

Division for Palestinian Rights
Chronological Review of Events Relating to the
Question of Palestine
MONTHLY MEDIA MONITORING REVIEW
October 2005

Monthly highlights

- Amidst growing violence, Israel arrests hundreds, restricts movement in the West Bank. ([15](#), [17 October](#))
- PA President Abbas meets US President Bush at the White House. ([20 October](#))
- Secretary-General states extra-judicial killings are not consistent with international law. ([28 October](#))

1

A homemade pipe bomb went off outside the office of Palestinian Police Chief Ala Husni as his convoy left the area, but no one was injured, according to Palestinian Authority (PA) Interior Ministry spokesman Tawfiq Abu Khoussa. The attack came two days after Mr. Husni had vowed to put an end to public displays of weapons on streets in the Gaza Strip. (AP)

Final results of the local elections conducted in the West Bank on 29 September were released. The head of the Palestinian Higher Commission for Local Elections, Jamal Al-Shoubaki, said Fatah had won in 51 of 104 municipalities and Hamas in 13, where they would be able to establish administrations without forming coalitions. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine won 55 of 1,018 seats, the Democratic Front 13, the Popular Party 18 and independents 28. The turnout was 84 per cent, and the number of eligible voters was estimated to be 144,000. Mr. Al-Shoubaki also said that the Israeli army had arrested 17 candidates since 25 September leading up to the elections. (AFP, International Press Centre (IPC))

The European Union (EU) Special Envoy for the Middle East Peace Process Marc Otte met with PA President Mahmoud Abbas in Gaza City. Mr. Otte said that the purpose of his visit was to inform President Abbas of the Union's plan to increase its aid to the Palestinian people. On settlement activities in the West Bank, Mr. Otte said, "Our position is clear, and we have reiterated our position. And according to international law, the settlement activities are illegal, and we agree with the Quartet committee members that settlements must stop and the military outposts must be removed." (IPC, WAFA)

2

Security officials said Israel had suspended its offensive in the Gaza Strip following a lull in rocket attacks by Palestinian militants, but that it was ready to continue the operation if the attacks resumed. (AFP, AP)

Israeli troops shot and wounded in the leg a 17-year-old Palestinian who had attempted to stab them with a knife at the Beit Farouk checkpoint outside Nablus. The soldiers were not wounded. (Ha'aretz, The Jerusalem Post)

A Palestinian policeman and two civilians were killed and at least 50 wounded during clashes between the PA police and Hamas members in Gaza City. The main clashes erupted when a police patrol operating in the Sheikh Redwan neighbourhood had stopped a car carrying four armed Hamas members and tried to confiscate their weapons. One of the men was Mohammed Rantissi, son of a Hamas leader assassinated by Israel in 2004.

The Hamas men opened fire and the ensuing confrontation sparked gun battles all over the neighbourhood. Later, the clashes spread to the Shati refugee camp, where the policeman was killed. The Hamas members also torched the Shati police station and several police cars. In a separate incident, a Palestinian driver was killed after he attacked a PA policeman during a demonstration called by Hamas in Gaza City to protest against soaring gas prices. (Ha'aretz)

The Israeli military opened an investigation into an incident in which a 13-year-old Palestinian had been killed by Israeli gun fire during a military raid in the Askar refugee camp in Nablus on 30 September 2005. (www.idf.il)

In a telephone conversation, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and PA President Mahmoud Abbas exchanged wishes for the upcoming Jewish New Year and the observance of the month of Ramadan and agreed to meet soon in order to enhance cooperation between them. An Israeli political source said the meeting would take place before Mr. Abbas' trip to Washington on 20 October. (International Press Centre, www.pmo.gov.il)

In a report submitted at its three-day assembly in Cairo, the Arab Labour Organization stated that Israeli practices during the previous three years had caused the Palestinian economy losses estimated at \$14 billion. (IPC)

3

Israeli soldiers seriously wounded a Palestinian child in the head with a live bullet during a raid into Tubas, in the northern West Bank, according to medical sources. (Wafa)

The Israeli military had detained 40 members of Hamas and Islamic Jihad in the West Bank overnight, an army spokesman said. Nearly 500 suspected militants have been detained in the West Bank by Israel since 25 September 2005. (AFP)

The Israeli army imposed a full closure on the West Bank as Israelis prepared for the Jewish New Year, which had begun later in the day. (Ha'aretz)

Dozens of armed policemen burst into the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) building in Gaza City to protest against spiralling insecurity in the Gaza Strip. Hundreds of other police fired into the air outside the building, as Council members linked up, via videophone, with their colleagues at the main building in Ramallah for a debate on the security situation. (AFP, AP, Reuters)

The Palestinian Legislative Council voted to ask PA President Abbas to reshuffle his Cabinet within two weeks. The legislators voted after a nine-member committee had presented a special report on the deteriorating security situation, which stated that Palestinian police had done little to control the chaos in the streets of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. (AFP, AP)

Palestinian public prosecutor Ahmed Malghany said that the blast that had killed 17 people during a Hamas parade in the Gaza Strip on 23 September had been caused by the explosion of local arms, not by an outside party. (UPI)

In a press release, the Council of the European Union issued its conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process. The Council "welcomed the successful conclusion of the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the northern West Bank." It expressed "concern at the renewed violence in Israel and the Occupied Territories" and emphasized the "importance of Palestinian security sector reform and of the co-ordination of international efforts in this regard." It also emphasized "the EU's commitment to continued and enhanced support to Palestinian civil policing through the EU Co-ordination Office for Palestinian Police Support." (www.ue.eu.int/Newsroom)

4

A Palestinian woman brandishing a knife stabbed and wounded an Israeli female soldier at a checkpoint outside Nablus in the West Bank, before other soldiers shot and killed her. Israeli troops had barred Palestinians from entering Israel from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip during the Rosh Hashanah holiday, which had started a day earlier. (AP, Ha'aretz, Wafa)

Representatives of Palestinian groups and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) met in Damascus. Farouk Kaddoumi, Secretary-General of Fatah, said leaders of Palestinian groups had agreed that dialogue should be the only way to solve their disputes. He then listed at a press conference the decisions taken at the meeting, including the leaders' agreement to "call on all Palestinian powers and factions to ban the use of weapons to solve internal differences," and to "refrain from all forms of political and media provocations that could harm the interests of our people and their national unity". At the same conference, Khaled Mashaal, Hamas political bureau chief, rejected a call for the disarming of Hamas by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, made on 30 September, and said his group had the right to simultaneously pursue a policy of armed struggle and political activism, including participation in Palestinian Authority elections, as long as occupation continued. (Ha'aretz, The Jerusalem Post)

5

A Palestinian teenager tried to stab an Israeli soldier at a checkpoint outside Nablus, the army and witnesses said. Other soldiers at the checkpoint opened fire at the youth, wounding him lightly. (AP)

Palestinians opened fire at an Israeli army post south of Nablus, causing no injuries or damage. Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades claimed responsibility, saying that the attack was part of a series of responses to the killing of two Brigades members in Nablus on 30 September 2005. (Ynet)

For the second day, Israeli bulldozers continued to raze for the second day vast areas of arable land in the southern Gaza Strip town of Abassan, destroying agricultural land and preventing owners from reaching their land. (Wafa)

A security official said that the Egyptian army had started building a border crossing at the junction of the Egyptian, Israeli and Gaza borders, opposite the new Kerem Shalom crossing facility in Israel. The construction would be completed in 90 days, the official said. Egypt intended to use the crossing for commercial trucks delivering goods to the Gaza Strip and Israel, and would later discuss other issues, such as the passage of people. (AP)

PA Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia and his cabinet were set to resign the following week, with Mr. Qureia's successor to be designated by PA President Abbas, the Palestinian newspaper *Al-Ayyam* reported. Mr. Abbas had been asked to form an interim government within two weeks to impose law and order and prepare parliamentary elections for January 2006. (Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA))

The IDF closed Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi (Tomb of the Patriarchs) in Hebron, preventing worshippers from praying for six days during the month of Ramadan. Sheikh Hijazi Abu Sneineh, chief custodian of the mosque, said the IDF had decided to close the mosque to ensure security for settlers during the Jewish New Year celebrations. (IPC)

The office of King Abdullah II of Jordan said in a statement that Prime Minister Sharon and PA President Abbas would meet on 11 October to revive Middle East peace efforts. An Israeli official said Mr. Sharon's Special Advisor, Dov Weissglas, would meet with PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat on Friday 7 October, to try to arrange a summit, possibly on Tuesday 11 October. (AFP, AP)

EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner presented a proposal to member State Governments that put in place a strategy for EU support in the creation of a Palestinian State. The proposal focused on reforms of the Palestinian Authority, boosting the rule of law and getting the economy going. It also included ideas on how to get the Palestinians integrated into the regional economy, reduce dependence on Israel and the diversification of markets. The Commissioner told a news conference that the EU would boost aid to help rebuild the Gaza Strip, but only if there was progress in a Middle East peace plan and if other donors also increased aid. (www.europa.eu.int, Reuters)

The Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, Riyad H. Mansour, [presented](#) his letter of appointment to the Secretary-General. Mr. Mansour had previously served as Deputy Permanent Observer from 1983 to 1994. At a [meeting](#) of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People later that day, Mr. Mansour said he believed that United Nations mandates, regularly presented for adoption by member States at the General Assembly, should not be subject to review by the Secretariat, since the mere presentation of mandates and programmes on an annual or biannual basis to the General Assembly represented a serious review by member States and an endorsement of the mandate as presented in the resolutions. He said that this was definitely the case with regard to mandates and programmes relating to the question of Palestine. (www.un.org/news, UN press releases BIO/3704 and GA/PAL/992)

6

Masked gunmen shot and critically injured a senior Palestinian security officer, Bassam Azam, in front of his house in Gaza City. Mr. Azam was a deputy of Moussa Arafat, the former military advisor to PA President Abbas, who was assassinated by gunmen on 6 September 2005. (DPA, Ha'aretz)

The High Court of Justice of Israel, in response to petitions filed three years ago by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel and the Adalah human rights organization, ruled that the IDF practice of using Palestinian civilians as "human shields" violated international law. Chief Justice Aharon Barak said, "You cannot exploit the civilian population for the army's military needs, and you cannot force them to collaborate with the army. ... Based on this principle, we rule it illegal to use civilians as human shields, and we also rule it illegal to use civilians to pass military warnings from the army to those the army wants to arrest." (AFP, AP, Ha'aretz)

The Israeli Housing Ministry prepared plans to erect 1,400 new housing units in Jerusalem that would annex land that had not been part of the city and would expand settlements. Some of the land was located to the north, including hundreds of dunums east of the "Neve Yacov" and "Geva Binyamin" ["Adam"] settlements. (Ha'aretz)

PA President Abbas stated that he would present a number of demands to Prime Minister Sharon during their meeting scheduled for next week in Jerusalem. Mr. Abbas told reporters that "one of the first issues I will ask for is the implementation of the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings, in addition to issues related to halting settlements and the separation barrier and the Judaization of Jerusalem." He added that implementing the understandings meant the release of prisoners and deportees, and withdrawal from West Bank towns and cities. According to sources, other issues would include opening the Rafah crossing, with a link between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and operating the Gaza Strip airport. Israel would in turn demand that the Palestinians put a halt to terror and would express its opposition to allowing Hamas to participate in the Palestinian parliamentary elections. (Xinhua)

The Middle East Quartet's Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement James Wolfensohn returned to the region and planned to hold individual meetings with PA President Abbas, Israel's Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz and Special Advisor to Prime Minister Sharon Dov Weissglas. He also planned to meet with Vice Premier Shimon Peres and PA Prime Minister Qureia in the coming days. Mr. Wolfensohn was expected to discuss the operations of the border crossing between Egypt and the Gaza Strip and Kerem Shalom between the Gaza Strip and Israel. (Ha'aretz)

7

PA security forces went door-to-door in the town of Yatta, near Hebron, and arrested 30 suspected criminals in efforts to strengthen law and order in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. More than 200 policemen participated in the raid. Hebron area Police Chief Ahmed Rabai said, "This campaign was ordered by political leaders to enforce law and order and to bring justice to normal Palestinians and make the Palestinian people feel safe. This campaign will continue not only in Yatta town, but also in other villages and in the city of Hebron itself." (AFP, AP)

PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat and Special Advisor to Prime Minister Sharon Dov Weissglas met for more than two hours in Tel Aviv to iron out the details of the Abbas-Sharon Summit tentatively scheduled for next week, possibly in the presence of King Abdullah of Jordan. According to sources, there was a "real chance" that the King would attend the summit. The two sides also agreed on the establishment of two teams to formalize the arrangements for the Rafah crossing between Egypt and the southern Gaza Strip. The crossing would be jointly run by Israel and the PA, with supervision by EU inspectors and surveillance systems that would convey information to the Israeli side. Israel Radio also reported that the IDF planned to recommend that Israel approve the transfer of light weapons and ammunition to PA security forces. (BBC News, Ha'aretz, Reuters)

A study, to be conducted by the World Bank, will examine options for linking the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Initiated by the Bank, it will be financed by the United States. The World Bank supported building a transit passage between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank in the form of a sunken road, but Prime Minister Sharon favoured a rail link because managing security would be easier. The study will examine transit options, such as a multi-lane road crossing Israel in a deep trench, an elevated road and a rail link between the Beit Hanoun (Erez) checkpoint with the northern Gaza Strip and the Tarqumiya checkpoint near Hebron. The PA will be responsible for the passage, according to the plans. (Ha'aretz)

8

PA President Abbas laid the cornerstone for a \$100 million housing project on the site of the evacuated settlement of "Morag" in the Gaza Strip. The work was due to start the next day in the Sheikh Khalifa neighbourhood, named after Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, who was financing the project. The project was expected to provide housing to 25,000 Palestinians. (AP)

Palestinian militant groups denounced inter-factional kidnappings and violence by signing a covenant of honour among them. In a statement, eight factions, including Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades said, "We announce all of the military wings are united in their position and faith and that we consider any attack on any one of us as an attack on us all". (Reuters)

Israel and the Palestinians are moving toward an agreement on new security arrangements for Gaza's border with Egypt, Israeli and Palestinian officials said. Under a proposal by James Wolfensohn, the Middle East Quartet's Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement, Palestinian travelers and exports leaving Gaza would go through Rafah, with foreign inspectors supervising the traffic. Incoming goods would be rerouted through

Kerem Shalom, an Israeli-run inspection point on the meeting point of Gaza, Egypt and Israel. Mr. Wolfensohn briefed PA President Abbas on the negotiations held the previous day and told him that Israel had agreed in principle to the presence of European inspectors, a Palestinian official who participated in the talks said. Mr. Wolfensohn told Mr. Abbas he hoped to wrap up a Rafah deal by the end of the holy month of Ramadan in early November, the Palestinian official added. (AP)

Aides to Prime Minister Sharon and PA President Abbas met to prepare for a planned summit this week, tentatively scheduled for 11 October. PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat and Prime Minister Sharon's Special Advisor Dov Weissglas met in Jerusalem, where the former described the discussions as "positive and in-depth". (Reuters)

9

The Israeli army said Palestinians opened fire at its post near a checkpoint in Beit Iba, west of Nablus, causing no injuries or damage. Also, Palestinians fired two mortar shells at an Israeli army base north of the "Kissufim" crossing between Israel and the southern Gaza Strip. (www.idf.il)

An Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades militant was killed in a clash with Israeli troops north of Nablus, the army and Palestinians said. The IDF found an M-16 rifle and ammunition on the dead man. (AP)

Israel's Defence Minister Mofaz opposed further handovers of Palestinian towns and the supply of Palestinian security forces with new weapons. The rejection of the two key Palestinian demands came in the context of a preparatory meeting for the upcoming summit between Prime Minister Sharon and PA President Abbas on 11 October. Prime Minister Sharon told his Cabinet he was not sure that the summit would take place, stressed that he would not threaten Israel's security, and said, "There are gestures that Israel can and will make, and there are gestures that it won't".

(AP)

Israel reopened the Al-Muntar (Karni) crossing at its border with the Gaza Strip. (AP)

Jibril Rajoub, national security advisor to PA President Abbas, denied Israel's Foreign Minister Sylvan Shalom's remarks the previous day that arms were being smuggled from Egypt into the Gaza Strip. He said that the Palestinian Authority had completely controlled the chaos that prevailed on the borders between Egypt and the Gaza Strip. Mr. Rajoub added that there was active Egyptian-Palestinian cooperation to prevent and face different smuggling issues, and that available data indicated that smuggling had decreased to zero. (*Xinhua*)

Egyptian ministers discussed ways of developing the Palestinian economy with visiting Middle East Quartet's Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement James Wolfensohn. Egypt's Minister of Industry and Foreign Trade Rashid Mohammed Rashid and Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit stressed that Egypt was doing its utmost to bring peace to the Middle East. Mr. Wolfensohn said the Quartet intended to provide all necessary means to back and vitalize the Palestinian economy. He said, "We will facilitate the movement of Palestinian people and goods and set up a number of industrial zones, as well as a direct route between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, to serve the Palestinian trade movement". (*Xinhua*)

PA President Abbas said that the PA was still deliberating over the formation of a new cabinet. Samir Huleilah, the Secretary-General of the Palestinian Cabinet, said in a broadcast message that PA Prime Minister Qureia was carrying out consultations with various parties to form a new Palestinian cabinet. Mr. Huleilah said, "Consultations have been starting with various parties of the PLO Executive Committee, the Council of Minister and the Legislative Council. An understanding is going to be clinched in a few days to clear up the crisis". (*International Press Centre*)

The Turkish Government provided the PA with a copy of the Ottoman archive containing documents pertaining to land ownership in pre-Mandatory Palestine through 1916. The PA had requested the records to support Palestinian land claims. (*Ha'aretz*)

10

Palestinians opened fire at an Israeli army base near Ramallah, causing damage. There were no injuries. (*Ha'aretz*)

Israeli soldiers shot dead three Palestinian teenagers near the southern Israel-Gaza border, Palestinian medics said. The Israeli army said troops had shot at three Palestinians crawling near the Gaza border fence after ignoring warnings to stop. The three bodies were discovered near the Kissufim crossing and taken to a hospital. Palestinians medics said that no weapons had been found on them. (*AFP, Reuters*)

A Palestinian security officer and two militants were wounded in a gunfight in Gaza City. Witnesses said Palestinian security forces had tried to stop a car carrying militants from the Popular Resistance Committees. When they refused to pull over, the security officers opened fire at the militants. One militant had been arrested, a security source said. (*Reuters*)

Israel's Shin Beth security agency said it had recently uncovered three networks of Hamas' military wing, suspected of being responsible for a series of terrorist attacks that had killed 5 and wounded 70 Israelis. The Shin Beth arrested 117 members of the Hamas networks, which the agency said were based in the Ramallah area, north of Hebron and south-west of Hebron. (*Ha'aretz, The Jerusalem Post*)

Israelis and Palestinians had confirmed the postponement of the summit between Prime Minister Sharon and PA President Abbas, expected to be held on 11 October, due to insufficient progress during talks aimed at laying the groundwork, according to Nabil Abu Rudeineh, a PA spokesman. A statement by Mr. Sharon's office said it was now hoped that a summit would take place after PA President Abbas returned from talks with US President Bush on 20 October. In the interim, joint committees would try to agree on some of the key issues that were being discussed. (*AFP*)

Following a series of meetings of the Israeli-Palestinian Steering Committee, headed by Prime Minister Sharon's Special Advisor Dov Weissglas and PA Chief Negotiator Erakat, the two sides issued a [joint statement](#). According to the statement, it was decided to resume the work of the joint security committee, fugitive and deportee committee, and prisoners committee. Other issues discussed during the meetings included the Rafah border crossing, the movement of people and goods between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and between the Palestinian territories and Israel, the status of the areas in the northern West Bank from which Israel had withdrawn, and the Gaza airport. (www.pmo.gov.il)

PA President Abbas and US Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs David Welch met in Ramallah to discuss Mr. Abbas' upcoming meeting with President Bush and US aid to the Palestinian Authority, as well as the deteriorating security situation in the Gaza Strip. After the meeting, Mr. Welch told reporters that the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians remained at the top of US foreign agenda, adding, "We will continue supporting both sides in the future, and James Wolfensohn will go on helping them." (*Al-Bawaba, International Press Centre*)

The Land Research Center of the Association of Arab Studies reported that the Israeli authorities had torn down 100 houses in Jerusalem since the beginning of the year. The report also stated that Israeli forces continued oppressive and punitive measures inside Hebron's Old City in an attempt to drive out Palestinian residents and bring in Israeli settlers. (*International Press Centre*)

11

The IDF arrested a 14-year-old Palestinian boy from Nablus suspected of preparing to carry out a suicide bombing. Troops also detained a Fatah member near the settlement of "Ariel." In Hebron, there was an exchange of fire as troops pursued a Hamas member. (*Ha'aretz*)

The Israeli army arrested overnight 20 members of Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Fatah and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in the West Bank. (*Ha'aretz*)

The Rafah border crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt had been temporarily reopened to enable hundreds of Palestinians to make a pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia. Salim Abu Saffiyeh, the official with responsibility for border security, said the terminal would remain open for 48 hours. The crossing had also been opened to those needing medical treatment and Palestinians who were originally from Gaza but lived abroad. (*AFP*)

Prime Minister Sharon said he would continue with steps towards peace with the Palestinians, but only if they did their part first, while ruling out new initiatives. "We have nothing new to invent. We have a plan the Cabinet accepted, the [Road Map](#) that can be implemented if the Palestinians do their part. I definitely plan to continue this," Mr. Sharon said. Earlier, PA Chief Negotiator Erakat said that the Palestinians were committed to the Road Map and expected Israel to carry out its obligations, including the halt to the construction of West Bank settlements and removal of unauthorized "outposts" there. (*AP*)

Israel's Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz instructed senior IDF officers to ask the High Court of Justice to re-examine its recent ruling banning the army's use of Palestinians as "human shields." Mr. Mofaz said he would appear in Court to present his arguments, which in his view justified continuing the use of "human shields." (*AP, Ha'aretz*)

During a meeting in Ramallah, the Fatah Central Committee rejected a US request to form a Palestinian Government in the Gaza Strip, official sources close to Fatah said. The US had proposed that the Palestinians form a cabinet in the Gaza Strip, which had its premier and ministers from the Gaza Strip and offices for each portfolio in the West Bank. (*Xinhua*)

The World Bank's Director for the West Bank and Gaza, Nigel Roberts, said the international community would invest some \$750 million in the Gaza Strip in the coming months in order to create large numbers of jobs and jump-start an economic recovery. While some of the aid would go to the West Bank, a vast amount was expected to be spent in the Gaza Strip by the end of the year on projects such as renovating a main north-south highway, improving water resources and new housing. (*AP*)

A Bir Zeit University poll showed the rising popularity of PA President Abbas. The poll gave Fatah a 45.6 per cent rating in support for legislative elections compared to 23.1 per cent for Hamas. Support for Fatah was slightly higher in the West Bank at 47.4 per cent, while Hamas' rating was higher in the Gaza Strip. A total of 1,200 persons from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were questioned for the survey, which had a 3 per cent margin of error. (*AFP*)

Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Human Rights Defenders Hina Jilani said Israel was creating conditions in the OPT that obstructed the work of human rights workers, placing them at "grave risk." Restrictions, such as its West Bank barrier and military checkpoints, meant that field workers faced "daily harassment, intimidation and humiliation," she said. She also said that the PA had committed violations against human rights workers who had exposed abuses of power. (AP, Ha'aretz, Reuters)

At a press briefing in Paris, Russia's Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov said representatives from the Russian Defence and Interior Ministries were in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to provide assistance to Palestinian security and police forces, with the consent of Israel. (www.Interfax.com)

12

Palestinian organizations reached an agreement to guarantee the holding of upcoming parliamentary elections in a good atmosphere. Organizations, including Fatah and Hamas, had agreed to abide by the electoral law when participating in elections slated for 25 January 2006, and had promised that there would be no disturbances during the election process. (Xinhua)

The PA urged Israel to release prisoners who had served more than 20 years of imprisonment. Sources said the PA presented to Israel a list of 20 Palestinian prisoners, including Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti. A survey showed that Fatah would secure its strongest showing in the parliamentary elections should Mr. Barghouti lead the list of Fatah candidates. (AFP, Xinhua)

PA President Qureia said the special committee that led the investigation into the death of Yasser Arafat had failed to determine the cause of his death. The committee would publish the results today, along with a report by the French doctors who treated Mr. Arafat. Mr. Qureia said the file would remain open for further investigation. (AP)

In Ramallah, PA President Abbas met with Alexander Kalugin, Russian Federation's Special Middle East Envoy to the Peace Process. Mr. Abbas and Mr. Kalugin discussed the latest political developments in the OPT after the Israeli withdrawal and a number of economic projects that would be launched in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. (Wafa)

In Hebron, the IDF arrested 47-year-old Ibrahim Ighnimat, a senior Hamas member who had allegedly been on the run for eight years and connected to a 1997 suicide bombing that had killed three Israelis, the army said. Meanwhile, in Dahariya, southwest of Hebron, a gun battle erupted after the IDF surrounded a house to arrest Haitham Battat, a wanted Hamas member. Mr. Battat had been wanted in connection with a suicide bombing in Beersheba in May 2005. (AP)

13

Palestinian sources in Tubas, north of the West Bank, said that the IDF razed large tracts of Palestinian lands. The IDF had also closed the Al-Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron. (Wafa)

"The Cabinet decided to hold the fourth round of the local elections on 15 December in 44 [West Bank] constituencies," PA Prime Minister Qureia's Chief of Staff told *Palestinian Radio*. He said the voting would include Ramallah, Jenin, Nablus and Hebron. A senior Fatah official told *AFP* that elections in another 65 West Bank municipalities would be held on a date yet to be announced. No date had been set for the final round of voting in the Gaza Strip, a decision which was condemned by Hamas. (AFP, BBC)

A new Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) project, funded by the European Commission, would provide the PA with updated information on poor households and groups in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the causes of their food insecurity, the FAO [announced](#).

An FAO assessment conducted in 2003 had found that food insecurity was a reality for 40 per cent of the Palestinians and a near constant threat for an additional 30 per cent. (www.fao.org)

14

IDF troops had arrested three Palestinians during an incursion into Ramallah, Palestinian sources said. (UPI)

Some 50 Palestinian, Israeli and foreign protesters took part in a weekly demonstration against the separation wall in the West Bank village of Bil'in.

Five were arrested. (Ha'aretz)

Sixty-eight per cent of Israelis polled by *Ma'ariv* said they were against a new round of pull-outs from the West Bank without a permanent status agreement, while 28 per cent were in favour. (AFP)

PA President Abbas would embark on a five-nation tour on 15 October, which would culminate in a summit with President Bush on 20 October, PA officials said. In addition to the United States, Mr. Abbas would be visiting Jordan, Egypt, France, the Vatican and Spain. (AFP, International Press Centre)

A total of 219 Palestinians had died in internal violence so far this year, compared with 218 killed by Israeli forces, the PA announced. (Ha'aretz)

Israel's Vice Premier Peres and PA Chief Negotiator Erakat met in Tel Aviv to discuss security and customs arrangements on the Gaza Strip-Egypt border. Listing the points of dispute, Mr. Erakat said, "There is the issue of goods leaving Rafah from Gaza, the issue of the security procedures on the passages, the role of the third party. All the issues are doable." (AP)

A PA report said that Israeli forces had killed five Palestinians, wounded 11, and committed 460 other ceasefire violations between 4 October and 10 October. (International Press Centre)

15

The IDF stormed the village of Beit Reema near Ramallah and arrested three Palestinians, witnesses and security sources reported. (Xinhua)

PA Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Information Nabil Sha'ath said that Israel was proving day after day that it was not a real peace partner for the Palestinians. (Xinhua)

Hamas denied media reports that some Hamas leaders in the West Bank wanted to postpone the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) elections because of recent arrests by Israel of hundreds of Hamas political cadres there. (Xinhua)

PA Chief Negotiator Erakat, following a meeting with Israel's Vice Premier Peres in Tel Aviv, said, "We are very close to reaching an agreement in principle to operate the crossing of Rafah by both Egypt and the Palestinians." (Xinhua)

A number of Russian police officers had arrived in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank to train PA police and security forces, the PA Ministry of Interior said in a statement. (Xinhua)

16

Palestinian militants driving by the "Gush Etzion" settlement in the West Bank opened fire at a bus stop, killing three settlers and wounding six others.

In another drive-by shooting shortly afterwards, near the settlement of "Eli" in the northern West Bank, one Israeli was seriously wounded. Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades claimed responsibility. PA Chief Negotiator Erakat told *Voice of Palestine* radio, "These acts will threaten the hand-over of West Bank cities to the Palestinians, the removal of checkpoints and closures in the West Bank and the deportees' return," Mr. Erakat stressed. (AP, Ha'aretz, Xinhua)

Settlers from the "Elon Moreh" settlement near the northern West Bank city of Nablus set ablaze 70 dunums of olive groves and wheat fields belonging to Palestinian farmers, local residents said. (AFP)

Khaled Al-Batsh, a senior official of Islamic Jihad, vowed to avenge the Israeli killing of one of its members, Nihad Abu Ghanem, in Burqin village near Jenin, earlier in the day. A Palestinian bystander had been seriously wounded in the incident. (AP, Xinhua)

The PA Ministry of Interior announced that PA security forces had foiled 17 armed attacks against Israel in September, adding that 75 roadside bombs had been destroyed. The PA forces had also confiscated 15 Qassam rockets and foiled seven attempts of weapon smuggling from Egypt into the Gaza Strip, and discovered two related tunnels. (*Ha'aretz, Xinhua*)

King Abdullah II of Jordan promised PA President Abbas to continue rallying international support for Middle East peacemaking and offered help to re-establish control over Palestinian lands relinquished by Israel, following their meeting in Amman. "There was a turning point recently, which is Israel's withdrawal from Gaza and there's a new period which requires talking to the US administration about the future, about implementing what President Bush has told us in our previous visit, about linking Gaza with the West Bank and that Gaza won't be first and last," Mr. Abbas told reporters before flying on to Egypt. He said his postponed meeting with Prime Minister Sharon needed "adequate preparation" and no new date had yet been set. (*AP*)

Israel's High Court of Justice accepted a State petition to cancel the temporary injunction preventing the building of the separation wall through the neighbourhood of Dahia Al-Barid near the town of Ar-Ram, north of Jerusalem. (*Ha'aretz*)

In a letter to the Quartet members, James Wolfensohn, Middle East Quartet's Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement, wrote, "The Government of Israel, with its important security concerns, is loath to relinquish control, almost acting as though there has been no withdrawal, delaying making difficult decisions and preferring to take difficult matters back into slow-moving subcommittees." The report accompanying the letter stated, "The Special Envoy was disappointed that none of the key movement issues has been resolved. Without a dramatic improvement in Palestinian movement and access, within appropriate security arrangements for Israel, the economic revival essential to a resolution of the conflict will not be possible." (*Ha'aretz*)

17

Israeli forces arrested 18 Palestinians in Hebron, Jenin and Ramallah. (*DPA*)

In the Hebron Governorate, Israeli forces shot and wounded a Palestinian infant in the head and another youth in the hand, according to Palestinian hospital sources. (*Wafa*)

Armed Israeli settlers set fire to a Palestinian store and attacked houses in Hebron's Old City. (*Wafa*)

Palestinians shot at an Israeli army post near Ramallah, causing no casualties. (*Ha'aretz*)

Israel announced restrictions limiting movement in the West Bank, security officials said. Exits from Bethlehem and Hebron would be blocked, Palestinian private cars would be banned from the main West Bank roads and arrest raids would be stepped up, the officials said, on condition of anonymity. They said the new measures would be in effect for the long term. "We condemn the Israeli decision to ... prevent the movement of cars which will affect the lives of all Palestinians," PA Prime Minister Qureia told reporters. "This will only add fuel to the fire. We call on the Israelis to immediately stop these moves and to allow the Palestinian Authority to do its job." (*AFP, AP, Ha'aretz*)

In response to Israel's decision to limit Palestinian traffic in the West Bank after the previous day's drive-by shooting near the "Gush Etzion" settlement, US Security Coordinator for the Middle East Lt.-Gen. William Ward released a statement saying the US Government was "continuing to ask Israel ... to take steps to ease the day-to-day lives of Palestinians." (*Ynet*)

Israel's Foreign Ministry spokesman Mark Regev said all contacts with the PA had been temporarily halted, but later clarified that this would apply only to committees on specific issues, such as prisoner releases, security and customs. (*AP*)

The PLC decided to postpone voting on a no-confidence motion against the Cabinet led by PA Prime Minister Qureia, PLC Deputy Speaker Hassa Khreishe said. He said the PLC would discuss the following day PA President Abbas' letter urging the parliament to put off the vote for 10 days and would carry out the voting in case it rejected Mr. Abbas' request. (*Xinhua*)

The chief of the PA border security department, Salim Abu Safiyyeh, said that the issue of reopening the Rafah border terminal would be solved soon and that Israeli officials had halted all plans to open a new terminal at Kerem Shalom in southern Israel, where the borders of Israel, Egypt and the Gaza Strip meet. Mr. Abu Safiyyeh further said that the Rafah terminal would be operated under pure Palestinian control, with Egypt's assistance in some technical aspects, and that Palestinians did not object to the presence of international observers at the terminal. (*International Press Centre*)

PA President Abbas met with France's President Jacques Chirac in Paris. Mr. Chirac said the [Road Map](#) remained the "reference" for France and the EU, and called on the Palestinian Authority to continue reforms in the fields of security, rule of law and economic and social development. Mr. Abbas was to head for Spain the following day. (*Ha'aretz*)

Twelve Palestinian political factions signed a code of conduct on specific principles and rules to guide them before, during and after the upcoming legislative elections. Hamas was the only faction that did not participate in the signing ceremony held in Ramallah. The Central Elections Commission, as well as members of the Palestinian Legislative Council and representatives of non-governmental organizations, also attended the event. The 25-article code included issues such as respect for the role of national and international observers, the prohibition of arms to be displayed or used during election campaigns, commitment to judicial decisions concerning the electoral process, and acceptance of final results issued by the Central Elections Commission. (*DPA, International Press Centre*)

18

Palestinians hurled a pipe bomb at Israeli border police officers patrolling near the separation wall surrounding southern Jerusalem and slightly wounded three of them, *Israel Radio* reported. (*Ha'aretz, The Jerusalem Post*)

IDF troops injured three Palestinian children, arrested two Palestinians and seized two houses in Hebron and Bethlehem, according to Palestinian sources. In the village of Beit Awa, south of Hebron, troops opened fire on children, wounding three of them with rubber bullets. Soldiers entered the Al-Dheisha refugee camp in Bethlehem and arrested one Palestinian. Another one was arrested in the Karsa village, south of Hebron. (*Wafa*)

Israeli security forces arrested two gunmen from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine who were carrying machine gun bullets near Nablus. (*Ha'aretz*)

IDF forces began restricting Palestinian traffic on the road linking Nablus and Hebron to Jerusalem (Road 60). The road had been closed to private Palestinian vehicles, restricting use to public transport. The IDF had also blocked off a number of side roads that joined Road 60 in the Bethlehem area. In addition, security had been tightened at checkpoints around Hebron and Bethlehem. (*Ha'aretz*)

Senior Hamas and Islamic Jihad leaders, based in Damascus, would meet with Egyptian intelligence officials in Cairo soon to prepare for a new round of talks among Palestinian factions to be held later this year, Palestinian sources said. (*Xinhua*)

Members of the PLC agreed to hold off on their demands for the formation of a new Cabinet until PA President Abbas' return from abroad next week. In a letter to Council members, read out by Speaker Rawhi Fattouh, Mr. Abbas said, "The issue of the Government is of such importance that it requires a meeting between myself and members of parliament immediately after my return from abroad." Mr. Fattouh told reporters, "We are still sticking by our decision to demand that this Cabinet be changed but we agreed to delay discussing this issue until next Wednesday." (*AFP, DPA*)

A total of 259 Fatah members from Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip, announced their resignation in a letter protesting the lack of democracy within

the movement. "The movement has gone backwards and the situation is worsening as it does not want to embrace democracy," the members stated in the letter. (AFP)

After a meeting in Paris with Lebanon's Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, PA President Abbas said he was prepared to hold talks without preconditions on the issue of Palestinian weapons in Lebanon. Mr. Abbas said Palestinians in Lebanon should remember that they were guests and not above the law. Mr. Siniora said Palestinian weapons outside the refugee camps were harmful to Lebanon. (BBC News)

In a meeting with Spanish President José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, PA President Abbas said he was working to prevent a repeat of violence by militants who had killed three Israelis over the weekend. Mr. Abbas also said his Government had been trying to get Hamas to lay down its weapons and be transformed into a legitimate political party ahead of the PLC elections in January 2006. Mr. Zapatero expressed his support for Mr. Abbas' leadership and stressed the need to follow the [Road Map](#) to complete the peace process. He reiterated Spain's pledge of €24 million in aid to the Palestinians before year end. Mr. Abbas also met with King Juan Carlos. (Ha'aretz)

US President George Bush discussed Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip with the Quartet's Special Envoy James Wolfensohn. "This is an opportunity for the President to get an update on the progress in Gaza following Prime Minister Sharon's disengagement," according to White House spokesperson Scott McClelland. (AFP)

Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin said Israel and the Palestinians might be losing momentum given to the peace process by Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. In letters sent to Israel's President Moshe Katzav and PA President Abbas, Mr. Putin urged both presidents to continue energetic peace efforts and reaffirmed Moscow's proposal to host an international meeting of experts to discuss further steps in implementing the [Road Map](#). The Russian Foreign Ministry said Moscow "resolutely condemns" the latest terror attacks in the West Bank and cautioned Israel against "the disproportionate use of force" and any actions that could worsen the living conditions of the Palestinians. (Ha'aretz)

Secretary-General Kofi Annan met with Yossi Beilin and Yasser Abed Rabbo, the drafters of the Geneva Peace Initiative, reportedly telling them that Israel should not oppose Hamas' participation in the PLC elections in January 2006. Mr. Annan said, however, it was important that no armed militia took part in the PLC, emphasizing the need for Hamas to disarm before the elections. (Ha'aretz)

Filippo Grandi assumed the post of Deputy Commissioner-General of UNRWA. An Italian national, Mr. Grandi has extensive experience in refugee and political affairs, including in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. (UNRWA press release no. HQ/G/16/2005)

The Saudi Arabian Committee for the Relief of the Palestinian People and UNICEF signed a joint cooperation agreement to provide assistance to Palestinian children, including providing vaccines to fight various diseases in the OPT. Project costs had been estimated at \$3.6 million. (Wafa)

19

Palestinians opened fire on an IDF outpost near Nablus, and a military jeep came under fire near Anabta, close to Tulkarm. A few bullets hit the vehicle and caused damage, but both incidents ended without casualties, *Israel Radio* reported. (Ha'aretz)

Israel was considering the imposition of a permanent ban on Palestinians using major highways in the West Bank. "This project has been in existence for some time and we will have no option but to implement it if the Palestinian Authority continues to do nothing to prevent terrorist attacks," according to an official from Prime Minister Sharon's office. PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat said the plan had ominous echoes of the apartheid regime in South Africa. "If it continues so that Palestinians can only use the small roads, there will be in effect two classes for the Palestinians and Israelis," Mr. Erakat said. Israeli Government officials subsequently denied that the ban was being planned, which had drawn criticism from the United States. (AFP, AP, Ma'ariv, Reuters, DPA, Ha'aretz)

The IDF's Central Command decided to cancel the military escort for Palestinian children on their way to school in the south of Hebron. The military escort, which had been introduced about a year ago, protected the children from repeated attacks by Israeli settlers near the "Maon" and "Havat Maon" settlements. The escort had been reportedly cancelled following the deaths of Israelis over the weekend when settlers began to gather in groups on the roads, with the IDF reluctant to clash with them. (Ha'aretz)

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said that while the Israeli withdrawal had reduced the exposure of Palestinian children to death and injury, their daily lives remained affected by Israeli measures, highlighting closures as harming their health and education. The Fund reported that 285 children remained detained by Israel, the same number as in early 2004. "Children are still living with distress and continue to be vulnerable. The chronic anxiety undermines self-esteem and feelings of loss of control due to the erosion of households' coping mechanisms adversely affect family relationships," UNICEF said. "More than ever, children need sustained psychosocial support in order to return to normalcy. The withdrawal will inevitably give rise to new expectations for youth, which, if they are not fulfilled, might in turn increase their frustration. In a changing environment, they need new outlets and to be fully involved in the improvement of the lives of their communities," it added. (Wafa, www.unicef.org)

Peace Now announced a new initiative calling on the Israeli Government to withdraw from 26 settlements throughout the West Bank immediately. The initiative's first goal is to "raise awareness to the problematic nature of the West Bank settlements," a representative said. The settlements on Peace Now's list were situated mostly east of the separation wall and were relatively isolated within large concentrations of Palestinian towns, including "Alon Moreh," "Hermesh," "Itzar," "Itamar," "Kfar Tapoah," "Dolev," "Tekoa" and "Ma'ale Amos." According to the head of the organization's settlements tracking committee, Drud Atks, the most pressing issue at the moment was the evacuation of the Jewish settlement in Hebron. (Ha'aretz)

20

IDF troops arrested Saed Sawafta, a 15-year-old Palestinian, as he tried to smuggle a large mortar shell across the Hawara checkpoint outside Nablus, the army said. Soldiers discovered the boy was carrying two knives and a 52-mm mortar shell. The boy was arrested and taken for questioning. Security forces said they suspect the militants had taken advantage of the teen's mental disability. Earlier in the day, troops arrested two wanted Palestinian women in Jenin. The two had been suspected of having volunteered to carry out a terror attack, *Israeli Radio* reported.

Eight Palestinians had also been arrested in the West Bank overnight. (AP, Ha'aretz)

In the southern Gaza Strip, Palestinians opened fire in the direction of IDF troops. No injuries or damage were reported. (Ha'aretz)

The IDF shot dead a Palestinian after he had thrown a firebomb at a car on a West Bank bypass road near the village of Husan, close to Bethlehem, the military and witnesses said. The firebomb had damaged the car. Five Israelis travelling in other cars were injured from stone throwing along the road, one of them moderately. Israeli troops entered Husan to disperse the stone throwers without firing at them, the army spokesman said. (AP, Ha'aretz, Wafa)

More than 200 olive trees were uprooted and burnt overnight near Salem in the Nablus region, several days ahead of the start of the olive harvest. Israeli police had launched an investigation into the vandalism, *Israel Radio* reported. (The Jerusalem Post)

In an interview with *El Pais* in Madrid, PA President Abbas said he wanted a revival of the [Road Map](#). "We want to revive the Road Map, step by step, until we reach the question of the final status of the territories," he said. In a separate article, Mr. Abbas said, "Unfortunately, Palestinians cannot pursue the Road Map alone. Israel has created obstacles in the face of a full and unconditional return to the negotiating table and acted as if Israel can resolve the Middle East conflict unilaterally. Israel's lack of regard for the Road Map is having a powerfully negative effect on Palestinian society at an extremely critical time in our democratic development." (*AP, Reuters, The Wall Street Journal*)

At a [news conference](#) at the White House with PA President Abbas, President Bush said, "President Abbas is a man devoted to peace and to his people's aspiration for a State of their own." Mr. Bush expressed support for Mr. Abbas' platform of peace and asked him to do more to stop attacks on Israelis. He urged Israel to dismantle illegal outposts and stop building new settlements in the West Bank. "Israel should not undertake any activity that contravenes with its [Road Map](#) obligations," Mr. Bush said. President Abbas said Israel should lift curbs on Palestinian travel in the West Bank, saying the restrictions had caused the Palestinians "hardship and humiliation." Mr. Abbas criticized Israel's separation wall, particularly its location in Jerusalem. (*AP, BBC News, www.whitehouse.gov*)

The PA rejected a report from Israeli intelligence that foreign Islamists, suspected of links with Al-Qaida, had slipped into the Gaza Strip after Israel's withdrawal in September. The PA Interior Ministry said its investigations showed that the Israeli report was untrue. (*Ha'aretz*)

Senior Israeli officials said PA President Abbas should crack down on armed factions. Israel's Vice Premier Shimon Peres said, "We want Abu Mazen (Mr. Abbas) to succeed, we do not want to see him being replaced. We believe that he really wants peace but he must follow up this desire with actions." A source close to Prime Minister Sharon said, "Israel will make no more gestures, no concessions if the Palestinian Authority does not decide to act to disarm these terrorist organizations and will prevent Hamas from participating in January's elections." (*Ha'aretz*)

During PA President Abbas' visit to the White House, President Bush said, in an answer to a question, "I believe that two democratic States living side by side in peace is possible. I can't tell you when it's going to happen. It's happening," adding, "If it happens before I get out of office, I'll be there to witness the ceremony. And if doesn't, we will work hard to lay that foundation so that the process becomes irreversible". (*AFP*)

Hamas said President Bush was trying to set Palestinians against each other with his call for PA President Abbas to move against militant groups during the latter's visit to the White House. Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said, "We consider this as serious American interference in our internal affairs aimed to create an internal conflict." He also rejected Mr. Bush's intention to appoint a new security envoy to replace Gen. William Ward, who had been advising Mr. Abbas on security issues. (*AP*)

The Quartet's Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement James Wolfensohn had sent a letter to Prime Minister Sharon and PA President Abbas expressing concern about the lack of progress made on issues related to the freedom of movement and the passage of Palestinian agricultural produce through the border crossings. He had also expressed dissatisfaction over the difficulties the Israeli Defence establishment was putting in the way of implementing the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings. (*Ha'aretz*)

Ibrahim Gambari, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, briefed the Security Council on the "situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question." (*S/PV.5287*)

The Office of the Spokesman for the Secretary-General issued the following statement:

The Secretary-General was surprised by the statement issued yesterday by Amre Moussa, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, criticizing the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Alvaro de Soto, for his briefing to the Security Council on 23 September 2005. There was nothing in that briefing that could be construed as supporting the construction by Israel of the barrier on occupied Palestinian land.

The position taken by Mr. de Soto was entirely consistent with decisions taken in the General Assembly and the Security Council on this issue.

The Secretary-General has full confidence in his Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and expects all interested parties to work with him in our common search for a solution in the Middle East.

(*UN press release SG/SM/10173*)

21

PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat told Israel TV's *Channel 2* that once Hamas took a political role in elections and the parliament, it would be tantamount to a first step toward disarming. (*AP, The Jerusalem Post*)

22

IDF troops stormed the village of Asira Shamliyya near Nablus, arrested five Palestinians, and blew up a house, witnesses said. (*AP, Xinhua*)

IDF troops shot dead a member of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades near Tulkarm during a gun battle, the group said. (*AP*)

Nazmi Muhana, chief of the Crossings Authority in the PA, announced that the Rafah crossing on the Gaza Strip-Egypt border would be reopened on 23 and 24 October for pilgrims and humanitarian cases. (*Xinhua*)

23

Israeli troops wounded two young Palestinian men who had hurled Molotov cocktails at IDF vehicles southwest of Bethlehem *Israel Radio* reported. (*Xinhua*)

IDF soldiers opened fire at two Palestinian young men, killing one and wounding the other west of Ramallah, witnesses said. An IDF spokesman told *Israel Radio* that the soldiers had noticed two Palestinians carrying a suitcase and had been suspected of attempting to plant a bomb.

(*Xinhua*)

Sixteen Palestinians, including 13 Hamas followers, had been arrested by Israeli soldiers in the Hebron region overnight, an IDF spokesman said. (*AFP*)

A Palestinian stabbed and seriously wounded two Israelis at a roadblock before a bypass road used by settlers to enter Jerusalem from the southern West Bank, the Israeli rescue service said. IDF soldiers shot and wounded the attacker. (*AP*)

Israel had abandoned its international campaign to keep Hamas out of the upcoming PLC elections, Israeli officials suggested on conditions of anonymity. "Israel will not help the Palestinians if Hamas takes part [in the vote], but neither will it hamper the voting in the areas where Israel has control," an official in Prime Minister Sharon's office said. (*AP, Reuters*)

The PA planned to begin disarming Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades members and incorporating them into the PA security apparatus, PA Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia announced after a meeting of his top security chiefs. "We have agreed today to establish five new camps for training and hosting 'traggler,' he said, referring to the Brigades' members. He said the disarmament efforts would begin in the Palestinian cities of Ramallah and Nablus, and then move into other areas. PA Interior Minister Nasser Yousef said the camps would be operational "within weeks." "In principle there are no problems," said Abu Ahmed, an Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades official in Gaza. (*AP*)

PA Minister of Transportation Saed-Eddine Khurma said that his ministry was ready to rebuild and operate Gaza International Airport if an agreement was reached with the Israeli side. He said the renovation of the airport would take six months and the installation of new radar and other

equipment, donated by Spain, would take another six months. (*Xinhua*)

Israel's Vice Premier Peres rejected the call by PA President Abbas for an alternative negotiation channel. "This will not do any good as there is no way at this stage of overcoming differences on the central questions of Jerusalem and the refugees," he said. Mr. Abbas had said in an earlier interview with *AFP*, "I proposed to the Americans the idea of a back channel for negotiations and I hope that they, and the Israelis, are going to accept it." (*AFP*)

Luai Saadi, an Islamic Jihad senior commander in the West Bank, was shot dead in Tulkarm by IDF troops, along with Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades activist Majed al-Aksar, following an exchange of fire. In a statement sent to *AFP*, Islamic Jihad said, "We will not stand by with our hands tied while the blood of our fighters flows everywhere... The enemy will regret its crime and the calmness will go to hell." "We condemn the Israeli incursion and assassinations in Tulkarm. This threatens the ceasefire we're trying to maintain," said PA Chief Negotiator Erakat. (*AFP, AP, Ha'aretz*)

24

Israel Radio reported that the Beit Hanoun (Erez) and Al-Muntar (Karni) crossings had been shut down late during the day, clarifying that the closure was due to the Jewish Sukkot holidays. (*Xinhua*)

Samir Hleileh, Secretary General of the PA Cabinet, told the *Voice of Palestine* radio that Israel obstructed the implementation of a PA security plan aimed at imposing law and order in the West Bank. (*Xinhua*)

The number of Palestinians killed since the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa intifada had reached 4,172, whereas the number of wounded stood at 8,435, a PA State Information Service report stated. Among those killed were 783 children and 350 were victims of extrajudicial executions. The number of prisoners and detainees in Israeli jails had reached 8,600. (*International Press Centre*)

25

Palestinians threw firebombs at Israeli cars in the West Bank, causing no injuries. Also, Palestinians opened fire at an Israeli army post near the border with the southern Gaza Strip, causing no casualties. (*Ha'aretz*)

The IDF arrested an Islamic Jihad militant in the West Bank village of Ja'aba. (*Ha'aretz*)

PA Interior Ministry spokesman Tawfik Abu Khousa said the PA denounced the launching of homemade rockets at Israel, which showed irresponsibility towards Palestinian citizens. He also said firing rockets at Israel from the northern Gaza Strip would lead to negative results in terms of internal Palestinian relations, noting that a number of the rockets fired by Islamic Jihad militants had fallen on Palestinians' houses in Beit Hanoun.

Mr. Abu Khousa said that such behaviour was not in favour of the Palestinian people as there was a national Palestinian agreement that prevented firing rockets from the Gaza Strip. This clear violation of the national agreement was unacceptable, he said. (*Xinhua*)

The PA deployed forces near Qassam rocket launch sites to prevent rocket attacks. (*Ha'aretz*)

An Israeli helicopter fired a missile into a Fatah building in the northern town of Beit Hanoun and into an office used by Islamic Jihad in the southern town of Rafah. Five Palestinians, including two women and a baby, were wounded in the attack, Palestinian Interior Ministry spokesman Tawfik Abu Khousa said. Israeli jets caused deafening booms over northern Gaza four times the previous day, when open fields and neighbouring land that the army said was a rocket launch site, were shelled. The area was also under air and artillery strikes on 23 October following Palestinian rocket attacks avenging the killing of a top militant commander over the weekend. A spokeswoman for the Israeli Army said, "The Israeli army will react with determination to put an end to attacks and will use all means in order to prevent Israeli citizens from coming to harm". (*AFP*)

PA President Abbas was to ask the PLC to allow the current PA Cabinet to remain in office until the elections in January 2006, the spokesman for the presidential office Rafik Hussein said, adding that Mr. Abbas saw no reason to make any changes to the Cabinet for such a short period of time.

(*DPA*)

PA Minister for Telecommunications and Technology Sabri Saidam denounced Israel's closure of its Gaza Strip borders and terminals. Mr. Saidam told the *Voice of Palestine* radio that the closure by Israel of Beit Hanoun (Erez) and Al-Muntar (Karni) crossings between Israel and Gaza Strip was turning the Strip into a big jail. "This is really considered as a collective punishment against our people," Mr. Saidam said. He also denounced Israel's escalation of the situation through army raids, targeting activists and closing terminals. Mr. Saidam said calm must be mutual and it was not acceptable that Israel continued its attacks while demanding that Palestinians control security. (*Xinhua*)

Egypt's Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit met with visiting British Foreign Office Minister Kim Howells on the Middle East peace process, the *MENA* news agency reported. Mr. Howells said both Egypt and Britain were in contact with the Palestinian and Israeli sides as part of efforts to activate the Middle East peace process. He also urged Israel and the PA to improve security so as to facilitate the free movement of Palestinians and help them reach their workplaces and seek jobs. "We are trying to encourage the two sides to improve the living conditions of the Palestinians, especially after the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip," he said. (*Xinhua*)

In the context of the European Security and Defence Policy, the European Union member States have agreed in principle to launch a mission supporting the Palestinian police beginning January 2006. The mission would consist of 30 European police officers, charged with giving advice to Palestinian police over a three-year period. The member States are expected to formally adopt the joint action to launch the mission in November 2005. The mission would aim to strengthen the European Union Coordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support, which had been manned by eight officers since January 2005, and funded by the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Spain and Denmark. European experts would work from the PA's Interior Ministry offices in Ramallah and an office in Gaza. The office of the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process Marc Otte, and European Commission offices in Jerusalem would also be used as bases for European experts. (*Europe Information Service*)

Asked about her observation of the recently released report by James Wolfensohn, the Quartet's Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement, at a joint press availability with Canadian Foreign Minister Pierre Pettigrew in Ottawa, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said, "It is very clear that the crossings issue needs to get resolved, not just the Rafah crossings but the issues of freedom of movement within the West Bank and issues about other crossings that need to be freed up." (*www.state.gov*)

PA Foreign Minister Nasser Al-Kidwa and Germany's representative to the PA Miguel Berger signed the annual German support agreement worth €46 million. Mr. Al-Kidwa said the fund would be used for investment projects and employment generation programmes. (*Wafa*)

The PA and the United Nations Development Programme signed an agreement to renovate PA President Abbas' muqataa headquarters in Ramallah, which was destroyed by the Israeli army in 2002. The project will be financed by Japan. (*DPA*)

26

An Israeli aircraft fired at least one missile into a field in the northern Gaza Strip after Palestinian militants had fired a homemade rocket into the southern Israeli town of Sderot. There were no reports of damage or injuries from the air strike or the rocket attack. The army said the missile had hit an area used by militants to launch rockets. (*AFP, AP*)

Palestinians in the Gaza Strip fired a mortar round onto a football pitch in Netiv Haasara in southern Israel, causing no casualties or damage. (*AFP, Ynet*)

The Israeli army said it had reopened the Beit Hanoun (Erez) and Al-Muntar (Karni) crossings between Israel and the Gaza Strip. In addition, Israeli forces arrested a Fatah activist in Bethlehem and two wanted Islamic Jihad members north-east of Bethlehem. (*www.idf.il*)

Armed Israeli settlers from "Qedumim," west of Nablus, stormed the nearby village of Jit, attacking a number of Palestinians and shattering the windows of several parked cars. (*PA International Information Center*)

Israeli forces wounded four Palestinians in Dura town near Hebron, including an elderly woman and her grandson. Israeli forces also stormed Yatta village, south of Hebron, and launched an all-out search campaign, wounding seven youths. (*Wafa*)

A suicide bomber blew himself up in an open-air market in the Israeli coastal city of Hadera, killing at least five people and wounding some 30 others.

Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the bombing, saying it was in retaliation for the killing of its military leader, Luay Sa'adi, by the Israeli army on 23 October. (*AFP, AP, DPA, Ha'aretz*)

In an interview with *Ha'aretz*, Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar said his group might not extend its participation in the ceasefire agreement if the Palestinian Authority reneged on its promise to hold PLC elections in January 2006. (*Ha'aretz*)

PA President Abbas told PLC members that Council elections would be held on 25 January 2006 as scheduled and that he would not reshuffle the Cabinet before then. Legislators decided to hold a vote of no-confidence in the Government, and Council Speaker Rawhi Fattouh said he would announce on 30 October when the vote would be held. (*AP*)

After talks with Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo, Israel's Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz said agreement had been reached to allow a third party to join Egypt and the PA in monitoring Gaza Strip crossing points. Mr. Mofaz said talks were ongoing over who the third party would be. "It has been initially agreed for a third party to be present on the Rafah crossing for people crossing from Gaza to Egypt and that the Kerem Shalom crossing will be for goods and trucks," Mr. Mofaz told reporters. He said the new Kerem Shalom facility, located in Israel at the junction of the Israeli, Egyptian and Gaza borders, would be ready in two months. (*AP*)

27

Four settlers from the settlement of "Kedumim" were charged with assaulting a 13-year-old Palestinian boy and for throwing rocks at Palestinian cars in the West Bank. The boy had been selling vegetables at an intersection. Palestinian sources reported that Israeli soldiers assaulted Palestinians in Hebron, wounding three, including a child. (*Ha'aretz, Wafa*)

The IDF evacuated five new outposts set up in the past two days by settler youths. The sites were close to the settlements of "Elon Moreh," "Kedumim," "Efrat" and "Kiryat Arba" and "Worshippers' Way", a road that led to "Kiryat Arba" in Hebron. IDF Chief of Staff Dan Halutz condemned the "violence and bullying" by settler youths resisting the evacuation. Settlers returned to two of the outposts after troops left the area. (*Ha'aretz*)

An Israeli Air Force aircraft fired missiles at the northern Gaza Strip, killing seven Palestinians, including two Islamic Jihad members and at least four civilians, including a 15-year-old. Sources said at least 10 people had been wounded in the attack, which took place in the Jabaliya refugee camp.

Islamic Jihad leader Shadi Mohanna and his deputy, Mohammed Ghazameh, were reportedly killed. PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat said, "We want to condemn this attack and warn about the consequences of this escalation." (*Ha'aretz*)

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice telephoned PA President Abbas to urge his Government to take steps against terrorist groups, the State Department said. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said, "It is very clear that there are some groups ... individuals who are intent upon derailing any hope of moving toward the overall goal of Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security." He also said, "We certainly encourage more contact, rather than less contact, to work through the issues, to work through problems, to resolve them ... to arrive at solutions that work for both sides." Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit said Israel bore "the greater responsibility" for the escalation of violence in the OPT. (*DPA, Ha'aretz*)

PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat condemned Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's call for Israel to be "wiped off the map." "This is unacceptable to us. We have recognized the State of Israel and we are pursuing a peace process with Israel, and ... we do not accept the statements of the President of Iran," he said. (*Ha'aretz*)

28

A Palestinian died overnight from injuries sustained in the Israeli air strike on the northern Gaza Strip, bringing the toll from the attack to eight. About 20,000 mourners turned out for the funeral of the victims of the air strike. (*AFP, AP, BBC News*)

Palestinians fired two Qassam rockets from the Gaza Strip, one of which landed in an open area north of Gaza. The Israeli Air Force fired two missiles into the northern Gaza Strip and targeted two roads leading to the town of Beit Lahia. No casualties were reported. In Nablus, IDF troops found eight grenades in buildings west of the city. (*Ha'aretz*)

At least 16 Palestinians were arrested by Israeli troops overnight in a West Bank sweep for suspected militants. Twelve of those detained were believed to be members of Islamic Jihad. Most of those arrested were picked up in areas around Jenin and Tulkarm. (*AFP*)

IDF forces began implementing a plan to sever the northern West Bank from the rest of the West Bank. The IDF was erecting permanent barriers in certain areas, setting up checkpoints on the roads and forbidding private Palestinian vehicles from using roads in the area. (*Ha'aretz*)

Israeli Police and Border Police officers threw stun grenades at hundreds of Palestinians gathered at the Al-Ram checkpoint north of Jerusalem. The Palestinians had been trying to reach Jerusalem's Old City so they could pray at the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Some members of the crowd attempted to break through the checkpoint. No casualties were reported. (*Ha'aretz*)

PA Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia said Israeli operations were undermining efforts to sustain a ceasefire agreed at the Sharm el-Sheikh summit in February 2005. Addressing the PA Cabinet in Ramallah, he denounced "Israel's escalation and its military provocations." He also called on all Palestinian factions to honour the truce and condemned the Hadera suicide attack. "This would not help us achieve any of the Palestinian rights, but rather will add fuel to the fire, the thing we should avoid," he said. (*The Independent, Wafa*)

Israel's Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz ruled out the chance of peace with the current Palestinian leadership. "We could reach interim agreements and I don't think that a Palestinian State will see the light of day in the coming years," he said. (*AFP, AP, BBC News*)

In a letter to the Foreign Ministers of the Quartet, Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement James Wolfensohn said Israel had asked the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development to stop a study aimed at determining the best method of creating a transportation link between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. However, Prime Minister Sharon's office denied the matter. (*Ha'aretz*)

The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights called upon the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to fulfil their legal and moral obligations to ensure Israel's respect for the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It also called upon the Parties to convene a conference to take effective steps to ensure Israel's compliance to the Convention and to provide immediate protection for Palestinian civilians. (*Wafa*)

The following statement was issued by the Spokesman of the Secretary-General:

The Secretary-General is deeply concerned at the further escalation of violence in the past 24 hours in the Middle East. He deplores the action taken in Jabalya refugee camp in Gaza on 26 October.

Extra-judicial killings are not consistent with international law. The Secretary-General reminds Israel of its obligation to take all precautions to ensure that non-combatants are not harmed.

The Secretary-General calls on both parties to take all steps possible to prevent further violence.

(UN press release SG/SM/10192)

The following statement was issued by the Middle East Quartet:

Representatives of the Quartet – Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, United Kingdom Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, High Representative for European Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana and European Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner – spoke today on the situation in the Middle East.

The Quartet condemns the October 26 terrorist attack on the Hadera market, responsibility for which was claimed by Palestinian Islamic Jihad, headquartered in Damascus. The Quartet urges the Syrian Government to take immediate action to close the offices of Palestinian Islamic Jihad and to prevent the use of its territory by armed groups engaged in terrorist acts.

The Quartet denounces all acts of terrorism and urges all parties to exercise restraint, avoid an escalation of violence, and keep the channels of communication open. The Quartet strongly encourages and supports the Palestinian Authority in its immediate effort to take steps to prevent armed groups from acting against law and order and the policy of the Authority itself.

The Quartet believes it is imperative that all involved act decisively to ensure that terror and violence are not allowed to undermine further progress in accordance with the [Road Map](#).

The Quartet will remain seized of these matters.

(UN News Centre)

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The IDF fired artillery at an open area in the northern Gaza Strip after Palestinian militants fired at least one mortar shell into the southern Israeli town of Sderot, the military said. No injuries were reported in either attack. (*Ha'aretz*)

PA Interior Minister Nasser Youssef issued a statement condemning the Israeli raids and urged "an immediate international intervention" to stop them. Mr. Youssef also called on militants to adhere to an eight-month truce, saying, "We will deal firmly and seriously with any foundry or workshop that manufactures weapons or explosives and also with any place used as storage for arms, something that poses a danger to our public," adding, "We will not enter Palestinian houses to search for arms, but we will not spare any effort to confiscate every weapon we find in the streets, because it would be a tool for chaos and crime". (*Ha'aretz*)

Palestinian police fired in the air to disperse about 60 Islamic Jihad members who had gathered outside PA President Abbas' office to protest against the arrest of four of its members earlier this week, police said. No casualties were reported. Mr. Abbas was not in his compound at the time. (*Ha'aretz*)

Palestinian Interior Ministry officials said Palestinian militant factions had agreed to halt rocket attacks on Israel. They spoke on condition of anonymity, pending an official announcement later in the day. Palestinian factions, including Islamic Jihad and other militant groups, were scheduled to meet later during the day. (*AP*)

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The IDF entered the town of Qabatiyah, south of Jenin, and surrounded a house suspected of harbouring Islamic Jihad members, including Jihad Awidat, allegedly involved in the Hadera bombing the previous week. The soldiers shot and killed Mr. Awidat and Arshad Abu-Zaid, the owner of the house. The siege on the house continued into the evening, after which parts of the house were bulldozed. Eight other Palestinians were also wounded in the shootout. While the troops approached the house, a contingent of paratroopers was fired upon by three Palestinians, one of whom was shot while another planted an explosive device. Military sources said the soldiers shot and killed the latter. Palestinian sources said Islamic Jihad responded to the operation by firing two Qassam rockets from Beit Hanoun in the northern Gaza Strip into the western Negev in Israel. There were no casualties. (*AP*, *Ha'aretz*)

Nabil Abu Rdeneh, PA President Abbas' adviser, said that Israel and the Palestinians had agreed to stop the hostilities after the intervention of the US. "Both sides have agreed to stop attacks ... what is required now is to preserve the truce and calm, and every (Palestinian) party should adhere to the political and national positions ... and create an atmosphere that allows working in a way that serves the Palestinian people." Israeli officials did not confirm the agreement. (*AP*)

During his weekly Cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Sharon promised "severe" retaliation if attacks on Israel continued. But he said he disagreed with comments by Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz in a newspaper interview a day earlier, that peace would be impossible with the current Palestinian leadership, saying, "This is not the right approach; we have to try to make efforts to reach an agreement alongside our fight against terror." (*AP*)

In Gaza, Israel reopened two crossings to allow the flow of cargo and other goods, but a travel ban for Palestinians from the area remained in effect, the army said. (*AP*)

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IDF tanks shelled the south-eastern Gaza Strip village of Khouza from Israel, PA security sources and witnesses said. An IDF spokesman said that shells had been fired at militants who tried to launch Qassam rockets. (*Xinhua*)

The IDF was constructing a new checkpoint south of Nablus, at the Zaatara (Tapuah) junction, to check Palestinian cars arriving from the northern and western parts of the West Bank. The checkpoint, approved nine months ago, will have 10 lanes: six for southbound Palestinian vehicles; one for Israeli cars; one lane for vehicles designated "humanitarian"; and two lanes for north-bound vehicles. Military sources said north-bound Palestinian vehicles would be checked only in special cases. (*Ha'aretz*)

Prime Minister Sharon said Palestinians must wage a "real war on terror" before peace talks could resume. Addressing the first parliamentary winter session, Mr. Sharon said Israel was ready to do its part for peace. But he strongly demanded that the Palestinian Authority first take action against armed groups. Mr. Sharon also vowed to continue building the separation barrier along the West Bank without any political or financial constraints, saying, "We will continue to build the security barrier with all our energy, without budgetary or political limit". (*AFP*, *Reuters*)

Chief Palestinian Negotiator Saeb Erakat sent an urgent letter to the Quartet's Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement, James Wolfensohn, urging him immediately to intervene and pressure Israel to stop its offensive. A press statement issued by Mr. Erakat's office said the letter briefed Mr. Wolfensohn on the latest dangerous developments in the Palestinian territory and escalating Israeli aggressions against the Palestinian people. (*Xinhua*)

In Seoul, visiting PA Foreign Minister Nasser Al-Kidwa called for South Korea's support for the Palestinian people, especially in the fields of trade and investment. "I expect South Korea's support for Palestine politically and economically," Mr. Al-Kidwa said in his remarks at a joint press briefing with South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon. Mr. Ban said, "The South Korean Government reaffirmed its support for the Middle East peace talks, and Palestine expressed its support for South Korea's position on the North Korean nuclear issue". He also said South Korea would continue aid projects to help improve the livelihood of the Palestinian people, a key factor for regional peace. Earlier in the day, Mr. Al-Kidwa paid a

courtesy visit to South Korea's President Roh Moo-hyun. *(Xinhua)*

Sharif Ziada, 34, Kamel Issa, 33, and Kazem Dib, 27, three senior members of Popular Resistance Committees suspected of trying to set up factories for Qassam rockets and mortar shells in the West Bank – were expected to be indicted during the day in the Be'er Sheva District Court in Israel. Police and the Shin Bet seized the three on 5 October, but concealed their arrest until 30 October after the indictments had been finalized.

(Ha'aretz)

PA Information Minister Nabil Sha'ath told reporters, "We passed a very dangerous week, and we hope that this will continue to be a full ceasefire."

(DPA)
