circumstances and events in Palestine and not in Israel, where democracy prevails and citizens live together and are legally guaranteed equal status”, adding “The book describes the abominable oppression and persecution in the OPT, with a rigid system of required passes and strict segregation between Palestine’s citizens and Jewish settlers in the West Bank. ...In many ways, this is more oppressive than what black people lived under in South Africa during apartheid. I have made it clear that the motivation is not racism, but the desire of a minority of Israelis to confiscate and colonize choice sites in Palestine, and then to forcefully suppress any objections from the displaced citizens. Obviously, I condemn acts of terrorism or violence against innocent civilians, and I present information about the casualties on both sides. ... The ultimate purpose of my book is to present facts about the Middle East that are largely unknown in America, to precipitate discussion and help restart peace talks that can lead to permanent peace for Israel and its neighbours.” ▲



Jimmy Carter

Dec. 13: Italian PM Romano Prodi suggests prisoner exchange between Israel and the Palestinians as a confidence-building measure, and calls for direct talks between PM Olmert and Pres. Abbas, saying it was “necessary to attempt a discussion on the exchange of prisoners.”

- South Africa expresses disappointment at the Israeli gov’t’s decision not to grant permission to the UNHRC’s fact-finding mission into the deaths of 19 Palestinians in Beit Hanoun to be led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and calls on Israel to reconsider its decision.

Dec. 14: After his meeting with a delegation of the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysian FM Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar says that the UN, and not any other parties, should be the central player in efforts to resolve the Palestinian issue, while also stressing that Palestinians themselves must demonstrate their sense of unity and cohesiveness. ►



Syed Hamid

- China opens a four-day symposium for Israeli and Palestinian politicians to discuss peace in the Middle East, attended by Meretz leader Yossi Beilin and former PLC member Abdel Qader Hamid.

Dec. 15: At its 10th emergency special session, UNGA adopts by a vote of 162:7 with 7 abstentions a resolution, introduced by Iraq, to establish a Register of Damage arising from the construction of a separation wall by Israel in the OPT. The office respective will be composed of a three-member board, an executive director and a secretariat.

- UN Sec.-Gen. Annan releases a statement expressing deep concern “over the recent deterioration in the security situation in the OPT and the increase of intra-Palestinian violence” and calling “for respect by all parties for the rule of law, and for Palestinians to resume dialogue in order to resolve differences peacefully and seek national unity.”

- At the close of its two-day meeting in Brussels, the EU Council issues its Presidency Conclusions, endorsing a three-month extension of the TIM, calling for the release of Palestinian revenues withheld by Israel, and urging the Quartet to lead an effort by the international community to build on the outcome of successful negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians in order to reach a comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Arab conflict, incl. peace agreements with Syria and Lebanon and full normalization of relations between Israel and the Arab countries.

- Speaking with journalists at the end of a meeting with PLC member and Mubadara head Mustafa Barghouthi, Italy’s FM, Massimo D’Alema reiterates the need for holding an international peace conference on the Middle East as “what we need is not a generic resumption of the peace process but the rapid conclusion of a peace deal.”

- US Sec. of State Rice says she would ask Congress for tens of millions of dollars to strengthen Pres. Abbas’ security forces, which are being trained by Lt. Gen. Keith Dayton.

Dec. 16: As a reaction to Pres. Abbas’ speech, British PM Blair urges the international community to support him, US State Dept. spokesman Vasquez says it was “an issue for the Palestinian people to decide through a peaceful political process,” and Russia asks the Palestinians to try to maintain unity.

Dec. 17: Under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the UN Forum of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People meets in Kuala Lumpur to look into initiatives by civil society in Asia and the Pacific region in solidarity with the Palestinian people, with a particular focus on the Malaysian experience.

Dec. 18: US Pres. Bush delays for another six months the transfer of the US Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, citing national security interests.

- In Brussels, German FM Steinmeier presents his Gov’t’s EU Presidency priorities, saying, *inter alia*, “We are very worried about the dangers of escalation in the Middle East” and that the EU would push for contacts between PM Olmert and Pres. Abbas, adding, however, “We cannot perform miracles.” ►



Frank-Walter Steinmeier

Dec. 21: US Pres. Bush signs into law a bill (S.2370) meant to block US aid to the Hamas-led Palestinian gov’t and ban contacts with Hamas until it renounces violence and recognizes Israel’s existence. It also creates a US\$20 million fund to promote democracy, human rights, freedom of the press and peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

- Japanese FM Taro Aso tells visiting Jordanian King Abdullah II that Japan would keep supporting initiatives such as the “peace and prosperity corridor,” proposed by then PM Junichiro Koizumi in July 2006, to develop the West Bank and build an agro-industrial park there in cooperation with Israel, Jordan and the PA.

Dec. 22: The Quartet issues a statement, endorsing the continuation of the TIM and commending the efforts of the World Bank and EU to facilitate needs-based assistance directly to the Palestinian people

- After talks with Russian FM Lavrov in Moscow, German FM Steinmeier announces that his country plans to launch a coordinated Middle East

peace initiative the following month with the US, Russia, the UN and other European countries.

Dec. 25: In his traditional “Urbi et Orbi” Christmas address at the Vatican, Pope Benedict XVI says we regard to the Middle East: “I express my hope that the way will be opened to a just and lasting peace, with respect for the inalienable rights of the peoples living there. I place in the hands of the divine Child of Bethlehem the indications of a resumption of dialogue between the Israelis and Palestinians, which we have witnessed in recent days, and the hope of further encouraging developments.”

- During his sermon at Canterbury Cathedral in Kent, the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams voices concern over an “almost total absence” of belief in the Middle East that a political solution could be found. ▶



Rowan Williams

Dec. 27: The EU Presidency in Helsinki criticizes Israel’s approval of a new settlement as illegal under international law. Similarly, a French FM statement denounces that “this decision runs counter to the commitments taken by Israel under the Road Map” and “sends a particularly negative signal with respect to the will to dialogue and the re-establishment of trust between the two parties.” A US State Dept. spokesman, Gonzalo R. Gallegos, states that Israel should meet its “Road Map obligations and avoid taking steps that could be viewed as predetermining the outcome of future negotiations... The establishment of a new settlement or the expansion of any existing settlement would violate Israel’s obligations under the Road Map.” ▶



Gonzalo R. Gallegos

ABSENTEE PROPERTY Israel's 1950 Absentee Property Law defines an "absentee" as a person who "at any time" in the period between 29 Nov. 1947 and 1 Sept. 1948, "was in any part of the Land of Israel that is outside the territory of Israel (meaning the West Bank or the Gaza Strip) or in other Arab states". The law stipulates that the property of such an absentee would be transferred to the Custodian of Absentee Property, with no possibility of appeal or compensation. From there, by means of another law, the property was transferred, so that effectively the property that was left behind by Palestinian refugees in 1948 (and also some of the property of Palestinians who are now citizens of Israel) were transferred to the State of Israel. Following the 1967 War, Israeli law was applied to the East Jerusalem, but it was decided that the status of absentee would not apply to residents of East Jerusalem, while West Bank residents with property in Jerusalem remained in a gray area: while considered absentees under the law and prohibited from officially registering their rights to the land, this did not affect their ownership of the property in practice. Owners could prove their existence and claim their property without being considered absentees. This directive – in place for 37 years - was rescinded on 8 July 2004 in a cabinet meeting. In Jan. 2005 the Israeli govt. decided to enact that decision and apply the Absentee Property Law to East Jerusalem property. In Feb. 2005, Israel's Atty.-Gen. Mazuz ordered the government to cancel implementation of the law in East Jerusalem, saying it violates obligations under international law.

ABSENTEE PROPERTY LAW Israeli Law adopted in March 1950, classifying anyone who was a citizen or resident of one of the Arab states or a Palestinian citizen on 29 November 1947, but had left his place of residence, even to take refuge within Palestine, as an 'absentee'. Absentee property was vested in the Israeli custodian of absentee property who then 'sold' it to the Development Authority, empowered by the Knesset. This authorized the theft of the property of a million Arabs, seized by Israel in 1948.

ABU ALI MUSTAFA BRIGADES (also known as Martyr Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades) Military wing for the PFLP, named after PFLP Sec. Gen. Mustafa Zabri, 62, better known as Abu Ali Mustafa, who was assassinated by an Israeli missile strike at his office on 27 Aug. 2001.

ABU RISH BRIGADES Group initially operating under Fateh but then more and more independent, carrying out attacks in Gaza regularly in conjunction with Hamas activists.

ADMINISTRATIVE DETENTION Imprisonment by Israel of Palestinians from the WBGS without charge or trial for a period of up to six months, renewable; based on the 'Law on Emergency Powers (Detention)' adopted by the Knesset in 1979.

AIPAC (The American Israel Public Affairs Committee) Influential Zionist pro-Israel lobbyist organization in the US set up in the early 1950s. Works unflaggingly to align US diplomatic, economic, military and foreign policy with Israel's interests.

THE ALTERNATIVE Coalition list of the DFLP, the PPP, Fida, and various independents, headed by Qais Abdul Karim (Abu Leila). Called for immediate permanent status negotiations with Israel, but insisted on Palestinian refugees' right to return. Focuses on deprived and marginalized segments of society, vowing to fight unemployment and poverty as top priority. Advocates full equality for women and abolishing any legislation that contradicts the principle of equality. Won two out of 132 parliament seats in the January 2006 PLC elections.

AL-AQSA MARTYRS BRIGADES Named after Al-Aqsa Mosque, where the controversial visit of Ariel Sharon on 28 Sept. 2000 sparked the current Intifada, the brigades, which consist of cells of Palestinian activists, were formed in 2000 as an offshoot of Fateh and were to go on to become one of the driving forces behind the current Intifada. Although the brigades initially focused on settlers and soldiers within the WBGS, they later resorted to suicide bombings within Israel proper. Added by the US State Dept. to its list of foreign terrorist organizations in March 2002.

ARAB LEAGUE Established on 22 March 1945 by the then independent Arab states (Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Jordan, Yemen) as a forum for concerted action on major issues its members face. Today has 22 members and represents over 200 million people. In 1964, the Arab League decided to establish the PLO "to organize the Palestinian people enabling them to play their role in the liberation of their country and to achieve self-determination", and at the 7th summit meeting in Rabat in Oct. 1974, it recognized the PLO as the "sole representative of the Palestinian people". In 1976, the PLO was admitted as a full member, and since 1989 it has been a member as 'the State of Palestine'. Current Sec.-Gen. of the Arab League is Amr Musa.

ATERET COHANIM ('Crown of the Priests') Extremist Jewish group whose goal it is to Judaize the Christian and Muslim Quarters of the Old City as well as East Jerusalem by taking over Palestinian property. Funded by Jewish-American businessman Irving Moskowitz. Supports numerous Jewish families living in the aforementioned neighborhoods; involved in the settlement building at Jabal Mukabber and Abu Dis.

BYPASS ROAD Term that emerged with the Oslo Accords, referring to roads used by the Israelis to link settlements with each other and with Israel proper to circumvent Palestinian built up areas. Usually built at the expenses of Palestinian agricultural land and development plans.

CITIZENSHIP LAW In full: Nationality and Entry into Israel Law (Temporary Order) 2003; passed by the Knesset on 31 July 2003, prohibiting citizenship, permanent residency and/or temporary residency status to West Bank/Gaza Palestinians married to Israeli citizens. Nearly all of the affected Israeli families – over 21,000 - are Arab. The law also denies citizenship to children born of an Israeli citizen and resident of the WBGS. Via special permission from Israel's Interior Minister, children will be allowed to remain with their family in Israel until the age of 12, when the child will be uprooted and forced to leave the state. The Law was extended by another six month in July 2004.

CHANGE AND REFORM Name of the list under which Hamas ran in the January 2006 PLC elections and won 74 out of 132 parliament seats. Vowed an end to corruption and lawlessness and advocated cutting ties with Israel, and instead strengthening relations with Arab countries; also promised to build an independent economy, effective education and health systems and to reconstruct the Palestinian infrastructure.

CLOSURE Israeli-imposed movement restrictions for Palestinian goods and labor on the pretext of 'security'. There are three basic forms: internal closure (movement restriction within the WBGS through a network of military checkpoints, reinforced by curfews); external closure of the West Bank and Gaza borders with Israel; and external closing of international borders (e.g., Gaza international airport, border crossings with Jordan and Egypt).

COLLABORATOR A term referring to Palestinians who cooperate with Israeli authorities, providing intelligence information on people within their own community.

CONVERGENCE PLAN (also referred to as Realignment Plan) Plan formulated by PM Ehud Olmert during the election campaign for the 17th Knesset in 2006, claiming that if he was elected PM, within four years he would unilaterally remove Israeli settlements from most of the West Bank and consolidate them into large groups of settlements near the 1967 border. In fact, the plan foresaw the annexation of some 10% of the West Bank, including settlements and historic areas in East Jerusalem, along a perimeter defined more or less by the separation barrier (all area west of it). Israel would expand settlements west of the barrier and withdraw its settlers from the remaining areas, maintaining exclusive security control over these territories as well as over the border crossing points to Jordan.

CURFEW A specific period - of hours, days and sometimes weeks - imposed by Israel on a community forcing its inhabitants to stay indoors, with occasional breaks to stock food and other supplies. Used as a means of control (e.g., to prevent the spread of public protests) and punishment, especially during the first Intifada.

DEMOCRATIC FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE (DFLP)

(Arabic: *Al-Jabha Ad-Dimuqratiyya li-Tahrir Filastin*) Left-wing Palestinian group led by its founder Nayef Hawatmeh (Abu Nouf); was formed on 22 Feb 1969 after a split from the PFLP following an ideological dispute over the necessity of adopting a Marxist program. Began a dialogue with the Israeli extreme left in 1970 and was the first PLO faction to call for a negotiated settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict based on the two-state solution. Adopted pragmatic positions and tried to find a midway position between Arafat and his opponents. Member of the UNLU during the first Intifada. Split in 1990-91 over policy differences with Yasser Abed Rabbo forming the non-Marxist FIDA. Refused to attend the Madrid peace conference in 1991 and opposed the Oslo process. Nevertheless have most of its leaders returned to Palestine since 1996. Somewhat marginalized since Oslo. Reconciliation with Arafat took place in Cairo in August 1999, where both sides defined red lines regarding the final status issues. Currently represented in the PLO Exec. Committee by Taysir Khaled. Launched an attack on an Israeli army base in August 2001 in Gaza, marking the first such attack in 10 years. DFLP Held its own national conference in 2006, and participated in the 2006 PLC elections in 2006, in which its politburo member Qais Abdul-Karim (Abu Leila) was elected. Is surrounded by popular and democratic organizations which have their own programs dealing with the interests of women, youth, workers, and professionals.

DISENGAGEMENT PLAN Plan proposed by PM Ariel Sharon at the Herzliya Conference on Security on 18 Dec. 2003, aimed at creating "maximum security with minimum friction" between Israelis and Palestinians. The plan was introduced in early Feb. 2004, at the peak of international criticism of Sharon's project of the separation barrier, with the ICJ hearings in The Hague just ahead. On 16 Feb. 2005, the Knesset passed the Disengagement Implementation Law by a vote of 59-40 (with 5 abstentions). As part of the plan, Israel evacuated all settlers from Gaza and additional settlers from four settlements in the northern West Bank in Aug.-Sept. 2005. However, Israel retains effective military, economic, and administrative control (i.e., control over Gaza's borders, air and sea space, overall security, and international relations) over the Gaza Strip.

DUNUM Unit of land area used in Palestine (1 dunum = 1,000 sq. meters = approx. 1/4 acre).

EAST JERUSALEM The area of the pre-1967 Arab East Jerusalem municipal boundaries, comprising 6.5 km², plus an additional 70 km² of West Bank land belonging to some 28 surrounding villages annexed by Israel following the 1967 War and illegally occupied since.

EASTERN RING ROAD Bypass road connecting the Jewish settlements located east of Jerusalem, stretching from Beit Safafa, via Sur Baher, Umm Tuba, Wadi Nar and Abu Dis, to the Mt. of Olives and incl. a tunnel under the Mt. of Olives.

ETZION BLOC ('*Gush Etzion*' in Hebrew) Bloc of 18 Jewish settlements, home to over 30,000 settlers, located between Jerusalem and Hebron (Alon Shevut, Bat Ayin, Betar Illit, Efrat, Elazar, Har Gilo, Karnei Tsur, Kedar, Kfar Eldad, Kfar Etzion, Ma'ale Amos, Metzad, Migdal Oz, Neve Daniel, Nokdim, Pnei Kedem, Rosh Tsurim, and Tekoa).

FAMILY REUNIFICATION An Israeli census conducted immediately after the occupation of Jerusalem in 1967 counted 66,000 Palestinians living in East Jerusalem within the new municipal borders; while these Palestinians were classified as permanent residents of Jerusalem (according to the Law of Entry into Israel 1952, Entry to Israel Regulations 1974), those who were not recorded due to absence - whether studying abroad, visiting relatives elsewhere, etc. - had later to apply for family reunification to the Ministry of the Interior. Until this day, any Palestinian who is not classified by the Israeli government as a permanent resident of East Jerusalem - incl. spouses, children and other relatives of East Jerusalem permanent residents - must apply for family reunification to reside legally there. The decision to grant or deny these applications is, according to Israeli Law, ultimately at the discretion of the Interior Minister, who is not required to justify refusal. In May 2002, Israel suspended the processing of family reunification claims between Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza to prevent the latter from acquiring Israeli citizenship, arguing that the growth in the non-Jewish population of Israel due to family reunification was a threat to the 'Jewish character' of the state.

FATEH (Acronym for the Arabic *Harakat At-Tahrir Al-Filistiniya* = Palestinian Liberation Movement, with the first letters in reverse order giving Fateh = conquest). Formally founded in Kuwait in 1959 by Yasser Arafat and associates (incl. Salah Khalaf, Khalil Al-Wazir, Mohdammed Yousef Najjar, Kamal Adwan), it grew out of a clandestine organization formed by Palestinian students in 1957; advocated armed struggle to liberate all of Palestine by Palestinians, while remaining independent of all Arab governments. Headed by Arafat ever since until his death on 11 Nov. 2004. Largest and strongest PLO faction. Initially a network of underground cells, it reorganized with a Central Com-mittee in 1963 and took control of the PLO as the largest single bloc at the 5th PNC meeting in Cairo in 1969. Adopted the principle of political pluralism within the PLO. Until the 1970s, it followed a guerrilla strategy (with its military wing Al-Assifa and squads operating underground in the OPT known as Fateh Hawks and Black Panthers). Formulated a new policy at the 1972 congress putting guerrilla warfare as only one of various means of struggle. Fateh advocates a democratic, secular, multi-religious state. Played a central role in the first Intifada and was a member of the UNLU; had a leading role in the second or Al-Aqsa Intifada, during which its military wing the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades were formed. Represented in the PLO Exec. Committee by three members. (Sec.-Gen.: Farouk Qaddoumi). Was badly defeated by Hamas in the Jan. 2006 PLC elections. Following inter-Palestinian fighting and Hamas's military takeover of the Gaza Strip in June 2007, Pres. Abbas dismissed the Hamas govt. and appointed a new Fateh-led Emergency Government, but its authority has effectively been limited to the West Bank.

FATEH CENTRAL COMMITTEE Established in 1963 as Fateh's highest decision-making body. Has currently 17 members and is headed by Yasser Arafat.

FATEH REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (1) Second-ranking decision-making body of Fateh (after the Central Committee). Is the highest authority in Fateh when convened between two sessions of the General Conference. Its jurisdictions include following up and executing decisions of the General Conference, monitoring Fateh operations and (military) affairs as well as the work of the Central Committee. (2) Other name for the anti-Arafat Abu Nidal Group.

FATWA Legal statement in Islam, issued by a mufti or a religious lawyer, on a specific issue.

FINAL STATUS NEGOTIATIONS Provided for in the 1993 Declaration of Principles (DoP), to be the second part of a two-phase timetable (first part involved a five-year “interim” or “transitional” period during which Israel would gradually withdraw from Palestinian centers in the WBGS and transfer powers to the Palestinians). Supposed to begin “as soon as possible, but not later than the beginning of the third year of the interim period,” i.e., in May 1996, and to cover “remaining issues, including: Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders, relations and cooperation with other neighbors, and other issues of common interest.” On 4 May 1999, the interim phase ended with no permanent status in sight. In the Sharm Esh-Sheikh Agreement of 4 Sept. 1999, the beginning of final status talks was rescheduled for 13 Sept. 1999, with an overall agreement to be reached by 13 Sept. 2000.

FOURTH GENEVA CONVENTION International agreement adopted on 12 August 1949 to which Israel is a signatory; includes standards for the treatment of civilians under occupation. Israel refuses to recognize the applicability of the Geneva Convention to the occupied territories. Particularly relevant clauses in the Convention forbid degrading or dehumanizing treatment of occupied peoples, protect them from coercion, corporal punishment, torture, the confiscation of personal property, and collective punishment, forbid the transfer of part of the occupier’s population to the occupied territories, and ensures freedom of movement especially for medical personnel.

FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE Party list formed prior to the January 2006 PLC elections and led by Salim Al-Bredeney, representing the Arab Liberation Front (ALF); ran unsuccessfully in the elections.

FREEDOM AND SOCIAL JUSTICE List, mainly representing the Popular Struggle Front as well as the Kafa’ (Enough) movement and the Green Party, which was headed by Ahmad Majdalany but ran unsuccessfully in the January 2006 PLC elections.

GREEN LINE Term used following Israel’s occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967 to refer to the post-1948 War cease-fire line (proper name is ‘1949 Armistice Line’), i.e., the “border” separating pre-1967 Israel from the OPT. The demarcation line (laid down in the Armistice Agreements of 1949) is the internationally recognized border (it is worth noting that Israel has not specified the boundaries of its state until this day).

GUSH KATIF Bloc of Jewish settlements in the southwest Gaza Strip, housing some 5,300 settlers.

HAMAS (ISLAMIC RESISTANCE MOVEMENT) (Abbreviation of *Harakat Al-Muqawama* Al-Islamiyya – meaning ‘zeal’). Fundamentalist political movement grown out of religious associations; not a PLO member. Served as the Muslim Brotherhood’s link to the first Intifada. Emerged shortly after the outbreak of the Intifada in January 1988, and was initially tolerated, if not encouraged, by Israel as an alternative to the PLO. Spiritual leader and founding father is Sheikh Ahmad Yassin (freed from an Israeli jail after 9 years on 1 October 1997 and assassinated by Israel on 22 March 2004); other founding leaders are - Fattah Dukhan, Mohammed

Shama’, Dr. Ibrahim Al-Yazuri, Issa An-Najjar, Salah Shehadeh and Abdul Aziz Rantisi. The Hamas Covenant, issued in August 1988, declared that all of Palestine is Islamic trust land and can never be surrendered to non-Muslims, and pro-claimed jihad against Israel. Advocates an Islamic state in all of historic Palestine and the application of Shar’ia Law. Worked independently from the UNLU during the Intifada but does not seriously question the PLO’s role as representative of the Palestinian people at an international level. Agreed to abide by decisions of the PNC in 1989, but called for elections to it (1991). Gained popularity through charitable efforts and the provision of educational and health services. Has been responsible for many attacks on Israeli targets (mostly carried out by its military wing, the Izz Eddin Al-Qassem Brigades). Strongly opposes Oslo; member of the ‘Alliance of Palestinian Forces’ opposed to the peace process. Boycotted the Palestinian elections of Jan. 1996. After Fateh, largest Palestinian faction, but shows signs of a rift between a moderate dialogue-based approach (Gaza) and one of violence (advocated by the Amman-based leadership). Listed as “terrorist” organization by the US State Dept. Won a landslide victory in the 2006 PLC elections, defeating Fateh, and formed subsequently a new PA govt., which however, was widely boycotted by the international community. Clashes with Fateh supporters led to a near civil war in the Gaza Strip and the expulsion of Fateh to the West Bank in June 2007, after which Pres. Abbas dissolved the Hamas govt. and appointed a Fateh-led Emergency Government. Hamas continue to control the Gaza Strip under extreme pressure from Israel and the international community.

HARAM ASH-SHARIF The Noble Sanctuary, one of the three most important sites in Islam spread over 135 dunums comprising nearly 1/6th of Jerusalem’s Old City. Both Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock are located on the compound, which in its entirety is regarded as a mosque. Jews refer to the area as “Temple Mount”, claiming it is the location of the “Second Temple,” de-stroyed by the Romans.

HIZBULLAH (Arabic: ‘Party of God’) Iranian-backed Islamic organization, created in 1982 in response to Israel’s invasion; based in predominantly Shi’ite areas of South Lebanon and currently led by Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah.

HUDNA (often referred to as ‘truce’ or ‘ceasefire’) Term goes back to 628 when Prophet Mohammed concluded the legendary, ten-year Hudaibiyya accord (after the place where it was signed) with the Quraysh tribe, which controlled Mecca at the time. Less than two years later, Mohammed had rearmed the Muslim forces, which attacked the Quraysh and launched the full conquest of Mecca. Since then, hudna is understood by Muslims as a tactical tool at times of crises. It justifies the unilateral violation of a temporary cease-fire when a shift in the balance of power has occurred in favor of the Muslims. In 2003, the term emerged during the ‘ceasefire’ talks between Israel and the “extremists groups.”

INDEPENDENT PALESTINE List headed by Mustafa Barghouti which ran in the January 2006 PLC elections and won two out of 132 parliament seats; main component is the Palestinian National Initiative (Al-Mubadara). The list promised to fight corruption, nepotism, and the Israeli separation barrier, and to provide “a truly democratic and independent ‘third way’ for the large majority of silent and unrepresented Palestinian voters, who favor neither the autocracy and corruption of the governing Fateh party, nor the fundamentalism of Hamas.” Accepted the 1993 Oslo Accords and favored resumption of negotiations with Israel.

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT (ISM) Palestinian-led movement of Palestinian and international activists, which works to raise awareness of the struggle for Palestinian freedom and an end to Israeli occupation, while promoting nonviolent, direct-action methods of resistance.

INTIFADA ('Civil Uprising'; Arabic, lit.: 'shaking off')

(1) What is today referred to as "first Intifada" erupted in Gaza on 9 Dec. 1987 after four Palestinians were killed when an Israeli truck collided with two vans carrying Palestinian workers. Ensuing clashes spread rapidly to the rest of the OPT. The Intifada was carried by youth and directed by the Unified National Leadership of the Uprising - a coalition of the main factions, with the goal to end the Israeli occupation and establish Palestinian independence. Israel's heavy-handed response included closing universities, deporting activists, destroying homes, but also stirred the international community into finding a permanent solution. With the signing of the Oslo accords, the Intifada came to an end; casualties were high with over 1,500 Palestinians dead, and tens of thousands injured.

(2) Also referred to as Al-Aqsa Intifada or second Intifada; began on 28 Sept. 2000 when Likud opposition leader Ariel Sharon made a provocative visit to Al-Aqsa Mosque, with thousands of security forces deployed in and around the Old City. Ensuing clashes with Palestinian protestors left in the first two days alone five Palestinians dead and over 200 injured. The incident soon sparked a widespread uprising in the WBGS, inside Israel and the Arab World, and brought the peace process to a halt.

ISLAMIC JIHAD (*Al-Jihad Al-Islami*) Split from the Muslim Brotherhood in the mid-1980s and was formed as a separate militant Islamic movement; led by Abdul Aziz Odeh (until his deportation 1988) and then Fathi Shiqaqi (until his assassination on 26 Oct. 1995 in Malta). Currently headed by Ramadan Abdallah Salah. Group advocates armed struggle for the liberation of Palestine which is a prerequisite for Islamic ascendancy; believes struggle must be preceded by spreading religious values in the society. It does not see itself as a rival to the mainstream PLO but strongly opposes the Oslo Accords. Listed as 'terrorist' organization by the US State Dept.

ISLAMIC MOVEMENT (IN ISRAEL) Version of the international Muslim Brotherhood founded in 1983 by a group of Israeli Arabs; runs kindergartens, clinics, social welfare services, sports clubs, a religious college, volunteer work camps and a TV station; set a confrontation course with the Jewish establishment; split in 1996 between the southern, more moderate branch, led by Sheikh Abdullah Nimr Darwish, and the northern, more extreme branch, which boycotts Israeli elections and strongly supports the Palestinians in the territories, currently led by Sheikh Ra'ed Salah from Umm Al-Fahm and Sheikh Kamal Khatib from Kufr Kana. On 13 May 2003, Israeli forces arrested 13 leaders of the northern branch, incl. Sheikh Salah, accusing them of transferring funds to Hamas and involvement in "terrorism."

ISRAEL LANDS ADMINISTRATION (ILA) Government agency responsible for managing national lands (i.e., lands of the Development Authority and of the Jewish National Fund), which amount to some 93% of the land in the State of Israel. According to the Israel Lands Administration Law of 1960, the Finance and Agriculture Min.s are charged with its implementation. Among the functions of the ILA are safeguarding state lands, development planning, and making state land available for "public use."

ISRAELI ARABS Palestinian population that remained in what became the state of Israel following the War of 1948. In 1950, their number was estimated at approx. 160,000; today, there are some one and half million Israeli Arabs, the vast majority of whom are Muslims.

IZZ EDDIN AL-QASSEM Military wing of Hamas and nominally controlled by it, but largely a nebula of small groups; responsible for numerous attacks on Israeli targets, incl. suicide bombings. Named after Muslim Brotherhood member Sheikh Izz Eddin Al-Qassam, who preached Jihad

against the British and the Zionists, and was killed in action by British forces near Jenin in 1935.

JERUSALEM DAY (Hebrew: *Yom Yerushalayim*) Celebrated by Jews on the 28th of Iyar to commemorate the "reunification" of East and West Jerusalem on 7 June 1967. Often accompanied by provocative actions against Palestinians living in the city.

JERUSALEM (SECURITY) ENVELOPE PLAN Barrier under construction intended to surround Jerusalem with a fence to create a physical barrier between the city and Bethlehem and Ramallah and restrict access to Jerusalem. The approx. 22 km-long fence is built on Palestinian land and will eventually seal the city completely off from the rest of the West Bank, thus isolating hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their government, work, social services, extended families, as well as religious sites. The plan is part of Israel's larger plan of constructing a separation fence between Israel proper and the Palestinian areas in order to prevent Palestinian 'terrorists' from penetrating into Israel.

KADIMA (Hebrew for "forward") Israeli political party founded by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon after he formally left the Likud party in November 2005, to have a party which would grant him the freedom to carry out his controversial policy of unilateral disengagement. Became strongest party in the March 2006 elections (with 29 of 120 Knesset seats). Defines itself as a broad popular movement which works to ensure the future of Israel as a Jewish democratic state.

KNESSET Israeli Parliament.

MARTYR ABU AL-ABBAS Small list formed to represent the PLF in the January 2006 PLC elections, led by Omar Shalabi (did not win a seat); named after the founder and late PLF leader Mohammed Zeidan (Abul Abbas).

MARTYR ABU ALI MUSTAFA List formed by the PFLP, which ran in the January 2006 PLC elections and won three out of 132 parliament seats (4.2%). Named after the late PFLP Sec.-Gen. Abu Ali Mustafa, who was assassinated by Israeli forces in 2001; led by imprisoned Ahmad Sa'adat.

MUBADARA Also known as Palestinian National Initiative. Political party formed in 2002 by Dr. Haidar Abdel-Shafi, Ibrahim Dakkak and Dr. Mustafa Barghouthi with the main objective of implementing Palestinian national rights and creating a durable, just peace through the establishment of a national emergency leadership, the implementation of democratic elections at all levels of the political system, and the reform of political, administrative, and other institutional structures in Palestine. Led by Dr. Mustafa Barghouthi, who also ran, though unsuccessfully, for President in the Jan. 2005 elections. Ran on a joint list (Independent Palestine) with some independents in the Jan. 2006 PLC, gaining about 2.7% of the votes (2 PLC two seats).

MUQATA'A Walled compound in Ramallah originally used by the British for military purposes in the 1920s. After the Israeli occupation in 1967, it served as the Israeli army's military HQ and prison in Ramallah, until the army withdrew in 1995 and the Palestinians took control of it. The compound also included a helipad, a prison, offices, a meeting hall, a VIP guesthouse, and a residential block, housing Pres. Arafat and his aides, and turning the Muqata'a into his official West Bank headquarters. Pres. Arafat was forcibly confined to those HQ by Israel since Dec. 2001. Most of the compound's buildings were destroyed or damaged when Israel invaded Ramallah and seized the Muqata'a in March 2002. In Nov. 2004, Pres. Yasser Arafat was buried on the compound, that has been restored and serves as the PA's HQ, and a mausoleum was built on top of his grave.

AN-NAKBA The 1948 'catastrophe' surrounding the establishment of the state of Israel, resulting in the dispersion of Palestinians worldwide.

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL A 14-member body formed by Pres. Arafat on 11 September 2003 and headed by him, with the task to unify and supervise all eight Palestinian security, military and police forces to guarantee their unity and effectiveness. The Council was initially comprised of the Pres. of the PA, the PM, the FM, the Interior Min., a PLO Exec. Committee member, a PLC member, the Chief of the Civil Police, the two Commanders of the West Bank and Gaza National Security Forces, the General Intelligence Service Chief, Military Intelligence Service Chief and security advisors. Through another decree, Pres. Mahmoud Abbas reconstructed (28 Oct. 2005) the Council.

NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT Coalition of developing countries that formed in 1955 in Bandung to pave a neutral path between the US and the Soviet Bloc; held its first conference in Belgrade in 1961; confers every few years to coordinate positions on international political and economic issues; currently consists of 116 member states. Palestine is a full member. The 7th NAM Summit (New Delhi, 1983) resulted in the establishment of the Committee on Palestine (heads of state level), whose task it is to support the rights of the Palestinian people in accordance with International Law and to work towards a just, durable, and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, which will enable the Palestinian people to exercise their rights in a free and sovereign manner in their independent homeland.

OCCUPATION Acquisition of territory by war; inadmissible according to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 (signed by Israel), which defines Occupied Territory, Occupying Power, and Protected People as the situation that results from cross-border military action. This is the International Law that forbids settlement or destruction of property and defines other obligations of an occupying power.

OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES Those areas of Mandatory Palestine occupied by the State of Israel following the June War of 1967; i.e., the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. They comprise approximately 22% of the land controlled by the British Mandate authorities prior to 1948.

OPERATION 'AUTUMN CLOUDS' Israeli military operation that began on 1 Nov. 2006 with Israeli forces entering the Gaza Strip near Beit Hanoun and lasted till 8 Nov. when they began withdrawing. During the operation, that was launched under the pretext to stop Palestinian rocket attacks into Israel, over 50 Palestinians were killed and 200 wounded. Was preceded by Operation 'Summer Rains'.

OPERATION 'DEFENSIVE SHIELD' Israeli reinvasion of West Bank cities in March/April 2002 (during the Al-Aqsa Intifada), which left most of the population under prolonged curfews and the PA infrastructure in ruins and caused unprecedented damages to private and public properties.

OPERATION 'SUMMER RAINS' Military operation launched on 28 June 2006 in response to the Hamas raid near the Kerem Shalom border crossing of the Gaza Strip three days earlier, during which two Israeli soldiers were killed and a corporal (Gilad Shalit) kidnapped. For the release of the latter Hamas demanded the freeing of all Palestinian women and under-18 prisoners from Israeli jails. The operation's stated goals were the release of Corporal Shalit and to prevent the launching of Qassam rockets into Israel. Consisting of several sub-operation, the operation almost lasted four months (until late October 2006) and included air bombardments, incl. bombing of the Gazan power plant and ground offensives. Was widely condemned for its "disproportionate use of force". Was followed by Operation Autumn Clouds in Nov. 2006.

ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE (OIC) Created in 1969 following the arson attack on Al-Aqsa Mosque - considered an attack on the whole of Muslim world - to coordinate efforts to protect the Holy Places of Islam and to support the struggle of the Palestinian people helping them recover their rights and free their land. Has also political, cultural, economic and social objectives. Currently 54 members.

OSLO ACCORDS Refers to the Gaza-Jericho Agreement (also: Oslo I or Cairo Agreement) of 4 May 1994, outlining the first stage of Palestinian autonomy - in Gaza and Jericho - incl. Israeli redeployment and the establishment of a Palestinian self-government authority, and the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip (also Oslo II or Taba Agreement) of 26 Sept. 1995, which outlined the 2nd stage of Palestinian autonomy, extending it to other parts of the West Bank, which is divided into Area A (full Palestinian civil jurisdiction and internal security), Area B (full Palestinian civil jurisdiction, joint Israeli-Palestinian internal security), and Area C (Israeli civil and overall security control). Furthermore, the election and powers of a Palestinian Legislative Council were determined.

OUTPOSTS (also settlement outposts) Structures - often uninhabited containers or a few mobile homes - erected by the settler movement without official recognition on the part of the Israeli Govt. as precursors to new settlements or settlement expansion.

PALESTINE LIBERATION FRONT (PLF) Militant PLO faction formed by Mohammed Zeidan (Abu-I-Abbas) and Tala'at Yaqoub in April 1977 after splitting from PFLP and later PFLP-GC (1977) to follow a pro-Iraqi stance. Split into three different factions in the 1980s: pro-Damascus faction under Tala'at Yaqoub, pro-Iraqi faction under Abu-I-Abbas and 'Ali Ishaq, and a militantly pro-Syrian under Abdel-Fattah Ghanim. Member of the Rejectionist Front. Responsible for the hijacking of the Achille Lauro in 1985. Its position toward the PLO leadership and Chairman Arafat is uncertain but strongly opposes the Madrid and Oslo processes. Currently represented in the PLO Exec. Committee by Ali Ishaq. Listed as 'terrorist' organization by the US State Dept.

PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION see **PLO**

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY (PA) Established on the basis of the Declaration of Principles signed by the PLO and Israel on 13 Sept. 1993 as temporary admin. body to serve during the interim period and govern Palestinian affairs in the self-rule areas. It consists of the elected President, the ap-pointed cabinet (Executive Committee - Ministers and a Cabinet Secretary) and the Palestinian Legislative Council. The PA is subject to the agreements signed with Israel and as such has no foreign relation powers. It is responsible for negotiating the permanent status issues towards a final settlement with Israel.

PALESTINIAN JUSTICE Small list that was formed to compete in the January 2006 PLC elections under the banner of "liberty, justice and peace." The top slot on the ballot was held by Samir Qadri, but the party ran unsuccessfully.

PALESTINIAN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (PLC) Palestinian parliament, first elected on 20 Jan. 1996 in accordance with the Oslo I and II Accords. Initially made up of 88 members elected in 16 electoral districts of varying sizes (voter turnout: 79%), dominated by Fateh. Responsible for drafting a Palestinian constitution as well as legal and regulatory frameworks. All legislation and acts must be transmitted to the Israeli authorities for approval. The PLC has no powers in terms of foreign relations and agreements. Its members automatically become members of the PNC. Second elections took place on 25 Jan. 2006 and brought

to power Hamas. Currently has 132 members, 74 of which are Hamas. Chaired by a Speaker (currently Hamas legislator Abdel Aziz Dweik), who replaces the President if the latter is unable to perform his role.

PALESTINIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL (PNC) Legislative and decision-making body of the PLO; quasi-parliament in exile, representing Palestinians worldwide; formulates policies and guidelines for the Exec. Committee. Elects the Exec. Committee, a speaker, two deputies and a secretary, who make up the Bureau of the Council. Currently 669 members, most of whom appointed by the PLO Exec. Committee (previously 483, with 84 seats for representatives from the OPT left vacant; now joined by 186 members from inside the Palestinian Territories, including - automatically - the 88 elected PLC members). Voted for altering its 1964 National Charter in line with the DoP on 21 April 1996 with a vote of 504 to 54 and 14 abstentions; the remaining members boycotted, opposing the removal of the articles Israel finds offensive. Meets every 2 years; resolutions are passed by a simple majority, but 2/3rds of members must attend for quorum.

PHILADELPHI ROUTE (also referred to as Philadelphia 'corridor' or 'buffer zone') 100-200-meter wide strip of Israeli-controlled territory along the border between Egypt and the Gaza Strip, which remained under direct Israeli military control under the Oslo Accords. During the second Intifada, the Israeli army demolished hundreds of houses (1,600 during the army's 'Operation Rainbow' in Sept. 2004 alone) in order to prevent the alleged smuggling of weapons through tunnels dug under the route and erected a fortification system with walls and armored outposts. In Sept. 2005 the Israeli army handed over control of the Philadelphia Route to the Egyptian army, which is now responsible for security and for fighting smuggling in the area.

PLO - PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION Following an Arab League decision, the PLO was founded by 422 Palestinian national figures, chaired by Ahmed Shuqeiri, in May 1964 in Jerusalem. When Fateh, led by Yasser Arafat, took over the PLO in 1969, it became an umbrella organization for various Palestinian factions and acquired a more central role in mobilizing Palestinians as well as international support. Created a number of organizations to provide education, health, and other relief services and formed a quasi-govt. with security bodies, a military, a financial system, information offices and foreign relations. On 14 Oct. 1974, the PLO was recognized by the UNGA as the representative of the Palestinian people (Res. 3210, which also granted observer status), and on 28 Oct. 1974 by the Arab League Rabat Summit. In 1975, the PLO was granted access to the UNSC. On 15 Nov. 1988, it declared Palestinian independence at the 19th PNC in Algiers, and in Dec. 1988, it announced the recognition of Israel's right to exist and renounced terrorism. The PLO headquarters were in Amman until the 'Black September' confrontation with the Jordanian army (1970), then in Beirut until the PLO's evacuation in the course of the 1982 Israeli invasion, and then Tunis. The PLO remains the Palestinian government in exile; it carries out state functions of the Palestinians, incl. negotiations with Israel and is the political umbrella for the PA in the Palestinian self-rule areas (Gaza and West Bank) following the DoP of 13 September 1993 and subsequent accords. Following the death of Yasser Arafat on 11 Nov. 2004, headed by Farouq Qaddoumi.

PLO CENTRAL COUNCIL (PCC) Second leading body of the PLO, formed first in June 1970 as ad hoc body, then established by the PNC in 1973 under the chairmanship Khaled Al-Fahum. Functions as an intermediary body between the PNC and the Exec. Committee. At present, it has 124 members, incl. 15 PLC representatives. In Oct. 1993, the PCC met in Tunis to ratify the DoP (by a vote of 63-8 and 9 abstentions). On 27 April 1999, PCC meeting in Gaza discussed the expiry of the DoP.

PLO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EC) Highest exec. body of the PLO; represents the PLO internationally. Consists of 18 members elected by the PNC, with full operational authority over all sub-organizations and budgets. acts as a cabinet, implementing policy, and directs the activities of the PLO in accordance with the Covenant and the Basic Law. [Chairman: Yasser Arafat (until Nov. 2004); members: Yasser Amro, Emile Jarjoui, Taysir Khaled, Hanna Amirah, Mahmoud Abbas, Zakaria Al-Agha, Ghassan Shaka'a, Riad Khadari, Abdel Rahim Malouh, Samir Ghosheh, Farouq Qaddumi, Asad Abdel Rahman, Yasser Abed Rabbo, Mohammed Nashashibi, Mahmoud Ismail, and Ali Ishaq; the seat of the deceased Faisal Husseini is still vacant].

POPULAR FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE (PFLP - *Al-Jabha Al-Sha'biyya li-Tahrir Filastin*) Established in 1967 by the Arab National Movement, led by George Habash (until 2000). Split twice: in 1968, when the Palestine Liberation Front broke away (now PFLP-GC) and in 1969, when the DFLP did the same. In the 1970s it became known for hijacking actions. Pulled out of the PLO Exec. Committee in 1974 rejoining it only in 1981. Opposes the Oslo Accords. Represented in the PLO Exec. Committee by Abdel Rahim Malouh, but in reality, is marginalized since Oslo process began. Reconciliation with Fateh/ Arafat took place in Cairo in Aug. 1999. Current head is Ahmed Sa'adat (imprisoned). Listed as 'terrorist' organization by the US State Dept.

POPULAR FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE - GENERAL COMMAND (PFLP-GC) Formed in late 1968 after breaking away from the PFLP; led by Ahmed Jibril, a former officer in the Syrian Army. Militant pro-Syrian anti-Arafat faction within the PLO, committed to armed struggle and guerrilla strategy. Rejects any compromise with Israel and has been involved in numerous attacks. Based in Damascus. Currently not represented in the PLO Executive Committee. Listed as 'terrorist' organization by the US State Dept.

POPULAR RESISTANCE COMMITTEES (Arabic: *Moqawamah*) Coalition of militants that emerged in Gaza in the early days of the Al-Aqsa Intifada, with the aim to resist Israel's assaults on Palestinians. The committees consist mainly of dissident or breakaway members of Fateh and former PA security officials, but has also Hamas- and Islamic Jihad-affiliated members. Were behind several attacks against Israeli targets in the Gaza Strip, especially by placing roadside bombs that target Israeli tanks. Rejected the US/Israel-demanded reforms in the PA in 2002 as well as the 2003 hudna. Claimed responsibility for an attack on a US convoy in northern Gaza in Oct. 2003, which left three US security men dead.

PRISONER DOCUMENT 18-point document drawn up by Palestinian prisoners held by Israel, incl. members of the Hamas and Fateh, in spring 2006, as a basis for conciliation between the rival factions. It was subsequently ratified by the Hamas and PLO/Fateh after revision. It calls for an Israeli withdrawal to the pre-1967 borders and the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza and was widely touted as granting implicit recognition to Israel, but Hamas leaders emphasized when signing it that their charter remains in force and that the document does not grant recognition to Israel.

QASSAM ROCKETS (Qassam-1 and Qassam-2) Home-made shorter-range version of Katyusha rockets, developed mainly by Hamas, launched from the Gaza Strip and fired at settlements and Israeli border towns, such as Sderot. Most of them miss their target and to date they have caused little damage and no serious injuries.

QUARTET Panel comprised of the FM's of the US and Russia and plus senior representatives from the UN and EU. Was formed in Madrid during Sec. of State Powell's visit to Europe and the Middle East shortly after

Pres. Bush called – on 4 April 2002 – on Israel to “withdraw immediately” from recently reoccupied Palestinian territories. The quartet’s mandate was to organize a Middle East conference later that year, which never materialized, and to design a road map for achieving an Israeli-Palestinian permanent status agreement based on the phased formula enunciated in the Mitchell Report and including the establishment of a Palestinian state.

AL-QUDS BRIGADES Military wing of the Islamic Jihad movement.

REFUGEE A person made homeless by acts of war or other human-made or natural disasters and who is forced to cross an international border to seek safety. In Palestinian discourse the term refers to anyone, who fled or was forced to leave their home and cross into a neighboring state during the 1948 Nakba or following the 1967 June War (or the descendants thereof) and who were forbidden to return, and whose rights are enshrined in various articles of international law. Many now live in refugee camps in neighboring Arab states administered by the UNRWA.

RIGHT OF RETURN One of the key Palestinian demands relating to the peace process. Refers to the right of Palestinian refugees and their descendants to return to their pre-1948 homes in Israel and the WBGS. Legal reference is UNGA Res. 194 of 11 Dec. 1948, which stated, “Refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so.” Israel - which has its own right of return, i.e., the automatic right of every Jew in the world to settle in Israel and obtain citizenship – has constantly rejected the idea of allowing the refugees to return.

ROAD MAP (full: Performance-based and Goal-driven Road Map) Plan put together by the Quartet in December 2002 but only issued on 30 April 2003 after Mahmoud Abbas was sworn in as first Palestinian PM, aiming at a “final and comprehensive settlement of the Israel-Palestinian conflict by 2005,” based on a full two-state solution, starting with an end to Palestinian terrorism and a freeze on Israeli settlements and other steps to normalize conditions.” The plan includes “clear phases, timelines, target dates, and benchmarks aiming at progress through reciprocal steps by the two parties in the political, security, economic, humanitarian and institution-building fields,” and has monitoring groups under the auspices of the Quartet. It envisaged a Palestinian state by 2005 although the timetable it set down was widely considered unrealistic and little progress had been made to date.

SAUDI PEACE INITIATIVE Peace plan floated by Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah in Feb. 2002, whose final version was adopted at the March 2002 Arab League summit in Beirut. It calls for Israeli withdrawal from all territories occupied since 1967 and return of the Palestine refugees to Israel in return for recognition of Israel and normal relations with the Arab World.

SAFDIE PLAN Plan initiated during Ehud Olmert’s tenure as WJM mayor, which calls for the construction of some 20,000 housing units on hills to the west of Jerusalem as well as new roads to serve the new neighborhoods. After harsh opposition by environmentalist, mayor Uri Lupoliansky cancelled the Planning Scheme in late Nov. 2006. This move is expected to have major consequences on Palestinian development in the city, since Jewish expansion and construction will now occur even more on the expenses of Palestinians lands, for instance by expanding settlements such as Har Homa.

SASSON REPORT Due to increasing local and international criticism of the settlement outposts, PM Sharon was compelled to commission Attorney Talia Sasson to prepare a report on government involvement

in the establishment of such outposts. The Sasson report was presented in March 2005, stating that many of the outposts were established on lands that are not state-owned, incl. 15 on private Palestinian land, and 46 on lands of unknown ownership. The report accuses numerous governmental bodies of committing blatant offenses to establish outposts, particularly the Construction and Housing Min. which planned and funded illegal outposts without any cabinet decision.

SEPARATION BARRIER (Also referred to as the ‘Wall’, ‘Fence’, ‘Apartheid Wall’, and ‘Security Fence/Wall’). Barrier (fences and, in some places, trenches or concrete walls) constructed by Israel within the West Bank since June 2002 on the pretext of security to prevent Palestinians from entering Israel ‘illegally’. Its construction, which drew international opposition, cuts deep into Palestinian territory and involves the confiscation of large amounts of fertile Palestinian land, the ‘ghettoization’ of Palestinian towns and villages, and the cutting off thousands of Palestinians from social services, schools and their farmlands. In some places, the fence runs along the Green Line, but mainly it penetrates the West Bank by up to several km. Some Palestinian specialists predict that the fence will eventually run more than 600 km and leave some 10% of the West Bank territory in Israeli hands. On 9 July 2004, the International Court of Justice ruled that construction of the separation barrier was illegal (“contrary to international law”) because it involves destruction/confiscation of Palestinian property and imposes severe restrictions on Palestinian movement, and that that Israel must “cease forthwith the works of construction of the wall being built in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem”, return seized property and compensate Palestinian landowners whose interests have been damaged by its construction.

SETTLEMENTS (sometimes referred to as ‘colonies’) Communities established illegally (usually on the prime agricultural land or above major aquifers) by the State of Israel on land occupied during the 1967 June War. They vary enormously in size, housing approx. 400,000 settlers, half of them in the Jerusalem area. Numerous UN Resolutions have condemned their construction, which is prohibited under the terms of the Fourth Geneva Convention. They represent a major obstacle to the realization of an independent Palestinian state, preventing territorial contiguity between Palestinian towns and cities.

TANZIM (Arabic for ‘organization’) Part of Fateh set up in 1995 by Arafat and Fateh leaders to counter the activities of the Islamic groups in the OPT; loose collection of militias that operates as grassroots organization with local decision-making, mainly consisting of “insiders” (Palestinians who grew up in the WBGS), originating from Fateh cadres operating in the OPT, both before and during the first Intifada; seen as the leading force in directing the Al-Aqsa Intifada; most senior figures is West Bank Fateh chief Marwan Barghouthi, who was arrested by Israel in April 2001; considered by Israel as part of the Palestinian ‘terror’ network in the territories.

TEMPLE MOUNT FAITHFUL Extremist Jewish group which aims to “liberate the Temple Mount” from Arab occupation and “rebuild the Third Temple.” Supports settlements and works to purchase Palestinian property, especially in the Old City. Has tried on various occasions to enter the Al-Haram Ash-Sharif Compound to pray there and to lay the cornerstone for the ‘Third Temple.’

THE THIRD WAY List, headed by then Finance Minister Salam Fayyad and Hanan Ashrawi, whose platform focuses on security and governmental reforms, democratic improvements and socioeconomic progress, and won two out of 132 parliament seats in the January 2006 PLC elections. Adopted the PLO’s political program (demanding full Israeli withdrawal

from the territories occupied in 1967 and solving the refugee problem in line with UN Resolution 149). Favors resumption of negotiations with Israel.

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 194 Adopted on 11 Dec. 1948, stating the right of return: "The refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible."

UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 242 Adopted on 22 Nov. 1967, calling on Israel to withdraw its army from territories occupied in the course of the War of 1967.

UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 338 Adopted unanimously on 22 Oct. 1973, calls for the immediate implementation of UNSC Res. 242 with a view to establish peace.

UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1559 Adopted with a vote of 9:0 and six abstaining on 2 Sept. 2004, calling upon Lebanon to establish its sovereignty over all of its land, upon "foreign forces" to withdraw from Lebanon and to cease intervening in its internal politics, and on all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias to disband. It further declared support for free and fair presidential elections in Lebanon without foreign interference.

UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1701 Adopted unanimously on 11 Aug. 2006, intended to resolve the 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict. Was accepted by the Israeli Knesset and the Lebanese Parliament the following two days.

UNRWA The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East was established by UNGA Res. 302 of Dec. 1949 to give emergency assistance to Palestinians displaced by the War of 1948 and began to operate in May 1950. Its mandate, to provide essential education, health and relief services to Palestine refugees living in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and the WBGs, has been renewed repeatedly ever since. Headquarters are in Gaza.

WA'AD List, also known as the 'National Coalition for Justice and Democracy', which was formed and headed by Gazan doctor Iyad Al-Sarraj during the 2006 PLC elections. The list, whose main platform was security reforms, rule of law enforcement and respect for human rights, did not win a seat.

WAQF Islamic charitable pious foundation; administers holy sites as well as state lands and other property passed to the Muslim community for public welfare.

YESHA Acronym for 'Yehuda, Shomron v'Aza', the Hebrew term for Judea, Samaria (West Bank) and Gaza. The Yesha Council is the representative body of the Jewish settlers in the Palestinian territories.

YESHA COUNCIL (of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza) Representative body of the Jewish settlers in the Palestinian territories.