

Division for Palestinian Rights

Chronological Review of Events Relating to the Question of Palestine

MONTHLY MEDIA MONITORING REVIEW

January 2010

Monthly highlights

- Hamas leader Haniyeh calls on Gaza armed groups to halt rocket attacks on Israel ([12 January](#))
- UNRWA launches a \$322 million 2010 emergency appeal ([19 January](#))
- Italy's Filippo Grandi is appointed Commissioner-General of UNRWA ([20 January](#))
- Israel pays the UN some \$10.5 million for damage during Gaza offensive ([22 January](#))
- Israel and the PA submit reports on their implementation of GA resolution 64/10, on the Goldstone report ([29 January](#))

1

The PA might review its West Bank security cooperation with Israel if it continued unilateral operations such as the Nablus raid which had killed three, PA President Mahmoud Abbas said. (*Reuters*)

Israeli forces had shot an eight-year-old Palestinian boy in the head with a rubber-coated bullet during the weekly protest against the separation wall in Ni'lin, local activists said. An Israeli military spokesman said that he was unaware of any injuries, but that "300 rioters threw rocks at security forces, who responded with riot-control means". (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Several hundred Jewish and Arab left-wing activists protested in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood in East Jerusalem against the arrival of settlers. (*Ynetnews*)

2

Israeli warplanes bombed two suspected tunnels under Gaza's border with Israel. Two Palestinians, including a child, were slightly wounded, according to medics.

The Israeli military said that the air strikes had been launched in response to rocket fire two days earlier on Netivot. Two mortars had been fired from northern Gaza towards Israel's Negev desert earlier in the day. (*AP, UPI*)

According to an *Asharq al-Awsat* report, French President Nicolas Sarkozy had floated the idea of a Middle East peace summit at a meeting with his Lebanese counterpart, Michel Suleiman, in Paris. He reportedly intended to invite Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, PA President Abbas, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and King Abdullah II of Jordan. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal of Saudi Arabia criticized Israel's settlement construction and said that the country was acting like a "spoiled child". He told a news conference that Washington and other players in the Middle East peace efforts should take a "firm and serious" stand to put an end to Israeli settlement construction. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Hundreds of Israeli pacifists, both Arabs and Jews, marched in central Tel Aviv to protest against the blockade imposed by Israel on the Gaza Strip. (*AFP*)

Egypt's *MENA* said that a ship carrying a 150-vehicle convoy, with hundreds of tons of humanitarian supplies for Gaza, expected to arrive the following day, would be unloaded at the Egyptian port of El Arish. A British-based group, "Viva Palestina", accompanied by 528 activists from 17 countries, would also travel to Gaza.

(*AP*)

3

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu told a Cabinet meeting: "Our policy is clear [...] to respond aggressively to any firing at our territory and at our communities." (www.pmo.gov.il)

Two West Bank Palestinians had been arrested at the Beersheba central bus station, which was evacuated following a bomb scare. The Palestinians were transferred to Shin Bet. No suspicious objects had been found on them. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

PA President Abbas arrived in Egypt for talks aimed at relaunching peace talks with Israel. He met with Egypt's Intelligence Chief Omar Suleiman in Sharm el-Sheikh and held talks with Egyptian President Mubarak before heading to Qatar, Kuwait and Turkey. President Mubarak briefed his Palestinian counterpart on the peace proposals presented by Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu during his recent visit to Cairo. Mr. Netanyahu had reportedly agreed to discuss the future of Jerusalem as well as the borders of a future Palestinian State, and to allot two years for both sides to reach a deal, according to *Haaretz*. Moreover, reconciliation efforts and the ideas which Egypt's Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit and Omar Suleiman would present to US President Barack Obama during their visit to Washington on 8 January were also reviewed, according to *Bahrain News Agency*. (*AFP, Haaretz, Saudi Press Agency*)

PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad said that the future Palestinian State must be "free of fences and settlements". (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Hamas' Political Bureau Chief, Khaled Mashaal, said in Riyadh: "We have made a lot of progress in the [reconciliation] negotiations conducted in Cairo since the beginning of last year and we are close to an agreement. [...] We want this document to conform to what we have agreed with our brothers in Fatah and the other Palestinian organizations. We will then be ready to sign it in Cairo, with the others." (*AFP*)

The Egyptian authorities had decided to open the Rafah crossing borders with the Gaza Strip for three days, allowing Palestinians and citizens from various countries, stranded on both sides to cross, a security source said. (*Xinhua*)

4

The Israeli military seized 11 Palestinians, including three children, during raids in the West Bank. (*IMEMC*)

Members of the armed wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine said that they had narrowly escaped a missile fired by an Israeli war plane in the northern Gaza Strip. They also said that they had fired a rocket-propelled grenade at an Israeli military watch tower along the border with northern Gaza. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

"Our position is that the [Prime Minister Netanyahu's] ideas are taking the Israeli position forward," Egyptian Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit told reporters, following the meeting between President Mubarak and his Palestinian counterpart, PA President Abbas. "When settlement construction is stopped and the international legitimacy is recognized, we will be ready to resume the negotiations," Mr. Abbas said. Mohammed Dahlan, a top Fatah official, said: "We value the Egyptian efforts and hope these efforts will be concluded in a plan or package." (*Haaretz*)

Prime Minister Netanyahu told the Likud Knesset faction: "In recent weeks, I have felt that there is a certain change in the air, and I hope that this will mature, allowing the start of the diplomatic process." "We are serious in our intentions to reach a peace agreement," he said, but cautioned that "diplomatic plans, said to be in my name that have appeared in the media, have no truth to them." Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman warned Quartet Representative Tony Blair: "It is not possible to reach a full agreement within two years... We need to begin direct talks without committing to any time frame." (*Haaretz*)

The PA said that it was forming a "national team" to oversee efforts to gain full membership in the World Trade Organization. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Jerusalem planning and building committee approved construction of four new residential buildings intended to house 24 settler families in East Jerusalem. The construction project had been initiated by Jewish-American millionaire Irving Moskowitz, who also owns the Shepherd Hotel in East Jerusalem. (*Haaretz*)

Peace Now [said](#) that Israeli planning authorities would be considering the [official objections by Peace Now](#) and the Palestinian residents of Beit Hanina over the planned route of settler-only Highway 20, designed to connect the "Pisgat Ze'ev" settlement and going through the private lands of Beit Hanina. (*Haaretz*, [www.peacenow.org.il](#))

Both Jordan and the Palestinians have claimed custody over the historic Dead Sea Scrolls, currently on display at Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum, in Canada, on loan from Israel's Antiquities Authority. "They are an integral part of Palestinian heritage," Hamdan Taha, Director of the Palestinian Antiquities and Cultural Heritage Department, said. He added that the Palestinians had demanded months ago that the Canadians close the exhibition and seize the artefacts until an international court could rule on their ownership. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

5

Four Israeli tanks and bulldozers advanced into an area east of Khan Yunis, razing farmland, according to witnesses. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Israeli military said that it had detained eight Palestinians during overnight raids in the West Bank. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A Palestinian militant had been killed and four others wounded in an Israeli air strike on Gaza, Palestinian medics said. One of the wounded later died, according to *Ma'an News Agency*. (*Haaretz*, *Ma'an News Agency*, *Reuters*)

Israeli border policemen arrested a Palestinian youth from Nablus in possession of a knife in Jerusalem's Old City. He allegedly confessed that he had acquired the knife to stab Jews to avenge the recent killing of three Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades operatives [in Nablus]. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

A French Foreign Ministry spokesperson reiterated France's readiness to host an international conference in support of Middle East peace. (*Xinhua*)

Newweapons Committee based in Italy [said](#) that a study by independent scientists and doctors had shown that "the 2006 and 2009 Israeli bombings in Gaza Strip have left a high concentration of toxic metals in the soil. Those metals can cause tumours and problems with fertility, and they can have serious effects on newly born babies, like deformities and genetic pathologies. The metals are in particular tungsten, mercury, molybdenum, cadmium and cobalt." (*Haaretz*, [www.newweapons.org](#))

PA Prime Minister Fayyad reaffirmed the commitment of the PA to clear local markets of goods produced by Israeli settlements and rid the West Bank of the settlements entirely. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli defence officials said that Defense Minister Ehud Barak had received dozens of death threats following the settlement freeze. (*IMEMC*, *The Jerusalem Post*)

It was reported that the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) would issue a revised order for the settlement freeze in order to meet some of the complaints raised by settlers. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Following the approval of the construction of four new settlement buildings in the Mount of Olives in East Jerusalem, a US State Department official told *The Jerusalem Post*: "We have noted that these types of announcements and activity harm peace efforts". (*The Jerusalem Post*)

A senior Hamas official said that despite unprecedented progress in prisoner swap negotiations, the group was unlikely to accept Israel's offer for a deal that would see the release of Gilad Shalit. A German negotiator mediating the exchange had arrived in the Gaza Strip to receive Hamas' response, which was unlikely to be positive, according to *Israel Radio*. (*Haaretz*)

Britain's Attorney General, Baroness Patricia Janet Scotland, said that she was aware of the urgent need to address a series of arrest warrants being issued in her country against Israeli officials over alleged war crimes in the Gaza Strip. She made the remarks after a delegation of senior IDF officers had cancelled a planned visit to the UK for fear that they would be arrested upon landing. (*Haaretz*)

During a phone call with Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed the need for further imports of needed materials for the reconstruction of Gaza. They also discussed the "urgent need" to surmount obstacles to restart Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. Talks between Mr. Ban and US Special Envoy George Mitchell focused on the current state of the peace process and the role of the Quartet. "The Secretary-General expressed his appreciation and support for US efforts," the readout said, adding that Mr. Ban also voiced concern over the humanitarian situation in Gaza and the need for reconstruction to begin. (*UN News Centre*)

In a meeting with representatives of Palestinian factions at the Ein el-Hilweh refugee camp, Salvatore Lombardo, Director of Affairs of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in Lebanon said that his agency was in the process of "restructuring" its top priorities in a bid to improve services it provided to refugees. (*The Daily Star*)

Some 55 people were injured in a clash with Egyptian police as activists tried to get a relief aid convoy across the border into Gaza. Two Palestinians and an Egyptian soldier were reportedly shot at the Gaza border during the demonstrations. (*Ma'an News Agency*, *Ynetnews*)

6

Israeli tanks and a bulldozer crossed the border into Gaza. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

IDF soldiers arrested a Palestinian youth suspected of throwing rocks at an Israeli car near Bethlehem. No one had been hurt during the episode. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

US Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George Mitchell said in an interview that Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations should take no longer than two years and could be finished sooner than that. He also said he planned to return to the region in the next few days and hoped to make progress on political, security and economic tracks of the peace process. (*Reuters*)

Israeli officials said that the US Administration wanted a statement to be issued at the end of a meeting of Quartet members, to be held in Brussels next week, calling for renewed negotiations between Israel and the PA. Quartet Representative Tony Blair was scheduled to attend the meeting, while the other delegates were still to be determined. (*Haaretz*)

PA President Abbas arrived in Turkey for a two-day visit. President Abdullah Gül's office said that Mr. Abbas was to meet with President Gül and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan to discuss US efforts to restart peace talks. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The Jerusalem Municipal Planning and Construction Committee approved plans for the construction of a new settlement in the city's north-east Shu'fat neighbourhood. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The Israeli military issued demolition orders against 28 homes on the outskirts of the Aqraba village, south-east of Nablus. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The PA Ministry of Information issued a report stating that Israel had levelled more than 23,000 Palestinian homes since the occupation began in 1967. (*IMEMC*)

Israeli security officials said that IDF Chief of Staff Gabi Ashkenazi had ordered the military to consult more closely with its legal advisers on future offensives.

They also stated that officers had been receiving more intensive training in the laws of war and international humanitarian law. (*AP*)

"We are troubled by the violence along the Egypt-Gaza border," Martin Nesirky, Spokesperson for Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, told reporters, amid reports of violence including the killing of an Egyptian security officer. "We call for calm and respect for Egyptian sovereignty," he added. "We remain deeply concerned at unsustainable conditions in Gaza and reiterate the need for the re-opening of all crossings as envisaged by the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access," stated

Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip fired at least 10 mortar shells at Israel, none of which caused injuries or damage. Afterwards, the Israeli Air Force dropped thousands of leaflets over Gaza, warning residents to stay away from the border with Israel and to avoid involvement in smuggling. (Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency)

The Israeli military said that it had detained nine Palestinians during overnight operations in the West Bank. (Ma'an News Agency)

The IDF launched a series of air strikes against targets in the Gaza Strip hours after a rocket fired from Gaza had hit Ashkelon in southern Israel, causing no casualties or damage. Three Palestinians were reportedly killed in the strikes, including a 15-year-old boy. Two had been wounded and several others were feared trapped inside the ruins, medics said. The IDF spokesman's office said that the IAF had bombed a tunnel linking Gaza to Israel, a weaponry workshop in Gaza City and two smuggling tunnels between Gaza and Egypt. (Haaretz)

Three Palestinians were injured in clashes with Israeli soldiers at a military checkpoint north of Hebron. A 16-year-old boy was shot in the hand and the abdomen.

An Israeli military spokesman said that Israeli forces had shot at three Palestinians rolling burning tires and throwing stones. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli soldiers attacked and injured Palestinian shepherds as they grazed their sheep near the village of Tuwani in the Southern Hebron Hills. Soldiers also attacked international activists accompanying the shepherds and broke a video camera. (Wafa)

The Jerusalem Post reported that the IDF Central Command, in a show of confidence in the PA, had decided to allow Palestinian security forces to operate 24 hours a day in cities such as Tulkarm and Qalqilya without the need for prior Israeli permission. (The Jerusalem Post)

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak ordered that the settlement moratorium be relaxed to authorize settlement councils to issue permits for the renovation of existing structures and for public infrastructure work. This would not include the construction of additional housing units. (Ynetnews)

It was reported that Israel and the United Nations had reached an agreement in principle on reimbursement for losses sustained by the Organization during last year's Israeli offensive in Gaza. Martin Nesirky, Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, declined to discuss details of the agreement since it had not yet been finalized.

These would be disclosed when the accord had been concluded and the payment made, he said, adding that there were certain inaccuracies in current press reports on this matter. (UN News Centre)

Haaretz reported that the US was considering the possibility of launching "proximity talks" between Israel and Palestinians. Under the plan, US Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George Mitchell and his staff would meet separately with both parties, present each side's positions to the other and then try to bridge the gaps. PA President Abbas had reportedly told his associates that he opposed the alternative American proposal of issuing a letter guaranteeing that any agreement would be based on the 1967 borders, because the US planned to balance this with a letter giving Israel certain guarantees. (Haaretz)

After meeting with Jordanian Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh in Washington, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told a joint news conference: "We are working with the Israelis, the Palestinian Authority, Jordan, and the Arab States ... to relaunch negotiations as soon as possible and without preconditions, which is in the interests of everyone in the region. The United States believes that through good faith negotiations, the parties can mutually agree on an outcome which ends the conflict and reconciles the Palestinian goal of an independent and viable State based on the 1967 lines with agreed swaps, and the Israeli goal of a Jewish State with secure and recognized borders that reflect subsequent developments and meet Israeli security requirements." Responding to a question, Ms. Clinton also said, "Resolving borders resolves settlements, resolving Jerusalem resolves settlements [...]. We know what a final resolution will have to include: borders, security, Jerusalem, refugees, water." Mr Judeh said: "What we don't need in the region right now is another open-ended process that leaves issues unresolved [...] If you sort out borders [...] then you automatically resolve not only settlements in Jerusalem but you identify the nature on the ground of the two-State solution and how it looks like". (Reuters, www.state.gov)

Israeli authorities announced the closure of all crossings into the Gaza Strip. (Ma'an News Agency)

Egypt declared British parliamentarian George Galloway a persona non grata. The Egyptian Foreign Ministry said in a statement that Mr. Galloway would not be allowed to enter the country again. Mr. Galloway had led more than 500 activists as part of an international aid convoy to Gaza organized by the Britain-based group "Viva Palestina". (Haaretz, www.mfa.gov.eg)

A Palestinian was seriously wounded when the Israeli army fired artillery shells at agricultural land east of the Maghazi refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip, according to Palestinian medical sources. (IMEMC)

Two Qassam rockets, fired from the Gaza Strip, landed in open areas near Sderot. There were no reports of injuries or damage. (Ynetnews)

Three Palestinians were killed and four others injured in an IDF strike east of Deir al-Balah, in the central Gaza Strip, about three hours after Palestinians had fired four mortar shells, all of which had landed inside Gaza. The IDF said that members of a cell planning to launch a rocket or a mortar shell at Israel had been hit. Palestinians confirmed that a cell belonging to Islamic Jihad had been struck in the area. (Ynetnews)

A Palestinian medical official said that two Palestinians had been killed by Israeli artillery at a former settlement site in the northern Gaza Strip. An Israeli military spokesman said that the IDF was not familiar with the incident. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu reminded coalition members that Israel's freeze on construction in settlements in the West Bank was only temporary, saying, "In another eight months, we'll start building again." (Haaretz)

Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal said that his group would deliver to the German mediator its final response to Israel's offer for a prisoner exchange within days. (Haaretz)

A Palestinian sustained moderate wounds when Israeli troops opened fire at his car near Hebron. The Israeli military said that the man had tried to run over the troops. Israeli troops also seized two 14-year-old Palestinian children in the Arroub refugee camp near Hebron and a man in Ramallah. (IMEMC)

A Qassam rocket fired by Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip exploded in Israel's western Negev region. There were no casualties or damage reported in the incident. (Haaretz)

Israeli forces razed 15 structures that had been home to some 150 Palestinians in Khirbet Tana, near Nablus, claiming that they had been built on military training grounds. (Ynetnews)

"We are working with the parties to resume negotiations as soon as possible with a set timetable for their successful conclusion," US Special Envoy George Mitchell told reporters after meeting French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner in Paris. He then continued to Brussels to meet representatives of the Quartet at the envoy level. He was also due to meet Israeli officials, according to the State Department. A spokesman for the European Union in Brussels meanwhile said that the Quartet would meet in Brussels on 13 January to discuss the new US plan to restart peace talks. (AFP, www.state.gov)

A three-year-old Palestinian boy with a heart condition died after the Israeli military had refused to give his family permission to leave the Gaza Strip for medical care.

According to Palestinian health officials, the number of patients who had died because of the Israeli siege had reached 368. (IMEMC)

Victor Toews, President of Canada's Treasury Board, said: "Canada has made a \$300 million commitment over five years to the Palestinian Authority, but we want to put that money only into programmes that are consistent with Canadian values. We are going to focus directing our funds on institution-building in the PA, such as building a proper functioning justice system. We need to ensure that [the PA has] less wide discretion and the funds are being directed to specific projects."

(The Jerusalem Post)

Israeli forces raided the villages of Ni'lin and Bil'in and detained three activists involved with the anti-wall movement. One of them was identified as Ibrahim Amirah, coordinator of the Popular Committee against the wall in Ni'lin. (Ma'an News Agency, Wafa)

Two Hamas operatives died in an accidental explosion in Beit Hanoun, according to Hamas. (AFP, Ynetnews)

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh called on the other armed groups in the Gaza Strip to refrain from firing into Israel. He also promised an investigation into the shooting of an Egyptian soldier at the border. (*Haaretz, Ynetnews*)

A Palestinian was strip searched at the Israeli checkpoint near Jenin before having his vehicle detonated by police. (*IMEMC*)

President Obama's National Security Adviser, Gen. James Jones, would head to the Middle East this week and meet key Saudi, Israeli and Palestinian leaders to discuss the "full range of regional challenges and opportunities at this critical time", his Spokesman, Mike Hammer, said. (*AFP*)

Prime Minister Netanyahu "has not changed his declared stance and insists, in all his political talks, that united Jerusalem will remain under Israeli sovereignty in any peace agreement and that Israel's defence borders will not be [rolled] back to the 1967 lines", *Yediot Ahronot* quoted his statement as saying. "In any peace agreement, Jerusalem will remain the united capital of Israel," the statement added. (*Ma'an News Agency, The Jerusalem Post*)

PA President Abbas told reporters at his headquarters in Ramallah: "We won't agree to resume negotiations without a full settlement freeze, especially in Jerusalem, for a certain period." (*Ynetnews*)

"Egypt has one of two solutions: either two States living side by side, or one State for two peoples," Egypt's Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit said in a TV interview, additionally warning of a third solution which he believed Israel to be planning – the displacement of the Palestinians into Jordan's borders. He said that opening Egypt's Gaza borders indefinitely would signal the recognition of the Hamas regime, in violation of Egypt's agreements with the international community and Israel. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

"We enter 2010 ready and able to support the Palestinian budget," Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre told reporters, after talks with US, EU and French officials in Brussels. "We will make our total annual support to the budget in the coming weeks," said Mr. Støre. "The day there is a resumption of negotiations – the sooner the better – we feel confident in this group that donors once again will rally to the challenge and stand up to support the creation of a Palestinian State." (*AFP*)

The US Administration denied that financial pressure would be used to force Israel to halt its settlement building. State Department Spokesman P.J. Crowley said: "[Special Envoy Mitchell] wasn't signalling [in the Charlie Rose [interview](#) of 6 January] that this is something that we're forecasting in the future [...] but it obviously is something that we have in our toolbox" (*AFP, www.state.gov*)

Responding to a question about the wall being built along the Rafah border in Egypt, Acting Deputy Spokesman for the US State Department Gordon Duguid said: "We have seen that Egypt is carrying out activities which will help stop weapons smuggling into Gaza. We believe that weapons smuggling should stop and that measures taken to stop that weapons smuggling should be – could be carried out." (*www.state.gov*)

At the request of the PA, Islamic scholar Sheikh Muhammad bin Salman Abu Jamea published a fatwa banning Muslims from digging or working in tunnels under the border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Work crews had broken ground on what they hoped would be the first modern, planned Palestinian city, Rawabi, located 30 km north of Jerusalem, which would be home to some 40,000 Palestinians. But the \$500 million project hinged on Israel's approval of a short stretch of access road which would pass within view of a settlement. Palestinians said that Israel had not responded to their requests about the road. (*AP*)

UNRWA said that it had been forced to use mud bricks to build housing because of a continuing Israeli ban on imports of cement and steel. UNRWA media adviser Adnan Abu Hasna insisted that the UN had not given up on plans to replace destroyed concrete homes with new concrete ones. The 120 units of unfired clay brick had been funded by the UAE as a "temporary humanitarian solution", he said. (*Reuters*)

PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad inaugurated the National Dignity Fund aimed at countering products of settlements in the Palestinian market. (*Palestine Press Agency*)

13

Unknown assailants detonated an explosive device in the car of Salameh Al-Ghasseen, leader of the Popular Resistance Committees' military wing, near Jabalya in Gaza. No injuries were reported. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Two Palestinian farmers and a child from Safa in the southern West Bank were reportedly wounded by rubber-coated steel bullets fired by Israeli soldiers. According to witnesses, the incident had happened when villagers were protesting the uprooting of trees and the destruction of farm lands by military bulldozers. (*IMEMC*)

Witnesses reported that Israeli troops closed all military checkpoints in and out of Nablus and erected barriers on several roads leading out of the city. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Residents near the Sufa border crossing in southern Gaza reported that an Israeli military incursion was underway and that forces had entered close to the border and opened artillery fire, while F-16 warplanes were sighted above. An Israeli military spokesperson denied the reports. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A Qassam rocket fired from the northern Gaza Strip exploded in an open area in western Negev causing no damage or injuries. The Ansar al-Sunna organization claimed responsibility for the rocket and for the mortar shell fired earlier that had landed in Palestinian territory. (*Ynetnews*)

Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal told *Al-Arabiya* TV that conditions were ripe for Palestinian national unity. He encouraged Egypt to push for a meeting between Hamas and Fatah, saying the outstanding issues could be "solved in hours." (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Egypt had informed the US that conditions were not right for a tripartite summit between Prime Minister Netanyahu, PA President Abbas and Egyptian President Mubarak, according to an Egyptian source quoted in *Al-Hayat*. (*Haaretz*)

During a meeting in Brussels with officials, including French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner and his Spanish counterpart Miguel Angel Moratinos, representing the EU Presidency, US Special Envoy George Mitchell briefed them on Washington's current efforts to restart Israeli-Palestinian talks. He said nothing about the approach, but underlined that international efforts must be coordinated and concerted to help build Palestinian institutions. (*AFP*)

After having been detained at Ben Gurion Airport, Jared Malsin, *Ma'an News Agency* English edition's chief editor and a US citizen, was ordered to be deported from Israel. (*IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency*)

An agreement was signed between UNRWA and the Palestinian Red Crescent Society to strengthen health care for Palestine refugees in Lebanon, and add to the number of facilities where they could receive treatment. (*The Daily Star*)

14

The IDF arrested 12 Palestinians during operations in the West Bank overnight. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

An Israeli woman was reported to be lightly hurt by stones hurled at her car near the West Bank village of Ni'lin. Two Israeli buses suffered damage. (*The Jerusalem Post, www.idfil*)

IDF soldiers arrested four Palestinians suspected of hurling stones at an Israeli car south of Bethlehem. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

A one-year-old Israeli girl was lightly wounded after the car she was travelling in had been pelted with rocks in the southern Hebron Hills. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Israeli forces installed three temporary military checkpoints around Tulkarm, sealing off the area and preventing some drivers from accessing their homes. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

US National Security Adviser Jim Jones told PA President Abbas in Ramallah that Washington was "trying very hard to find a way to resume the negotiations", Saeb Erakat, Head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), told *Reuters* after the meeting. In an interview with Egypt's *Voice of the Arabs* radio station, PA President Abbas said that he would resist renewed US pressure to resume talks unless Israel fully halted settlement building. (*Reuters*)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu met with Gen. James Jones in his office. Their meeting centered on continued efforts to renew negotiations with the Palestinians, as well as regional affairs. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Palestinian Legislative Council Hamas faction speaker Salah al-Bardawil said that Hamas believed in reconciliation and was ready and willing to sign a unity deal based on the Egyptian vision. "Once Hamas signs the Egyptian paper of reconciliation, we would be ready to sit with them at any table, on any level and in any place," Fatah PLC faction head Azzamel-Ahmad said. (*IMEMC, Xinhua*)

In contravention of a recent decision by the Israeli High Court, Israeli police had for the past three days been prohibiting Palestinian lawyers and relatives of Palestinian detainees from reaching a military tribunal via the Beitunia checkpoint west of Ramallah. Military Judge Arie Durani criticized the police for keeping the

lawyers from adequately representing their clients. (Haaretz)

Israeli settlers took over 25 dunams of Palestinian land using bulldozers in Deir Istiya, west of Nablus, according to the mayor of the village. (Ma'an News Agency)

In a statement issued at the end of its annual visit to Jerusalem, a high-level delegation of Roman Catholic bishops from North America and Europe criticized Israeli policies in East Jerusalem, called for more contacts between ordinary Israelis and Palestinians as well as the establishment of a Palestinian State alongside Israel. (AP, Ynetnews)

Marking the anniversary of Israel's invasion of Gaza, hundreds of children gathered in Gaza City to sign a letter asking that the UN denounce as criminal the Israeli actions that lead to the deaths of their friends and loved ones. The children marched to the headquarters of UNRWA. (Ma'an News Agency)

15

Israeli gunboats opened fire on Gaza fishermen and their boats near the central Gaza Strip, further south near Khan Yunis and again in the Rafah coastal area, dozens of witnesses reported. (Ma'an News Agency)

Egyptian security forces said that they had seized a cache of explosives in northern Sinai after receiving information about goods waiting to be transported into Gaza through the tunnels. (Ma'an News Agency)

A projectile fired from the Gaza Strip landed in an open area in the Ashkelon region. (The Jerusalem Post)

Egyptian security sources said that equipment used to construct the underground border wall in Rafah had come under fire, prompting a US delegation to cancel a visit to the site. (Ma'an News Agency)

Egyptian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Hossam Zaki said that Egypt was working to create some common ground between the Palestinians and Israel for a resumption of talks in the near future, based on the US vision for a final settlement, according to a MENA report. (Xinhua)

In its latest Protection of Civilians Weekly Report, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) noted a serious escalation in violence in Gaza, with seven Palestinians killed by Israeli air strikes. Also, 24 others had been injured by Israeli forces throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Meanwhile, the death toll from H1N1 had reached 19. (www.ochaopt.org)

Hamas official Ziad Ath-Thatha called on Arab and Islamic nations to deal directly with the Palestinians rather than with Israel over the opening of the Rafah crossing. "The amounts of industrial fuel and cooking gas allowed into Gaza do not cover half of what Gazans need," he said, and urged Egypt to look for a way to ensure Rafah was able to transport goods and fuel into Gaza. (Ma'an News Agency)

Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal urged Egypt to stop building an underground wall along its border with Gaza, which he said would further choke the impoverished enclave. At the same time, Izzeddin Musa, Head of the Society for Humanitarian Support of Palestinians in Germany, criticized Berlin's role in helping Egypt to build the wall, which he said violated international law. (AFP, IRNA)

Settlers inhabiting the "Maon" outpost on Mount Hebron descended into the valley and uprooted an estimated 70 olive trees. (Ma'an News Agency)

The PA Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs had filed an appeal to the Israeli High Court demanding that it void a decision to deport 15 Palestinian detainees who had already served their terms and were supposed to be sent back home. (IMEMC)

Amnesty International welcomed the release from detention of Palestinian human rights activist Mohammed Othman, held without trial since September 2009, but expressed concern that the Israeli authorities had imposed conditions that would prevent him from continuing his campaign against the separation wall. (www.amnestyusa.org)

16

Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal warned Israel against further strikes on the Gaza Strip, stating that Gaza would not be defeated but would instead turn Israel into a "cemetery". (The Jerusalem Post)

An IDF soldier was lightly wounded by stones hurled during an anti-wall protest in Ni'lin by some 150 Palestinians. (The Jerusalem Post)

Witnesses said that Israeli tanks operating near the northern Gaza border had been targeting civilian properties with heavy artillery fire the previous night. (Ma'an News Agency)

Palestinians hurled rocks and a firebomb, damaging an Israeli vehicle traveling near "Zufin" [settlement]. (www.idf.il)

Israeli troops closed the Qalqilya-Azzun road and were seen searching areas east of Qalqilya. (Ma'an News Agency)

Asharq Al-Awsat cited unnamed French official sources as saying that US Special Envoy George Mitchell would not be carrying any US guarantees to PA President Abbas during his upcoming visit. (The Jerusalem Post, Ynetnews)

PA officials denied reports in the Israeli media that the EU had linked the continuation of its financial aid to the Palestinians with progress in the peace process. (Xinhua)

Jordan's Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh said that "Jordan rejects all Israeli measures that threaten the Holy Sites in East Jerusalem that always receives continued Hashemite support," and stressed that such measures undermined peacemaking efforts. (Xinhua)

Hamas leader Osama Hamdan said that prisoner swap negotiations with Israel were still ongoing. (Ma'an News Agency)

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Witnesses said that the Israeli navy had opened fire at and detained a number of Palestinian fishermen, and impounded two boats off the coast of Gaza. (IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency)

PA President Abbas urged Washington to declare an "endgame" to resolve the Middle East conflict if Israel did not agree to halt settlement growth. (Palestine Media Centre, Wafa)

Members of Fatah Central Committee had been quoted as saying that PA President Abbas would not meet with Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal until Hamas signed the Egyptian reconciliation document. (Ma'an News Agency)

More than 100 Israeli security officers raided the West Bank settlement of "Yizhar," arresting 10 settlers, including five allegedly involved in burning down a nearby Palestinian mosque the previous month. (Haaretz)

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The IDF said that three handmade explosive devices had been discovered during an operation in Nablus and that several Palestinians suspected of planning a terrorist attack had been arrested. (www.idf.il)

An Israeli was lightly injured as stones were hurled at his vehicle near Ni'lin. (www.idf.il, Ynetnews)

Four Palestinians were detained by the Israeli military during a raid in Ni'lin, allegedly because of their involvement in the weekly protests against the wall. The IDF reported that 12 Palestinians had been arrested in the West Bank overnight. (IMEMC, www.idf.il)

Hamas and Islamic Jihad held a meeting in Gaza City to discuss recent developments in Palestinian politics and the Egyptian-sponsored reconciliation document. (Ma'an News Agency)

The Ramallah-based Al-Ayyam daily reported that Fatah planned to hold municipal elections in the West Bank and contacts were being held among PLO factions to run in the elections under a united list. The report added that the polls were likely to start in June. (Xinhua)

Israeli authorities had opened the Kerem Shalom and Karni crossings to allow the transfer of aid, limited quantities of domestic gas and industrial diesel fuel, as well as restricted amounts of goods for export, Palestinian border crossing official Raed Fattouh said. (Ma'an News Agency)

A Palestinian Authority representative met with Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre at an orphanage near the Mount of Olives in East Jerusalem. It was the first meeting of the PA with a foreign diplomat in East Jerusalem since the closing of Orient House in 2001. PA President Abbas had earlier met with Mr. Støre in Ramallah. At a meeting of the Quartet members on 13 January, the EU and Russia had proposed asking Israel to reopen Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem. (*Haaretz*)

According to a [statement](#) by Norway's Foreign Ministry, Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre said, "Norway is concerned about developments in East Jerusalem. The Palestinian population is subject to ever-increasing pressure. [...] The status of Jerusalem must be resolved to ensure lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians, and this can only be achieved through negotiations." "Evictions, demolitions, the separation barrier and the ongoing establishment of new settlements are changing the demographics and geography of East Jerusalem, and thus also the basis for a negotiated solution. [...] I am concerned that these changes, which have accelerated in recent months, will make it more difficult to get new, genuine negotiations off the ground," Mr. Støre added. The Foreign Ministry said Norway considered the Israeli presence in East Jerusalem to be in violation of international law. (www.regjeringen.no)

Sheikh Tayseer Tamimi, chief Islamic judge for the PA, warned that the Al-Aqsa Mosque suffered from cracks in the walls as a result of Israel's excavations below it. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Eleven Palestinian human rights organizations sent identical letters to PA President Abbas and Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, urging the PA and Hamas to endorse the Goldstone report by investigating alleged Palestinian violations of international law committed during "Operation Cast Lead". At the same time, former Israeli High Court Justice Aharon Barak advised the Israeli Attorney General Menachem Mazuz to form an official Government committee to probe Israel's war on Gaza. (*Haaretz*, *IMEMC*)

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Israeli forces detained 10 Palestinians in the West Bank overnight. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Local sources reported that Israeli tanks stationed at the southern Israeli-Gaza borders had shelled homes located in the eastern part of Rafah, causing a panic. A number of homes had sustained damage, but no injuries had been reported. (*IMEMC*)

The Lebanese Government reiterated its call for Palestinian groups outside refugee camps to disarm. "Lebanese sovereignty is not open to negotiation," Information Minister Tareq Mitri said after a Cabinet meeting. (*AFP*)

Fatah Spokesman Jamal Nazzari said Fatah's Revolutionary Council would form a committee to plan the return of legitimacy to the Gaza Strip. The committee would comprise members of the Fatah Central and Revolutionary Councils and would work on supporting people in Gaza and implementing a policy to "end the coup Government." (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Responding to a call to return to negotiations by Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, Saeb Erakat, Head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO, said that Mr. Netanyahu must withdraw his terms and implement the Road Map before talks could resume. Mr. Erakat made his pronouncement during a meeting with EU Envoy Marc Otte, Piero Fassino, Middle East Rapporteur of the Council of Europe, and UN Special Coordinator Robert Serry. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A Vatican document blamed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the occupation for fomenting most of the conflicts in the Middle East, driving Christians out and making life difficult for those who remained. (*AP*)

The fourth session of the Arab Parliamentary Union's Executive Committee concluded in Muscat. The Committee had decided to coordinate a visit by its members to Gaza. (*Oman News Agency*)

Jordanian Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh held talks with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov on the need to intensify efforts to launch serious and effective peace talks to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. (*The Jordan Times*)

US Special Envoy George Mitchell arrived in Beirut at the beginning of a new regional tour aimed at restarting Middle East peace talks. He stressed to Lebanese officials that the US would not support the forced naturalization of Palestinians in Lebanon. His tour would also take him to Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Syria. (*AFP*)

Egypt had told several Arab States that it was refusing to receive Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal until Hamas signed the Egyptian proposal for reconciliation with Fatah, a Kuwaiti newspaper reported. (www.albawaba.com)

PA Prime Minister Fayyad and EU Representative Christian Berger signed a €158.5 million financing agreement, including in support of the Palestinian Authority's recurrent expenditure for 2010. Mr. Berger said, "Support can only be sustained if there is a clear indication that a Palestinian State will be established in a foreseeable future. [...] Sustaining such a high level of support for a long period of time without reaching the goal will lead to questions, particularly from taxpayers." (*DPA, WAFA*)

Israeli bulldozers, in the presence of Israeli troops, demolished a home in the village of Jab'a, south-east of Ramallah. The home was demolished because the roof had been constructed out of aluminium, which required an Israeli permit. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli security forces dismantled a caravan set up in the "Aloh Moreh" settlement. This was the first time a structure built contravening the 10-month settlement freeze had been razed. (*Haaretz*)

Israel's Civil Administration of the West Bank destroyed three unauthorized makeshift structures that settlers had erected to protest the 10-month moratorium on new housing starts. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The IDF said that it had dishonourably discharged a soldier for waving a banner at a ceremony protesting the Army's demolition of a West Bank settler outpost. (*AP*)

UNRWA announced the launch of its 2010 [emergency appeal](#), allocating \$73,049,589 for the West Bank and \$249,587,143 for the Gaza Strip. (www.unrwa.org)

The Mideast Press Club had succeeded in bringing together Palestinian and Israeli journalists for a meeting at the Knesset. The event, which could be a prelude to Palestinian journalists receiving permission to report from the Knesset, was hosted by the Chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, with the full cooperation of the Knesset Speaker. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Adalah-NY, CodePink: Women for Peace and Jewish Voice for Peace said that Israel must end a wave of arrests of Palestinian civil society members organizing protests and boycotts opposing Israeli rights violations. (*WAFA*)

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Militants in the Gaza Strip fired a Qassam rocket at Israel. There were no reports of injury or damage. (*Ynetnews*)

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told a news conference: "The [Palestinian] ability to proliferate into contiguous areas thousands of rockets and missiles [...] is something that creates a monumental security problem. [...] In the case of the future settlement with the Palestinians, this will require an Israeli presence on the eastern side of the prospective Palestinian State," he said, refusing to elaborate on the nature of such a presence. (*AFP*)

Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal renewed his call to meet with PA President Abbas to achieve reconciliation, Saudi media reported. Mr. Abbas had rejected an invitation by Kuwait's Foreign Minister to host a meeting with Mr. Mashaal before the Egyptian document was ratified by Hamas. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu told the foreign media that Palestinians rejecting US calls for peace negotiations "have climbed up a tree. And they like it up there. People bring ladders to them. We bring ladders to them. The higher the ladder, the higher they climb." (*Reuters*)

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh said, during an interview with *Al-Quds TV*, that he had requested an urgent meeting with Egyptian leaders to address the recent crisis in relations between Hamas and Egypt. He described the underground wall under construction on the Egypt-Gaza border as "harmful", tightening the siege on Gaza, affecting Palestinian-Egyptian relations, and violating international human rights law. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

UN agencies and the Association of International Development Agencies (AIDA), representing over 80 NGOs, [highlighted](#) the health impact of the continuing blockade on Gaza. They again called on Israel to relax its tight control of the Gaza Strip's borders to allow in a sufficient supply of essential items and access to care not available in the enclave. UN Humanitarian Coordinator Max Gaylard said that the blockade undermined the local health-care system and put lives at risk. (*Reuters*, www.ochaopt.org)

Officials in the offices of both the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) Minister Bev Oda and Canada's Treasury Board President Vic Toews confirmed that Canada's \$15 million contribution to UNRWA would now be spent specifically on food security instead of supplementing UNRWA's general fund. (www.embassymag.ca)

Two medical delegates, from France and Switzerland, had arrived in Gaza to perform orthopaedic, neurological and plastic surgeries. (IMEMC)

Cold weather had boosted demand for domestic fuel, used to power space heaters in the Gaza Strip, creating a shortage and bringing a humanitarian crisis closer to reality, fuel officials said. (Ma'an News Agency)

The Israeli Interior Ministry had stopped granting work permits to foreign nationals working in most international NGOs operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Ministry was now granting them tourist visas only, which barred them from working in Israel and East Jerusalem. The organizations feared the new policy would impede their ability to work in "Area C" of the West Bank and subject them to movement restrictions imposed on the Palestinians. (Haaretz)

Israeli settlers vandalized a Muslim cemetery in Awarta village, south-east of Nablus, officials said. (BBC)

EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process Marc Otte said that Israel's partial settlement freeze was a first step in the right direction, but "not sufficient". He made the statement after his meeting with Arab League Secretary-General Amre Moussa in Cairo. He also ruled EU sanctions against Israel at that time. (Xinhua)

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak had decided to move ahead with plans to transform a college in the settlement of "Ariel" into a university, Israeli officials said. (AFP)

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak reportedly transmitted a message to Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal during Mr. Barak's recent trip to Turkey, saying that Israel would take steps to improve conditions in Gaza if the group freed captured IDF soldier Gilad Shalit. (The Jerusalem Post)

Heavy rain and flooding had forced hundreds of people from their homes in Khan Younis, in the south of the Gaza Strip, according to Gaza authorities. (IRIN)

The PA was pushing Israel to agree to a total construction freeze, including East Jerusalem, of between three to six months, something senior Israeli officials said Prime Minister Netanyahu would not agree to. (The Jerusalem Post)

According to a World Health Organization [Gaza Health Fact Sheet](#), many patients had had their applications for exit permits denied or delayed by the Israeli authorities. Twenty-seven had died while waiting for referral since the beginning of 2008. Clinical staff frequently lacked medical equipment, which was broken, missing spare parts or out of date. Up to 30 per cent of 480 essential drugs were out of stock in 2008. (www.ochaopt.org)

Israeli authorities deported a US journalist who was working as an editor for Ma'an News Agency. Jared Malsin, who was Jewish and in his late 20s, had been detained at Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion airport the previous week. (The Guardian)

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed [Filippo Grandi](#) of Italy as UNRWA's new Commissioner-General, effective 20 January 2010. He also appointed [Margot B. Ellis](#) (United States) as Mr. Grandi's Deputy. (UN press releases SG/A/1215, SG/A/1216)

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Residents of Silwan in East Jerusalem threw stones at Israeli Science and Technology Minister Daniel Hershkowitz and his entourage during their visit there. No injuries had been reported. The Border Police made a number of arrests. (Ynetnews)

Saeb Erakat, Head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO, said: "Benjamin Netanyahu has said no to a settlement freeze, no to sharing Jerusalem, no to the 1967 borders, no to the rights of Palestinian refugees. Now he wants to retain the Jordan Valley [...] Israel is sabotaging the two-State solution and imposing a de facto one-State solution, or bi-national State," Mr. Erakat concluded. (www.nad-plo.org)

US Special Envoy George Mitchell met with Israel's President Shimon Peres. Mr. Mitchell said he was aware of the obstacles on the road to peace between Israel and the Palestinians, and that the Obama Administration intended to work to solve the difficulties. The US Envoy also met with Defense Minister Ehud Barak and Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman. He was scheduled to hold talks with Prime Minister Netanyahu later before meeting PA President Abbas on 22 January. (AFP, Ynetnews)

PLC Speaker Abdel-Aziz Dweik denied reports by Israeli media that he had said Israel had a right to exist. (UPI)

The Spanish EU Presidency pledged to make every effort to ensure that Middle East peace negotiations resumed "as soon as possible". (AFP)

The PA denied reports that it had asked the US to represent the Palestinians in peace negotiations with Israel. (Xinhua)

During a political workshop held in Gaza City, Gaza-based Fatah lawmaker Faisal Abu Shahla said that elections should be held in June, adding "according to the law, after 25 January, all of us will be illegal". Ahmed Yousef, an aide to Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, said: "If we continue our endless rift and division, the Palestinian people will live under occupation forever." However, he insisted that Egypt had to take Hamas' notes on the reconciliation pact into consideration and Hamas would never accept holding the elections before reaching a reconciliation agreement. (Xinhua)

OCHA released its Protection of Civilians weekly [report](#). It noted that Israeli forces had injured 15 Palestinians in the West Bank during that week and that access restrictions to fishing areas continued in Gaza. (www.ochaopt.org)

Plans to demolish [all] houses in East Jerusalem had been put on hold to avoid having to tear down a building used by settlers, *Israel Army Radio* said. Deputy Mayor David Hadari told the station it was the only building in which Jews resided among 117 under demolition orders. Municipal councillor Meir Margalit said, "One can only welcome a measure that [also] postpones the demolition of Arab homes." (AFP)

A lawyer of the Palestinian Prisoners Society visited a number of sick detainees imprisoned by Israel and stated that there was an increasing number of detainees who needed medical attention but were deprived from this internationally guaranteed right. (IMEMC)

The Tel Aviv District Court ordered the State of Israel to disclose documents related to its Gaza access policies within 30 days or explain why it had refused to do so. Gisha, the Legal Centre for Freedom of Movement, had filed the relevant petition under the Freedom of Information Act. (Wafa)

An indictment was filed at an Israeli court against two Palestinian youths from East Jerusalem, for allegedly planning to attack Israeli soldiers at the Qalandiya terminal. (IMEMC)

The 2010 session of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was opened on 21 January. At the meeting, a [statement](#) was made by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The Committee elected members of the Bureau of the Committee: Ambassador Paul Badji of Senegal as Chairman, Ambassador Zahir Tanin of Afghanistan and Ambassador Pedro Núñez Mosquera of Cuba as Vice-Chairmen, and Ambassador Saviour F. Borg of Malta as Rapporteur. The Committee also adopted its programme of work as contained in document [A/AC.183/2010/CRP.1](#). (Division for Palestinian Rights, UN News Centre)

NGOs should be allowed to "carry out their missions in the Palestinian territories," French Foreign Ministry's Spokesman Bernard Valero said when asked about limitations on work visas that Israel imposed on foreign NGOs. (Ynetnews)

22

Israeli security forces arrested three West Bank Palestinians suspected of involvement with terrorist activity, including the son of prominent peace activist Khaled Abu-Awwad, General Manager of the Israeli-Palestinian Bereaved Families Forum. (Haaretz)

Palestinian sources reported that three people protesting the takeover of a local village's land by settlers near Ramallah had been injured by rubber bullets fired by the IDF. (Ynetnews)

Some 170 Palestinians, Israelis and foreign nationals protested near Bil'in against the wall. Seventy people protested in the village of Ni'lin, some hurling stones. There had been no reports of injuries or damage in either case. (Ynetnews)

US Special Envoy George Mitchell told Palestinian leaders that they must resume talks with Israel if they wanted the US help to achieve a peace treaty that would end the Israeli occupation and create a Palestinian State. Saeb Erakat, Head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO, said that Mr. Mitchell had told

President Abbas that returning to the negotiating table was paramount. Mr. Abbas had continued his insistence that an Israeli settlement freeze should come before negotiations. (*Reuters*)

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that Moscow was continuing its contacts with Hamas, which it considered vital. "Only a united Palestine can ensure proper conditions for the talks that I hope [PA President] Mahmoud Abbas will eventually resume with Israel", he said. He further added that Moscow was suggesting a [Quartet] meeting at the ministerial level on peace talks between Israel and Palestinians. (*Ma'an News Agency, RIA-Novosti*)

In a *Time* magazine interview following his first year in office, US President Obama said, "What we did this year [to revive negotiations] didn't produce the kind of breakthrough that we wanted, and if we had anticipated some of these political problems on both sides earlier, we might not have raised expectations as high."

"Both sides — the Israelis and the Palestinians — have found that the political environment, the nature of their coalitions or the divisions within their societies, were such that it was very hard for them to start engaging in a meaningful conversation," said Mr. Obama. (*Time*)

The head of the Palestinian Consumer Protection Program in the West Bank stated that several Israeli factories had been pumping and burying their toxins in several areas in the West Bank. (*IMEMC*)

Israeli police arrested six demonstrators in Sheikh Jarrah [in East Jerusalem], dispersing 300 left-wing activists marching against what they called the "Jewish takeover" of the Arab neighbourhood. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

"I ask Libyan leader Muammar Al-Qadhafi to add to the agenda of the Arab League Summit in Tripoli the issue of the reconstruction of Gaza and the end of the blockade," Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal said in Damascus. (*IMEMC*)

The Palestinian leadership had received US pledges ensuring the provision of construction materials and basic needs for Gaza residents, Saeb Erakat, Head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO, said, following a meeting with US Special Envoy Mitchell. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Prime Minister Netanyahu reaffirmed his commitment to the continued building of settlement blocks of "Ariel", "Ma'aleh Adumim" and "Gush Etzion" when he called them an indisputable part of Israel, during a visit to the settlements. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Israel's Defence Ministry admitted that, in the "Kiryat Netafim" settlement, in the northern West Bank, the construction of 15 houses had proceeded, contrary to an interim order issued by the High Court of Justice. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Israeli right-wing activists planned to plant 15,000 trees in the West Bank on the holiday of Tu B'Shvat, which would be celebrated during the weekend. A representative said, "We have a method of bypassing the [settlement] freeze orders. [...] This is how we can take hold of vast areas in Judea and Samaria [West Bank]. Obama's satellite can't pick up the trees and in the future homes will be built near them" (*Ynetnews*)

The human rights group Yesh Din had demanded that the Israeli police indict four settlers who had been filmed attacking Bedouins in the West Bank in the summer of 2008. The police had closed the cases against the suspects, despite a police camera having documented them in action. (*Haaretz*)

The Israeli army was preparing to open Route 443 to Palestinian traffic, in keeping with last month's High Court of Justice ruling that barring Palestinians from using the highway, which linked the coast with North and East Jerusalem, had been disproportionate to security needs. (*Haaretz*)

Israel had paid the United Nations some \$10.5 million in damages after its assault on the Gaza Strip last year, UN officials said today. (*AFP*)

According to *Der Spiegel*, a prisoner swap deal with Hamas was about to collapse due to the Israeli refusal to sign the agreement they themselves had negotiated.

Instead, the Israeli Prime Minister presented a completely new ultimatum and demanded that the Palestinian negotiators signed it on the spot without any consultations. Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal said that Mr. Netanyahu was "responsible for the failure" to clinch the deal. (*AFP, IMEMC*)

The IDF ordered an investigation into the desecration of Palestinian tombstones at the West Bank village of Awarta. The complaint had been filed by human rights organization B'Tselem. (*Ynetnews*)

A new tourist guide for visitors to Nablus was launched by Project Hope, an NGO based there. The initiative, available from www.nablusguide.com, was the first city guide for Nablus produced locally. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

23

Israeli forces detained three Palestinian journalists, in separate incidents across the West Bank, as they compiled news reports on settlements. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Islamic Jihad said that its militants had tried without success to capture an IDF soldier. (*Haaretz*)

If Hamas were to ratify the Egyptian agreement, elections could be held on 28 June 2010. "This is an important and last chance," PA President's Spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeineh said in an interview with the *Ma'an Radio Network*. Negotiations with Israel, he said, would remain stalled if Mr. Netanyahu did not commit to a settlement construction standstill, including East Jerusalem. "We will not accept a single Israeli soldier on Palestinian territories [under a peace agreement]," he added. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Libya had joined forces ahead of a proposed Arab League Summit in Libya in February to pressure Arab camps as well as Palestinian factions into unity, member of the politburo of the Palestine People's Party Walid Al-Awad said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak approved the establishment of a financial mechanism by which NIS 2 million would be transferred monthly to the PA, to be distributed to about 900 Gazans eligible to receive Israeli pensions and national insurance payments, bypassing Hamas. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Palestinian medical sources reported that two Palestinian youths had been wounded by Israeli military fire as soldiers attacked local residents defending themselves from fundamentalist settlers near Nablus. (*IMEMC*)

A female left-wing activist and a settler sustained light wounds after stones had been hurled during a clash near "Kiryat Arba". (*Ynetnews*)

24

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said, in a speech broadcast live on state TV: "Fortifications and construction on our eastern borders are a pure Egyptian sovereign act. [...] We won't allow chaos on our borders nor will we allow acts of terrorism and sabotage to take place on our lands." (*SABA, Xinhua*)

Palestinians threw a firebomb at an Israeli vehicle travelling south-east of Qalqilya and hurled stones at a bus south-west of Bethlehem. There were no reports of injury. (*Ynetnews*)

Palestinian Legislative Council Speaker Abdel-Aziz Dweik announced that the body would continue working "as usual", until new elections were held. Hamas cited the Basic Law as saying that the Council's mandate ended only when its new members were sworn in. It called for a special session to be held on 27 January.

Fatah argued that the PLC's four-year term legally ended on 25 January. It maintained that only President Abbas could call for a session. (*Haaretz, Ynetnews*)

US Special Envoy George Mitchell shuttled between Jerusalem and Amman where he met Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas. "President [Abbas] has told Mitchell that the Palestinian leadership and the Palestinian people are devoted to the peace process on the basis of clear principles that include the complete halt of settlement activities," his Spokesman, Nabil Abu Rudeineh, said after the meeting. Earlier in Jerusalem, Mr. Netanyahu had said that the US envoy had presented "new ideas" about how to relaunch the peace process, without elaborating. Vice-Prime Minister Silvan Shalom said that it was "time to say clearly and unequivocally that there will be no further concessions from Israel for the launching of negotiations". Later in the day, Mr. Mitchell flew to Cairo for a two-day visit during which he would meet officials, Egypt's *MENA* reported without elaborating. (*AFP, RIA Novosti*)

Yemen's Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Saleh Ba-Surrah discussed with the Palestinian Ambassador Basim al-Agha the situation of Palestinian students in Yemen. The meeting projected the provision by Yemen of 200 annual scholarships for Palestinian students. (*SABA*)

In a speech to the extraordinary meeting of the Arab Media Ministers Council in Cairo, Secretary-General of the Arab League Amre Moussa hailed the suggestion of Yemen to launch an Arab media campaign to oppose the Israeli plans to efface Jerusalem's Arab identity and damage the Islamic and Christian holy sites in the city. (*SABA*)

25

Nine Palestinians had been detained across the West Bank overnight, an Israeli military spokesman confirmed. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The PA was reported to be studying a proposal by US Special Envoy George Mitchell for lower-level talks with Israel. According to *Haaretz*, Palestinians cited confidence-building measures, including transfer of authority, as issues that could be discussed, while Israeli political sources spoke of talks at a ministerial or lower level that would look at narrowing differences over "core issues" in the suspended peace negotiations. An aide to President Abbas, Nimr Hamad, said that Mr. Abbas had set two conditions for the resumption of talks, namely that Israel should commit to a genuine settlement freeze, even for a limited time, and that negotiations be based on the establishment of a Palestinian State on the 1967 borders. (*Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency, The Jerusalem Post*)

During a Labour Party meeting, Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak expressed the belief that peace talks would resume in the next month or two. Speaking at a conference in Tel Aviv later, the Minister was quoted as saying that the lack of defined boundaries [of] Israel was a greater threat to the country than "an Iranian

bomb". (*The Jerusalem Post*)

A senior PA official in Ramallah condemned initiatives by some EU citizens and officials to talk to Hamas, accusing them of "ignoring the fact that Hamas had staged a coup in the Gaza Strip", and undermining efforts to achieve reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah. "Those who are trying to legitimize Hamas are harming the PA and any chance of achieving peace with Israel," he said. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

IMEMC reported that following a decision by the EU to stop buying fuel for the Gaza power plant, it was likely to shut down by next weekend. (*IMEMC*)

The IDF reported that 68 humanitarian aid trucks and a supply of fuel were scheduled to cross into the Gaza Strip, and 105 humanitarian aid trucks and a supply of fuel and natural gas were scheduled to cross into the Gaza Strip the next day. (*www.idf.il*)

A *Haaretz* probe revealed that while the number of checkpoints in the West Bank with a consistent IDF presence had indeed dropped, as claimed by the Israeli Government, more roadblocks with only sporadic supervision had been positioned. According to Palestinians, the unmanned roadblocks created severe traffic jams. (*Haaretz*)

It was reported that a fact-finding mission had been launched to investigate Israeli practices in Bil'in, including a recent escalation of repression against anti-wall activists. Palestinian political leaders and 11 European diplomats had responded to the invitation to learn more about the ongoing arrests of human rights defenders active against the wall. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh declared 2010 "the year of the detainees" and called for an international conference in Gaza to discuss the issue. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Knesset approved a bill that would expunge the criminal records of 400 out of 482 Israelis who had been detained during demonstrations against Israel's disengagement from the Gaza Strip in 2005. Most of the convicted were teenagers and had already completed their sentences. (*Haaretz*)

PA President Abbas announced that he had decided to establish a panel of inquiry, headed by former Palestinian Supreme Court President Isa Abu Sharar, to respond to the findings of the Goldstone report. (*Haaretz, The Jerusalem Post*)

UNRWA's Director of Operations in Gaza John Ging told a news conference in Geneva that the Israeli Government continued to block UNRWA's efforts to import construction materials necessary to rebuild schools and homes in the Gaza Strip. He said that the blockade, which amounted to collective punishment, had prompted the collapse of the private sector and created unprecedented unemployment, poverty and food insecurity. (*United Nations Radio*)

26

Two Palestinians were arrested overnight in the West Bank. (*www.idf.il*)

A bus belonging to the Israeli company Egged was hit with stones while travelling near "Karnel" settlement in the West Bank. No injuries were reported but the bus sustained damage. (*Ynetnews*)

Palestinian parliamentary sources had indicated that President Abbas was preparing to issue a decree postponing elections until an understanding had been reached.

The decree would replace the previous decree issued in November 2009, which called for elections in January 2010. (*Palestine Press Agency*)

"Unfortunately, a formula that will break the current deadlock has yet to be found," PA President Abbas said during a meeting with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev in Sochi, adding that PA cooperation with Israel was "normal" in such areas as security and the economy. He said that he would also like to address the internal Palestinian situation with the Russian President, among other things. Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that Mr. Abbas had "welcomed our initiative to hold a Quartet meeting as early as next month," to focus on the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. (*RIA-Novosti*)

Following a meeting with British Shadow Minister of State and Conservative MP David Lidington in Ramallah, Fatah Central Committee member Nabil Sha'ath said that peace talks with the current Israeli administration were doubtful on account of its "stubbornness, procrastination, refusal to respond to the requirements of peace and to recognize East Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian State". (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Sameh Habeeb, Spokesperson for the Palestinian Return Centre in London, said that the buildings damaged in the Gaza Strip after "Operation Cast Lead" showed signs of contamination with hazardous depleted uranium and similar types of weapons. He criticized the UN, saying the organization had avoided proper measures to clean the contaminated areas, calling on it to launch a probe into the type of weapons used by Israel in Gaza. (*The Palestine Telegraph*)

PA official Ghassan Daghlal stated that the Israeli military had issued orders demanding that the construction of a mosque and warehouses in Burin village south of Nablus be halted. (*Ma'an News Agency, Palestine Press Agency, Wafa*)

Around 15 settlers attacked Palestinians in the village of Al-Tuwani near Hebron. The settlers were accompanied by Israeli soldiers in three jeeps and the "Ma'on" settlement security agent. (*Wafa*)

Dozens of armed settlers invaded the village of Beit Illu, north of Ramallah, ransacking one home before setting fire to a car, according to local residents. The IDF did not attempt to stop the attack or force the perpetrators out of the village. (*IMEMC*)

The windshields of several Palestinian vehicles were smashed near the settlement of "Nahaliel". Earlier in the day, Israeli forces had destroyed an unauthorized structure in the "Givat Menachem" outpost near the settlement. (*Ynetnews*)

The Shin Bet arrested Rabbi Itzik Shapira, the head of a yeshiva in the settlement of "Yizhar" for his alleged involvement in the torching of a Palestinian mosque in the village of Yusuf last month. (*Haaretz*)

Following a meeting with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Israeli Minister of Information and Diaspora Affairs Yuli Edelstein said that Israel had "no intention of creating a verification commission" as called for in the Goldstone report. (*AFP*)

The European Campaign to End the Siege on Gaza said that the EU should sanction Israel for refusing Belgian Development Minister Charles Michel access to Gaza.

Arafat Shoukri, Chair of the Campaign, said that he would submit a statement to the EU in support of Mr. Michel's proposal for such sanctions. (*The Palestine Telegraph*)

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Fifteen Palestinian civilians were detained by Israeli troops during predawn military raids targeting Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah and nearby villages. The IDF claimed that those detained were on its "wanted list" and added that all 15 men had been taken to military detention camps for questioning. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Speaking with French Prime Minister François Fillon in Paris, PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad stressed his efforts to build the institutions of a Palestinian State, and asked France to urge the international community to ensure that Israel honoured its international obligations. Following his meeting in Paris, Mr. Fayyad would meet High Representative of the [European] Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton, French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner, Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre, Quartet Representative Tony Blair, and Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Quoting a senior Palestinian official, *Al-Hayat* newspaper said that the US Special Envoy George Mitchell had offered shuttle [diplomacy] between Israel and the PA. Mr. Mitchell suggested to the partners that his trips would also include Syria and Lebanon and that he would hold discussions on a possible regional peace agreement. (*Ynetnews*)

The American Task Force on Palestine (ATFP) formally welcomed a letter sent by 54 members of Congress to the administration urging immediate action to ease humanitarian suffering in Gaza. The dear colleague letter was circulated in Congress by Representatives Jim McDermott (D-WA) and Keith Ellison (D-MN) and supported by ATFP along with numerous other organizations. (*www.american taskforce.org*)

Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero told Jordan's King Abdullah II that, in the Middle East at present, the necessary conditions existed to "take a definitive step toward peace, [an opportunity] which cannot be wasted." (*Latin American Herald Tribune*)

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak met with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Sharm el-Sheikh to discuss ways of restarting Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

The two also discussed the stalled negotiations over Gilad Shalit, as well as the situation along the Gaza border. (*Haaretz*)

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak called on Palestinians to "seize" the opportunity to resume peace talks. Mr. Barak told reporters in Sharm el-Sheikh after talks with President Hosni Mubarak that Israel had already made the "unprecedented" move of partially freezing settlement building on Palestinian territory. (*AFP*)

The Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Amr Moussa, told a panel on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos: "We cannot just continue to raise the flag of two States living next to each other in peace. [...] If this does not materialize, we'll have to resort and soon to another area, a different area, which is one state for Israelis and Palestinians." (*AP*)

Intervention by the PA would see 200,000 litres of fuel pumped for the Gaza power plant by the following day, staving off the threat of blackouts. (*Ma'an News*)

Agency)

The Mohammed Bin Rashed Al Maktoum Charity and Humanitarian Foundation had donated AED 1 million [approximately \$272,000] worth of medical equipment to the Gaza Eye Hospital. (*WAM Emirates News Agency*)

Yediot Ahronot reported that prisoner exchange negotiations would resume as early as next week with Egyptian, German, and possibly French, mediation. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Danske Bank and the Pensioner Bank decided to withdraw all investments from two Israeli companies, Elbit and Magal Security Systems, for their role in constructing the separation wall. The two Danish banks also decided to divest from the Africa-Israel Company, owned by Lev Leviev, for its role in financing the construction of settlements and the wall. The decisions were taken upon Israel's announced intention to begin new construction of the wall west of Ramallah, which would annex more Palestinian land in order to expand the settlement of "Modi'in Illit". (*IMEMC*)

Hamas official Muhammad Faraj Al-Ghoul announced that testimonies of families whose sons allegedly had their organs harvested by Israel had begun. "We intend to prepare a complete legal file to be used in suits against the Israeli Government in international courts," he told reporters in Gaza. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

With Israeli-Palestinian negotiations at an "extremely worrying impasse", due largely to simmering tensions and frequent protests in East Jerusalem, ongoing deprivation in the Gaza Strip, and an uptick in militant rocket fire into Israel, Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, warned the Security Council that the effort to forge a viable Middle East peace was seriously at risk. "We remain deeply concerned at the current stalemate," he said during his open [briefing](#) to the Council on the situation in the Middle East. Some 43 delegations participated in the day-long debate, which was also attended by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Riyadh Mansour, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, opened the day-long debate by asking, "How can the world's conscience bear to continue witnessing the suffocation and deprivation of an entire people?" (www.un.org)

The Israeli human rights group B'Tselem requested that Maj. Gen. Avichai Mandelblit investigate the execution-style deaths of three men in Nablus on 26 December, a [report](#) from the group said. (www.btselem.org, *Ma'an News Agency*)

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Israeli tanks shelled areas east of Gaza City. Damage to homes was reported but no injuries. (*IMEMC*)

Six Palestinians were detained by Israeli troops during raids in the West Bank. (*IMEMC*)

IDF checkpoints were installed around Nablus as Israeli forces raided buildings and detained two teens. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Daniel Ayalon met with Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico as part of Israel's efforts to form a "moral majority" against the Goldstone report which would be brought for debate at the United Nations. (*Ynetnews*)

The Kerem Shalom crossing would be opened to allow 95 truckloads of humanitarian aid and commercial goods into Gaza, as well as two trucks of industrial fuel for the Gaza power plant. The extra industrial fuel would come a day after Gaza's fuel crisis had reached a peak. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The UAE Red Crescent Society said that a convoy of 40 trucks carrying 700 tonnes of humanitarian assistance was due to arrive in Gaza. (*Emirates News Agency*)

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) signed agreements with seven well-known international NGOs that would implement nine recovery projects in Gaza at a total cost of \$14.7 million. These projects moved USAID assistance beyond humanitarian distributions and began to help Gazans rebuild their lives. (*ReliefWeb*)

PA President Abbas declared that Palestinians would not accept any alternative to Jerusalem as the capital of a future State. He told Russian television that Jerusalem should not be divided and that there should be free passage for people of various faiths. (*Haaretz*)

Israel's State Prosecutor Moshe Lador sent a letter to Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat, instructing him to comply immediately with the evacuation order for "Beit Yonatan", which housed Israeli families in the Silwan neighbourhood of East Jerusalem. (*Ynetnews*)

The Jerusalem Magistrate's Court released from custody three teenaged settlers who had been arrested for allegedly torching a West Bank mosque. (*Haaretz*)

In what organizers were calling "the highest profile arrest of the recent wave of repression against West Bank popular struggle [against the wall]", Israeli forces detained Popular Committee member Mohammed Khatib from the village of Bil'in. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Robert Serry expressed his disappointment that Israel had not permitted materials in to complete stalled UN projects in Gaza. (*BBC*)

The Palestinian Ministry of Information said in a report that the total number of Palestinian and Arab prisoners in Israeli jails was about 7,500. They were living under very harsh conditions in more than 23 prisons and detention centres, according to the report. Since 1967, some 760,000 Palestinians and Arabs had been arrested, including about 13,000 women and nearly 25,000 children. (*Wafa*)

The Arab Group had started talks for submitting a draft Security Council resolution on the demarcation of the future Palestinian State based on the 1967 borders, Saeb Erakat, Head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO, said. (*Xinhua*)

Human Rights Watch (HRW) said that Hamas' contention that it aimed its hundreds of rockets at Israeli military targets and only accidentally harmed civilians was contradicted by the facts. Researcher Bill van Esveld said that most of the rockets hit civilian areas, suggesting Hamas deliberately targeted civilians. He said that their actions amounted to war crimes. (*AP*)

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A Palestinian fisherman was seriously injured when Israeli navy ships fired on a cluster of small fishing boats near Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

About 20 residents of the village of Nabi Salah in the West Bank were injured during a demonstration, which was directed mainly at the "Halamish" settlement, which occupied the village's farmland and primary water source. Most of those injured were children not participating in the protest. They were tear gassed and fired upon with rubber bullets as they sought shelter in a nearby house. (*The Palestine Monitor*)

The Breaking the Silence organization released a booklet of testimonies by female Israeli soldiers recounting various abuse cases involving Palestinians in the West Bank. Stories included systematic humiliation of Palestinians, reckless and cruel violence, theft, killing of innocent people and cover-ups. (*Ynetnews*)

Egyptian authorities shut down a smuggling tunnel, police said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown met PA President Abbas and said that his Government would continue to do everything to make progress towards a lasting peace settlement. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

During a tree-planting ceremony in the "Ariel" settlement, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said, "Ariel, the capital of Samaria [the northern West Bank], will be an integral, inseparable part of the State of Israel in any future agreement." (*Haaretz*)

Haaretz reported that Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu agreed to the release of hundreds of Fatah prisoners as part of efforts backed by the United States and Egypt to jump start peace talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Under the plan, Israel would also embark on low-level negotiations with US mediation. (*Haaretz*)

Israeli settlers began an illegal squat in a Palestinian home in the Old City of Jerusalem following a court order expelling the elderly Palestinian occupant and granting settlers partial access to the building. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak said, "This morning we handed the UN a report of the investigations and operations that took place during Operation Cast Lead.

This report stresses that the IDF is like no other army, both from a moral standpoint as well as from a professional standpoint. The Goldstone report is a distorted, false and irresponsible report." In the 46-page response, Israeli authorities admitted some "operational lapses and errors in the exercise of discretion".

But they strongly denied allegations of war crimes. (*The Guardian*, *Haaretz*)

Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, Riyadh Mansour, submitted to the UN his Government's preliminary report on the Gaza war last year, in response to a [General Assembly request](#), and expressed hope that Hamas would cooperate with the experts who would conduct the proper investigation in the Gaza Strip. (*Kuwait News Agency*)

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King Abdullah II of Jordan stated that the whole world would pay the price of a failed peace between Israel and the Palestinians, and added that his country would not accept any role as an occupying power in Palestine. (*IMEMC*)

Israeli forces prohibited local farmers from the village of Safa, near Hebron, accompanied by international and Israeli solidarity groups from accessing their land. They were told that the area was now a closed military zone, witnesses reported. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Prime Minister Netanyahu had made concerted efforts to persuade Defense Minister Ehud Barak to accept an [outside] investigation into civilian deaths during Israel's three-week Gaza offensive a year ago, senior aides on his staff said. But Mr. Barak and IDF Chief of General Staff Gabi Ashkenazi had refused to yield authority to investigators from outside the defence establishment, officials said. (*Haaretz*)

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IDF troops arrested six "wanted" Palestinians in West Bank operations overnight. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Following the lifting of a gag order, it was revealed that Israeli security forces had last month arrested two Hamas militants suspected of plotting attacks against civilian targets across Israel. (*Haaretz*)

Israeli officials said that a Hamas commander [Mahmoud al-Mabhouh] assassinated in Dubai had played a central role in smuggling weapons from Iran to Gaza militants. But they refused to say whether Israel was responsible for killing the man it had sought for two decades. (*AP*)

An Israeli truck driver was shot and moderately injured by Israeli soldiers guarding the Qalandiya checkpoint when he refused to slow down. An investigation revealed that he had been trying to escape stone-throwing Palestinians. (*Ynetnews*)

A 40-year old Israeli woman was arrested on suspicion that she had attempted to smuggle 10 Palestinians into Israel. (*Ynetnews*)

Egypt uncovered three tunnels used for smuggling motorcycles, cars, tools and paint into the Gaza Strip. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

PA President Abbas said that Israel's continued colonization of the West Bank was leading to a one-State solution, and called for a three-month settlement freeze to resume direct peace talks, British media reported. (*Ma'an News Agency, The Guardian*)

If PA President Abbas gave his approval, the "proximity" talks that US Special Envoy George Mitchell would mediate, would start with a basic question – how each side perceived a two-State solution – then move from there, EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process Marc Otte told *The Jerusalem Post* .

(*The Jerusalem Post*)

Syrian Prime Minister Mohammad Naji Ottri reviewed in Damascus with Archbishop Hilarion Capucci Israel's crimes against the Palestinian people. (*Syrian Arab News Agency*)

The PA Ministry of Agriculture said in a statement that shortages of fuel and natural gas were leading to a food crisis in the Gaza Strip. (*The Palestine Telegraph*)

The IDF planned to reoccupy an abandoned military base near Bethlehem, security sources said, in a move certain to please settlers seeking to establish themselves in the district. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A senior Hamas official, in an interview with *Al-Hayat* said that the head of Hamas' military wing in Gaza, Ahmed Jabari, "will not agree to a Shalit deal if Palestinian prisoner Ahlam al-Tamimi is not included on the list of prisoners to be freed." The official stated that the negotiations had failed due to Israel's refusal to free nine Palestinians sentenced to life imprisonment. (*Al-Hayat, The Jerusalem Post*)
