

Division for Palestinian Rights

Chronological Review of Events Relating to the Question of Palestine

MONTHLY MEDIA MONITORING REVIEW

September 2010

Monthly highlights

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- General Assembly adds Venezuela as a member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People ([7 September](#))
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- PA President Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu meet for a second round of direct talks in Sharm el-Sheikh ([14 September](#))
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- UN Human Rights Council adopts resolutions on follow-up to the reports of the Fact-Finding Mission on the flotilla attack and of the Committee of Independent Experts on the Gaza conflict ([29 September](#))

I

A 16-year old Palestinian was killed when a tunnel connecting Rafah and Egypt collapsed. (*The Palestine Telegraph*)

Following the killing of four Israelis the previous day, PA security forces carried out a wave of arrests in the West Bank, in which more than 300 people identified with Hamas were arrested, according to a Palestinian source. (*Haaretz*)

Israeli Interior Minister Eli Yishai issued instructions to ease restrictions on the purchase of firearms by Israeli settlers in the West Bank. (*Ynetnews*)

In a [press conference](#) prior to a working dinner at the White House with the participation of Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, King Abdullah II of Jordan, Quartet Representative Tony Blair and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, President Barack Obama, flanked by the Egyptian, Jordanian, Israeli and Palestinian leaders, said that he was "cautiously hopeful" with regard to the peace talks, and he asked his guests: "Do we have the wisdom and the courage to walk the path of peace?"

Mr. Netanyahu said that Israel desired a lasting peace, not an interlude between wars. Calling President Abbas his "partner in peace", he said: "Everybody loses if there is no peace". (*AP, The New York Times, www.whitehouse.gov*)

During his one-on-one meeting with US President Obama in Washington, D.C., King Abdullah stressed the need for collective efforts to make peace as the only way to guarantee the security of the countries in the region and a "regional and international strategic interest". The two leaders discussed the steps needed to create a proper environment for successful talks. King Abdullah also met separately with the other parties to today's peace talks at the US State Department, accompanied by the Jordanian delegation to the talks, including Royal Court Chief Nasser Lozi, the King's Adviser Ayman Safadi and Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh. (*The Jordan Times, www.kingabdullah.jo*)

Fatah Central Committee member and delegate to the Washington peace talks Nabil Sha'ath said that a proposal was under consideration to open the Gaza Port, according to which international inspectors would oversee the transport of goods and travellers to and from Gaza, as a transitional measure until the complete lifting of the blockade. "Ending the siege is the fastest way to unity", he added. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli authorities had issued warrants ordering Bedouin families lodging in tents and sheds on land between Jericho and Jerusalem to leave the area by June 2011. Around 600 households would face evacuation if the orders were enforced, according to one of those who received a warrant. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli Defense Minister Barak [told](#) *Haaretz* : "West Jerusalem and 12 Jewish neighbourhoods that are home to 200,000 residents will be ours.

The Arab neighbourhoods in which close to a quarter million Palestinians live will be theirs. There will be a special regime in place along with agreed upon arrangements in the Old City, the Mount of Olives and the City of David." (*Haaretz*)

Following a statement by Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak that parts of Jerusalem could be handed over to the Palestinians as part of a peace agreement, an aide to Mr. Netanyahu said that the Prime Minister's position was that Jerusalem was one of the core issues on the negotiating table, adding that "our position is that Jerusalem will remain the undivided capital of Israel". (*Haaretz*)

Some 50 Israeli settlers attacked the home of a Palestinian family near the “Kiryat Arba” settlement. They threw empty bottles and stones at the home and set fire to the grass outside the building. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli settlers said that they would break the freeze on settlement construction to protest the killing of four Israelis the previous day. The “Yesha Council”, which represents the settlers, said in a statement that construction in at least 80 settlements would resume at 6.00 p.m. local time today. Prime Minister Netanyahu had the previous day urged settlers in the West Bank to show restraint and respect the rule of law. (*Haaretz, Reuters, The Jerusalem Post*)

The following statement was issued by the Spokesperson for Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon:

The Secretary-General condemns the killing of four Israeli citizens in the West Bank on 31 August. He extends his condolences to the families of the victims and calls for the perpetrators of this crime to be promptly brought to justice. This attack must be recognized for what it is: a cynical and blatant attempt to undermine the direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations starting tomorrow. Negotiations are the only way for the parties to resolve all final status issues. The Secretary-General calls upon both sides to show leadership, courage, and responsibility to realize the aspirations of both peoples. (*UN News Centre*)

Two foreign peace activists were reportedly arrested by Israeli police after Israeli settlers had driven their cars into a demonstration in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Silwan, trying to run over protesters, who had gathered in solidarity with the residents of the town and to condemn the regular attacks of Israeli settlers on them. (*The Palestine Telegraph*)

2

Palestinian gunmen opened fire at a car near the “Kochav Hashachar” settlement close to Ramallah, injuring two Israelis. Shortly afterwards, Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, issued a statement claiming responsibility for the attack, which they characterized as “a normal and legal response to Zionist aggressions on the Palestinian civilians”. Speaking from the White House, PA President Abbas condemned the shooting, as did Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu in a [statement](#) released by the US State Department. (*AP, Ma'an News Agency, www.pmo.gov.il*)

Eight Palestinians were arrested by the IDF in the West Bank. (*www.idf.il*)

Israeli forces shot an 18-year-old Palestinian in northern Gaza following earlier reports that Israeli patrols and bulldozers had entered the area.

Israeli jets had also bombarded targets in Rafah causing damage but no injuries. (*Ma'an News Agency, Palestine News Network*)

Israeli soldiers arrested seven Palestinian civilians during raids in and around Hebron. (*Palestine News Network*)

Members of the armed wing of Hamas and representatives of other militant groups met and said that they were joining forces and that attacks on Israelis would continue. Militant groups had agreed to form a joint operations room to coordinate activities, a spokesman for Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades (armed wing of Hamas) told reporters. A spokesman for Hamas said that 13 militant groups would work together to launch “more effective” attacks against Israel. Asked if this included suicide bombings, he said: “All options are open”. (*CNN, Ma'an News Agency, The Guardian*)

Abu Obeida, spokesman for Hamas' Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, vowed to continue the campaign of armed attacks on Israeli targets in the West Bank and in Israel. (*AFP, DPA*)

Direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians were officially opened by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in Washington D.C. this morning. Secretary Clinton congratulated Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas on having agreed to the talks, and stressed that the United States would not be imposing a solution. Mr. Netanyahu, calling on the Palestinians to “recognize Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people”, said that he was willing to go “a long way in a short time” to achieve peace. On his part, President Abbas called on Israel to halt all settlement activities and to lift the blockade on Gaza. (*AFP, AP, Reuters*)

In addition to President Abbas, members of the Palestinian delegation to the talks included Saeb Erekat, Yasser Abed Rabbo, Nabil Sha'ath, Akram Haniyeh, Muhammad Shtayyeh and Nabil Abu Rudeineh, while the Israeli delegation, besides Prime Minister Netanyahu, included the Israel Ambassador to the US, Michael Oren, Israeli Chief Negotiator Itzhak Molcho and Mr. Netanyahu's advisers, Uzi Arad and Ron Dermer. (*www.nad-plo.org, www.news.ino.com*)

The EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton issued a [statement](#) welcoming the launch of the direct talks and commending the Obama Administration for its efforts to bring the parties back to the negotiating table. (*www.consolium.europa.eu*)

The President of the European Parliament, Jerzy Buzek, issued a [statement](#) welcoming the resumption of direct negotiations and expressing the Parliament's readiness to support the negotiations and the final settlement. (*Kuna, www.europarl.europa.eu*)

The British and German Foreign Ministers expressed support for the resumption of direct negotiation, while warning that “failure would be very serious”. (*Middle East Online, www.fco.gov.uk*)

The Negotiations Affairs Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) said that “freedom means control of our borders”, adding that freedom for the Palestinians would mean “having our Government located in our historic capital – the centre of our culture and faiths”. (*Wafa*)

PA President Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu agreed to meet again in the Middle East on 14 and 15 September, and every two weeks thereafter. US Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George Mitchell **bold** reporters that the initial meeting between the two sides at the US State Department had been “long and productive”, reflecting “good faith and seriousness of purpose”. He said that both Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Abbas condemned “all forms of violence that target innocent civilians”, pledged to work together to maintain security, and renewed their commitment to a two-State solution. (*www.aljazeera.net, www.state.gov*)

During a speech in Tehran, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad criticized PA President Abbas over the direct negotiations with Israel and questioned his authority to represent the Palestinian people. “The region's nations will not allow anyone to give up even one centimetre of Palestine”, he said. (*Ynetnews*)

Speaking to journalists in Vienna, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that he was “very encouraged and happy about these direct talks for the Middle East peace process between Israel and the Palestinian Authority taking place today”. (*AFP*)

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navanethem Pillay strongly condemned the recent armed attacks against Israelis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, responsibility for which had been claimed by Hamas. She also pointed out that the individuals responsible "can be held accountable under international criminal law". (www.unog.ch)

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told reporters in Vienna that he would convene a meeting of the Quartet principals later this month to coincide with the opening of the general debate of the General Assembly at UN Headquarters. Representatives of the League of Arab States would also be invited. "We need the collective efforts to see the peace in the Middle East", he said. Asked whether Hamas might be brought into the peace process, Mr. Ban replied: "We have already seen attempts by cynical groups who really want to derail this peace process. That we have to guard against". He reiterated his support for PA President Abbas, noting that his leadership was recognized by the entire international community. (AFP, UN News Centre, www.unis.unvienna.org)

3

A report by Al Mezan Center for Human Rights shows that a blanket ban had been imposed by Israel on Palestinian students from the Gaza Strip, preventing them from enrolling at Palestinian universities in the West Bank. The organization said that this ban was based not on security needs, but on discrimination. (IMEMC)

A [report](#) issued by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) of the United Nations Secretariat found that Palestinians residing in "Area C" of the West Bank under full Israeli control continued to suffer due to restrictive zoning policies, house demolitions, settler violence, access restrictions, poor nutrition, water scarcity and limited access to public services. (www.ochaopt.org)

4

The Israel Air Force struck three tunnels in the southern Gaza Strip. (www.idf.il)

The UN Human Rights Council-mandated mission investigating Israel's raid on a Gaza-bound aid flotilla wrapped up its hearings in Jordan after interviewing a total of 30 witnesses, one of the flotilla organizers said. (AFP)

5

Saeb Erakat, Head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO, said that if the latest round of Middle East peace talks failed, the moderate Palestinian leadership would "disappear". "We hope to bring (about) a Palestinian State. If we fail to bring it now, then I think we'll go home," he said, adding that such a scenario would spell the end of the PA. (AFP)

A peace deal with the Palestinians will require a creative, new approach to issues that have defied resolution in past negotiations, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said. He gave no hint in remarks to his Cabinet about any new ideas he may have in mind. (Reuters)

A group based in the US would send a plane loaded with aid to the Gaza Strip in defiance of Israel's air and sea blockade, an official said. "We intend to send an aircraft to Gaza in much the same way boats were used – without going through Israeli or Egyptian airspace," said Paul Larudee, an organizer with the California-based Free Palestine Movement. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israel's Defense Minister Ehud Barak said that a slowdown in West Bank settlement construction was unlikely to continue in its current form after it expired at the end of this month. But he added that he did not believe Israel will entirely cancel the 10-month curbs. (AP)

6

PA President Abbas said that he had asked the US to settle a dispute with Israel over settlement expansion that was threatening to derail Mideast peace talks. He was speaking to reporters accompanying him on his way back from Washington. (AP)

PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad landed in Madrid for meetings with Spanish officials in an effort to continue State-building projects in parallel with the peace process. (Ma'an News Agency)

Jordan's King Abdullah II and Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad stressed the need for Israel to pull out from all Arab territories occupied in the 1967 war if peace with the Palestinians was to be achieved. According to a Royal Court statement, King Abdullah was in Damascus to brief the Syrian leader on the outcome of his talks in Washington, D.C. last week. (Haaretz)

Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit said in an interview with *Al-Arabiya* that Israel's demand to be officially recognized as a Jewish State was "a cause for concern", considering the growing Arab sector, which made up 20 per cent of Israel's population. (Al-Arabiya, Haaretz)

The EU made its ninth contribution this year to the regular payment of salaries and pensions of more than 84,000 Palestinian civil servants and pensioners in the West Bank and Gaza. This month's contribution amounted to €8.93 million. (Wafa)

Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman said that his party would try to block any extension of Israel's settlement slowdown. He said that the Israeli Government must keep its promise to voters that the 10-month slowdown will end as scheduled at the end of the month. (AP)

7

A rocket fired by Palestinian militants from the Gaza Strip struck Israel today without causing any casualties or damage, the IDF said. A spokesman said that the projectile landed in an open field near Sderot. (AFP)

Dozens of Israeli soldiers were deployed in the old town of Hebron and set up checkpoints and prevented people from entering the markets. (The Palestine Telegraph)

PA officials said that they had arrested several Hamas members on suspicion of organizing and executing two attacks on Israeli settlers, which took place in the days leading up to the Summit in Washington. (AFP)

An Israeli settler reportedly opened fire on Palestinian cars near Nablus. (IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli forces raided the village of Al-Majdal Bani Fadel, south of Nablus. (IMEMC)

Israeli forces arrested 10 Palestinians in the West Bank and brought them in for questioning. The following night, one Palestinian was arrested and taken for questioning. (www.idf.il)

Egyptian police seized nine weapons caches across the Sinai Peninsula. Officials said that they were ready to be smuggled into the Gaza Strip. (Ma'an News Agency)

PA President Abbas rejected Prime Minister Netanyahu's talk about a "historic compromise" and said that there would be no compromises on core issues such as Jerusalem and borders. "We're not talking about a Jewish State and we won't talk about one," Mr. Abbas added in an interview with *Al-Quds* newspaper. (The Jerusalem Post)

Senior Israeli and Palestinian officials cautioned that despite the positive atmosphere in Washington, D.C., the success of direct negotiations remained uncertain. "This climate means nothing if there are no results," said Nabil Sha'ath, a member of the Palestinian negotiating team, while Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu stated, "There is a need to try and reach peace and we are trying with good intentions, but not naively". At the same time,

another senior Palestinian official indicated that it was unlikely that the talks would collapse later this month. (AFP)

In a [statement](#) marking the Jewish holiday of Rosh Hashanah, US President Obama said that while recent developments had given rise to hope for peace in the Middle East, progress would not come easily. (AFP, www.whitehouse.gov)

Speaking at an Iftar dinner at the State Department, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton [said](#) that the resumption of the Middle East peace talks was a reminder that “progress always, always must be possible in spite of difficulty.” (Ma'an News Agency, www.state.gov)

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov called for the Quartet to be more directly involved in facilitating the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. (RIA Novosti)

Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero expressed his country's support for the PA and the creation of a Palestinian State and urged the EU to raise its profile in the Middle East peace talks. (DPA)

Following a joint meeting, the Russian and French Foreign Ministers, Sergey Lavrov and Bernard Kouchner, urged Israel not to jeopardize the recently launched peace talks by resuming settlement construction after the end of the moratorium on 26 September. (AFP)

Palestinians could get up to \$50 billion in compensation under a future peace agreement with Israel, Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed About Gheit said in a local television interview. He did not elaborate on where he had received that information, nor did he say who would supply the funds.

He did say that the money, which he believed could total between \$40 and \$50 billion, would be designated towards building infrastructure in a nascent Palestinian State and to compensate those who lose land in an exchange with Israel. (Haaretz)

The IDF announced that the West Bank would be sealed off from midnight on 7 September until midnight on 11 September in connection with the Jewish New Year. (DPA, The Jerusalem Post)

Egypt will close its Rafah border crossing with the Gaza Strip for the period of the Eid holidays. The closure period, from 10 to 12 September, would be the first time Egyptian authorities would close the Rafah crossing since June. (DPA)

Palestinian sources reported today that a settler opened fire at Palestinian vehicles driving near the West Bank settlement of “Kedumim”, near Nablus. No injuries or damage were reported. (Ynetnews)

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) will begin a week of activities on 5 October to protest Israel's decision to keep the movement's leader, Ahmad Sa'adat, in solitary confinement, a party source said today. The campaign will urge Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in the diaspora to also protest Israel's use of solitary confinement as punishment for Palestinian political prisoners. (Ma'an News Agency)

More than 150 American and British actors, writers, directors and other artists signed a letter of support for the Israeli actors who declared they would not perform in West Bank settlements. (Arab News)

The General Assembly [decided](#) to add Venezuela to the membership of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. (UN press release GA/10976)

8

A mortar shell fired from the Gaza Strip landed near a day care centre in a Negev kibbutz. No injuries were reported. (Haaretz, The Jerusalem Post, www.idf.il)

Saeb Erakat, Head of the PLO Negotiations Affairs Department, confirmed reports that discussions were under way to set up a direct meeting between President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu after the next round of talks on 14 and 15 September in Egypt. (Ma'an News Agency)

Senior Palestinian negotiator Nabil Sha'ath said at a press conference in Ramallah that the Palestinian negotiating team had turned down Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's request to discuss the recognition of Israel as a Jewish State during the upcoming round of talks in Sharm el-Sheikh next week.

Mr. Sha'ath said that the recognition would harm Israel's Arab citizens and negate the Palestine refugees' right of return. (Haaretz)

Palestinian security services in Nablus released 46 Hamas-affiliated detainees on the orders of PA President Abbas on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli daily Haaretz reported that an agreement was taking shape, according to which there would be no formal extension of the settlement freeze, but in practice Israeli security authorities would refrain from signing new building permits. The newspaper also reported that the PA would not agree to a complete demilitarization of the Palestinian territories, but would be ready to accept international forces, with a broader mandate than that of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). (Haaretz)

Anticipating new attempts at breaking the naval blockade on Gaza, Israeli officials had turned to a legal deterrent, warning vessels in advance that they face costly impoundment and the possible detainment of crews. (Reuters)

Israel announced that two Hamas lawmakers from Hebron, Nezar Ramadan and Azzam Salhab, who had been held in Israeli custody for 56 months without charge, would be released on 9 September. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli forces prevented a delegation of the Norwegian youth movement in support of Palestine from reaching Jenin. (The Palestine Telegraph)

9

The Israeli military said that a rocket fired by Palestinian militants from the Gaza Strip had struck southern Israel, causing no injuries or damage. (AFP)

The Jerusalem Post reported that Israel was concerned about a proposal being promoted by US National Security Advisor James Jones to establish a multinational force in the West Bank as one of the ways to expedite an Israeli withdrawal following a peace deal with the Palestinians. The IDF's Planning Branch drafted a paper outlining Israel's security needs regarding the West Bank, which had been approved by Defense Minister Barak and the Chief of General Staff. It referred to three main commitments required of the Palestinians prior to any IDF withdrawal: no rockets smuggled into the West Bank, no resumption of terrorist attacks like those during the second intifada, and no deployment in the West Bank by foreign military forces. (The Jerusalem Post)

All Gaza crossings were to remain closed until the morning of 13 September as Israel was to celebrate the Jewish New Year and the start of the High Holidays. (Ma'an News Agency)

The Spanish Parliament condemned the conviction of Bil'in activist Abdallah Abu Rahmah by an Israeli military court on 24 August. The Intergroup for Palestine, an official body of the Parliament representing all political parties, issued a statement expressing “deep concern that Abdallah Abu Rahmah's potential incarceration aims at preventing him and other Palestinians from exercising their legitimate right to protest against the existence of the Wall in a non-violent manner.” (Ma'an News Agency)

The National Initiative Committee Against the Siege based in Lebanon said that four flotillas would be sailing to Gaza on 18 September, marking the 28th anniversary of the Sabra and Shatila massacre. (IMEMC)

Israel launched a series of air raids, mostly targeting Gaza smuggling tunnels, that wounded two members of the Hamas security forces. (AFP)

US President Obama told a White House news conference: "What I've said to Prime Minister Netanyahu is that, [as long as] the talks are moving forward in a constructive way, it makes sense to extend that [settlement] moratorium... I've said to President Abbas you've got to show the Israeli public that you are serious and constructive in these talks so that the [coalition] politics for Prime Minister Netanyahu, if he were to extend the settlement moratorium, would be a little bit easier." Mr. Obama and his team wanted "President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu to start thinking about how can they help the other succeed, as opposed to how do they figure out a way for the other to fail". Mr. Obama said that he saw "enormous hurdles" ahead in the negotiations, but said that it was a risk worth taking and that the US would remain engaged even if talks broke down.

(Ynetnews, www.whitehouse.gov)

"I chose, rather than being in the second row on the White House lawn [during the launch of direct negotiations], to be at the heart of our discussions in China", EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton told journalists. "We are engaged in the Middle East peace process," she added. "We want to see this moving forward; we have a very, very strong and clear role." Ms. Ashton had come under criticism by Members of the European Parliament and diplomats over her failure to attend the Summit. (AFP)

Spain's Government said that it planned to upgrade the Palestinian mission in Madrid from "General Delegation of Palestine" to "Palestine diplomatic mission". The head of the mission will have the status of Ambassador and will be formally accredited in a ceremony by King Juan Carlos.

(AFP)

Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, denounced the direct talks between Israel and the Palestinians and accused Washington of covering up the "crimes of the Zionist regime". (AFP)

The UAE had donated \$42 million to the PA, Arab officials said. (Reuters)

12

Israeli tank fire killed three Palestinians at the border with the Gaza Strip, medics said, following a rocket and mortar attack claimed by the Popular Resistance Committees. The shelling killed 91-year-old security guard Ibrahim Abdullah Abu Said, his grandson Hossam Khaled Abu Saeed, 17, and a man identified as Hossam Khaled Abu Saeed, 20, a medical services spokesman told AFP. (AFP, BBC)

Recognition of Israel as "the national State of the Jewish people" was the first requirement for peace with the Palestinians, Prime Minister Netanyahu told his Cabinet. (DPA)

Prime Minister Netanyahu told Quartet Representative Tony Blair that "the Palestinians demand that after September 26, there will be zero building" in the [settlements]. "That will not happen," Mr. Netanyahu said. Israel will not build "tens of thousands of housing units that are in the pipeline, but we will not freeze the lives of the residents". He did not provide details or timelines. He also told his Likud party, that "there is all or nothing, but there are also halfway options." (AP)

Israel released Hamas-affiliated Palestinian Legislative Committee (PLC) member Muhammad Jamal An-Natsheh after eight years in prison.

(Ma'an News Agency)

13

Palestinian militants fired a rocket at Israel without wounding anyone. (AFP)

Israeli forces arrested four Palestinians from the Nur Shams refugee camp in Tulkarm. (Ma'an News Agency)

Egyptian authorities arrested at least 12 jewellers accused of having cooperated with Hamas to smuggle large quantities of gold into the Gaza Strip, local media reported. (DPA)

Quartet Representative Tony Blair told the BBC he was confident a peace deal could be reached between the Israelis and Palestinians. Both sides had a "fixed determination to get a solution" and the "feeling of cynicism had been significantly reduced", according to Mr. Blair. (BBC)

Israeli military Spokesman Guy Inbar said that 250 tonnes of pipes, iron and other materials had begun to enter Gaza to upgrade a Gaza City waste treatment plant. Gaza water official Maher Najjar said that the upgraded plant would be able to double its current capacity. (AP)

Egyptian authorities had reopened the Rafah crossing between Egypt and the Gaza Strip in both directions, Gaza crossings officials announced.

(Ma'an News Agency)

Nearly 130 Israeli settlers broke into the yards of the Al-Aqsa Mosque while the Israeli police kept the Palestinians away. (IMEMC)

The Peace Now group said that construction of some 13,000 new homes for settlers could proceed immediately after the moratorium expired later this month. It added that another 25,000 units were in the pipeline but required further Government approval. An Israeli Government official, on condition of anonymity, confirmed that construction on around 2,000 homes could proceed without any further approval. Israeli officials speaking privately had said that the Government would avoid making any formal announcement when the moratorium expired while quietly preventing any major new construction. (AFP)

Israeli settlers set fire to Palestinian-owned cars near Nablus, spraying the word "revenge", a PA official said. (Ma'an News Agency)

A group of armed Israeli settlers occupied Palestinian farmland close to Doma village in the Nablus district and started bulldozing the land and uprooting trees. (IMEMC)

The Israeli [Turkel Committee] investigating the storming of a Gaza-bound ship in which nine Turkish activists were killed said that it had invited the ship's captain, Mahmut Tural, to testify. (Reuters)

A loosening of Israeli curbs on goods allowed into Gaza had helped its economy grow by an estimated 16 per cent in the first half of 2010, Oussama Kanaan, the resident representative of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the West Bank and Gaza, said. But the growth was "from a very low base" and it was unlikely to continue without a further easing of restrictions, said the official. Discussing the IMF report to be presented at a 21 September meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for Assistance to Palestinians (AHLIC) in New York, he told Reuters that real economic growth in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was forecast at 8 per cent in 2010 compared with 6.8 per cent last year. But the PA faced "serious liquidity problems" this year, he said, "unless adequate donor aid is promptly disbursed". (Reuters)

The General Assembly President, Ali Abdussalam Treki, expressed profound concern at the desecration of the ancient Muslim cemetery of Mamilla in Jerusalem. (www.un.org)

Navanethem Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, told the fifteenth session of the Human Rights Council that in Israel draft laws had given civil society cause for concern. Peaceful activists had been injured and arrested for protesting the construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In the Gaza Strip, the *de facto* authorities shut down civil society organizations. (www.unog.ch)

14

A Palestinian man was killed and another seriously wounded in an exchange of fire with Israeli troops in the northern Gaza Strip. (Haaretz)

Israeli troops arrested 13 Palestinians in the West Bank. (The Jerusalem Post)

An IDF inquiry revealed its finding that three Palestinians, including a 91-year old, killed by IDF tank fire on 12 September, near the Erez checkpoint in the Gaza Strip, were civilians not involved in "terrorism" as originally claimed. (*Haaretz*)

The IDF opened fire at Palestinian and international protesters near Beit Hanoun as they attempted to fill up a trench that the Israeli military had dug to create a buffer zone which cut Palestinian farmers from their land adjacent to the Gaza border. (*IMEMC*)

"We think it makes sense to extend the [settlement] moratorium," US Special Envoy for Middle East Peace Mitchell said after Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and PA President Abbas met for a second round of face-to-face talks in Sharm el-Sheikh. "Today the parties have begun a serious discussion on core issues. ... President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu also reiterated their intent to approach these negotiations in good faith and with a seriousness of purpose," he added. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Abbas convened later in the day for an [unscheduled] set of talks. Mr. Mitchell said negotiations would continue tomorrow in Jerusalem with Ms. Clinton's participation, and Israeli and Palestinian teams would meet again in the coming days ahead of further talks at the leadership level. (*Haaretz*)

Speaking before the parliament in Berlin, German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle said that it was time to get down to matters of substance [in the direct negotiations], calling on both sides to refrain from doing anything which could jeopardize the talks, and to create a positive environment to facilitate their success. He said that Germany attached great importance to the negotiations and was striving to strengthen "the moderate forces in the region willing to enter into talks". (www.auswaertiges-amt.de)

US Special Envoy Mitchell was scheduled to visit Damascus on 16 September in order to "present the Syrian leadership with a portrait of the direct talks between Israel and the Palestinians", the Syrian newspaper *Al-Watan* reported. (*Ynetnews*)

A construction company resumed its project in the "Modi'in Illit" settlement. (*Ynetnews*)

Israeli Vice-Prime Minister Silvan Shalom said, "I was against the [settlement] freeze and said it would be irreversible. Now we are facing the exact predicament I had predicted. [PA President] Abbas' demands are unacceptable. We are saying clearly - ten months have passed."

(*Ynetnews*)

Haaretz reported that the Jerusalem District Planning and Construction Committee would discuss on 7 October plans for 1,362 new homes in the "Givat Hamatos" settlement located between "Talpiot" and "Gilo". The hilltop area is currently the site of a caravan village populated mostly by Palestinians and Ethiopian immigrants. (*Haaretz*)

B'Tselem said in a new [report](#) that the IDF policy of refraining from thoroughly investigating the wrongful deaths of Palestinian civilians absolved IDF soldiers of responsibility even when criminal charges should have been brought against them. Between 2006 and 2009, the IDF had killed 1,510 Palestinians, 617 of them non-combatants, but out of the 148 requests for investigation submitted by B'Tselem, only 22 cases had been investigated, 29 had been closed, and 16 were pending, the report said. (*Ynetnews*, www.btselem.org)

At the daily noon briefing, Martin Nesirky, Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, when asked about the report by the UN Panel of Inquiry on the flotilla incident of 31 May 2010, said that the report was to go to the Secretary-General, who would decide what to do with it. Since it was an interim report that was procedural in nature, he said it was not likely to be published. (*UN News Centre*)

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Palestinian militants in Gaza fired two Qassam rockets, one of which exploded in an open area in an industrial zone, just south of Ashkelon. There were no injuries or property damage. Later, eight mortar shells were fired from Gaza hitting the Eshkol area near the Gaza Strip, an IDF spokesperson confirmed, saying that it was the largest number of projectiles fired from Gaza in a single day since March 2009. (*Haaretz*, *Reuters*)

Israeli aircraft bombed smuggling tunnels under the Gaza Strip's border with Egypt killing one and wounding three Palestinians, witnesses said.

(*DPA*)

The IDF said that one rocket and nine mortar shells were fired into Israel from Gaza, the heaviest day of fire since March 2009. At least two of the nine mortar shells were phosphorus bombs, Israeli police confirmed. The Israelis retaliated with an air strike that killed a Palestinian civilian and wounded two. (*The New York Times*, *Ynetnews*)

Hamas categorically denied Israeli claims about firing phosphorus shells or any rockets at the Negev region. "The occupation is looking for further reasons to justify its expected escalation against the Gaza Strip and thus it spreads allegations about firing shells at its territory", Hamas Spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said. (*Palestinian Information Center*)

After meeting with Israel's President Shimon Peres in Jerusalem, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton strongly endorsed Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu and PA President Abbas ahead of negotiations in Jerusalem saying, "This is the time, and these are the leaders". She described the two leaders as sincere and serious and urged them to seize "a moment of opportunity" despite deep pessimism about the US goal of resolving the conflict's main issues within a year. On his part, President Peres said, "Yesterday [the opening] in Sharm el-Sheikh was much better than all the pessimists and sceptics [anticipated]", adding, "I don't believe that you can solve the problems in one or two or three meetings, but it was an opening." Later, Ms. Clinton met separately with PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad and Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman. (*Reuters*)

"We have much work to do," Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said as he met with PA President Abbas for direct talks in Jerusalem. Mr. Netanyahu added that both parties were working hard to reach a peace agreement. Mr. Abbas did not make an official statement but, signing the Prime Minister's guestbook, the President wrote that he hoped to secure peace between Israel and the Palestinians as well as in the region. (*Ynetnews.com*, *Haaretz*)

Israel and the PA had moved further in a few days of intensive negotiations than the two sides in the Northern Ireland conflict did in "many, many months", US special envoy George Mitchell said, following the second consecutive day of the talks. Mr. Mitchell was unusually upbeat in his characterizations of the meetings, saying "serious and substantive discussions" were well under way, and that the talks started at a "very rapid pace".

(*The Jerusalem Post*)

Palestinian sources said that during their meeting, Prime Minister Netanyahu told President Abbas that Israel would resume construction in the settlements at the end of the month. Mr. Abbas reportedly replied that, in that case, the Palestinians would have to withdraw from peace negotiations.

(*Haaretz*)

Hamas leader Mahmoud Al-Zahhar said in a statement that the Palestinian negotiating team was [in a weak position] because of PA President Abbas' decision to resume talks, despite his earlier condition of a total halt to settlement construction. He said that the US would eventually side with Israel on the issues of Jerusalem and settlements, adding, "The US negotiator, as well as the Quartet, is only pressuring Palestinians to further compromise". He concluded that "resistance is the only way to confront Israel". (*Ma'an News Agency*)

More than 100 Palestinians demonstrated in Nablus to protest the return of Palestinian negotiators to talks with Israel. Organized by factions including the PFLP, the Palestine People's Party and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the protests were the first in Nablus against the talks. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

According to a [press release](#) issued by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the PA Minister of Education and Higher Education UNICEF, and UNRWA warned that educational standards have plummeted to an unacceptable level, despite the efforts of the PA and the support of the international community. "The international community should take a collective stand and support the education system, especially in the most

vulnerable areas, such as Gaza and 'Area C', said PA Minister Lamis Alami. (www.unicef.org)

A family in Jerusalem said friends and neighbours helped them resist what witnesses described as an attempted home takeover. The event reportedly began in the early morning in the As-Sa'diyah neighbourhood in the old city of Jerusalem, as Israeli settlers entered a wing of the family home and allegedly began removing furniture. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A Knesset committee had recommended that Interior Minister Eli Yishai and Internal Security Minister Yitzhak Aharonovich amend regulations for granting arms to Israeli settlers in the West Bank. This came days after Mr. Yishai called for a boost in arming settlers in the West Bank and loosening arms restrictions laws for "self-defence" purposes. Mr. Yishai charged the Department of Housing Director with the task of easing the issuance of arms permits to Jewish settlers living or working in the West Bank. (*Palestinian Information Center*)

The Office of the Spokesperson for the UN Secretary-General issued [statement](#) saying: "The Secretary-General has received the initial progress report he requested from the Panel of Inquiry on the 31 May 2010 Flotilla Incident. As expected, this first report is largely procedural in nature... The Secretary-General was heartened that the Panel unanimously reported it had the means available to it to respond to the high international concern that has been expressed concerning the flotilla incident. The Secretary-General looks forward to the Panel's substantive treatment of the flotilla incident after it has received and been able to review reports from both Israel and Turkey on their national investigations. The Secretary-General is pleased that the Panel is now fully under way and focused on fulfilling its very important responsibilities. He is encouraged that the Panel reported it had conducted its proceedings in a positive and collegial atmosphere." (www.un.org)

An organization of European Jews that wants to sail an aid ship to break the Israeli blockade of Gaza said that its ship was ready to go, but its port of departure remained a secret. A leader of the German Jewish Voice organization said the trip was being managed by Jews for Justice for Palestinians, a British group. The Jewish activists were already on board. (*DPA*)

The sentencing phase in the trial of Abdallah Abu Rahmah, the coordinator of the Bil'in Popular Committee Against the Wall and Settlements, began at Israel's Ofer Military Court. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A disciplinary tribunal reprimanded two students at Israel's Ben-Gurion University for taking part in a protest over the 31 May raid on the Gaza-bound flotilla, and said it would suspend them if they repeated their actions. One of the students said the "harsh and disproportional penalty would bar [Israeli] students from political activism". (*Haaretz*)

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An agricultural tools warehouse and an open area in the Rafah tunnels district were the sites of two Israeli air strikes on Gaza this morning, witnesses said. According to a Palestinian medical services spokesman, the latest strikes did not result in any injuries. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A member of a militant group in Gaza told *Ynetnews* that the white phosphorous in shells fired from Gaza into Israeli the previous day contained material gathered from shells Israel itself had fired on Gaza during Operation Cast Lead. (*Ynetnews*)

Palestinian security officials said that five Palestinians were detained overnight by Israeli forces in the Nablus and Hebron areas, while an Israeli military spokeswoman said that at least seven were taken for questioning. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel announced a total closure of the West Bank from midnight of 16 September until midnight of 19 September, for the Jewish Yom Kippur holiday. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In a letter to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Israeli Ambassador to the UN, Meron Reuben, wrote that Hamas' continued terrorism and total rejection of any negotiated settlement reinforced Israel's decision to exercise its right of self-defence against Hamas. (*KUNA*)

During a raid on the Nur Shams refugee camp near Nablus, an Israeli soldier shot and killed a local commander of the armed wing of Hamas. PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad said that the assassination was a "dangerous escalation that weakened the credibility of the already fragile political process." Accusing Israel and the PA of conspiring to kill 38-year old Iyad abu Shilbayeh, Hamas subsequently threatened retaliation. (*AFP*, *Haaretz*, *Ma'an News Agency*, *Ynetnews*)

Israel paid out NIS 89 million over the past decade in compensation to Palestinians and foreigners who suffered damages or injury from the IDF, documents obtained by *Haaretz* show. All in all, the State paid out in 524 damages suits. (*Haaretz*)

The Obama administration wants Israel to expand the 10-month moratorium on West Bank settlement construction for another three months, according to London-based paper *Asharq Al Awsat*. The paper reported this morning that PA President Abbas had agreed to the US suggestion, but that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had yet to respond. (*Asharq Al Awsat*, *The Jerusalem Post*)

Israel had rejected a proposal to extend by three months the West Bank settlement building freeze, officials close to the negotiations said today. (*Reuters*)

European leaders will urge Israel today to extend a freeze on settlement activity. The EU "calls for an extension of the moratorium decided by Israel," in draft conclusions seen by *AFP* and due to be signed off by national leaders at a Brussels summit. (*AFP*)

Offering a positive note after two days of inconclusive Mideast peace negotiations, President Abbas said today that he sees no alternative to continuing the talks in search of a peace deal with Israel. "We all know there is no alternative to peace through negotiations, so we have no alternative other than to continue these efforts," Mr. Abbas said, speaking through an interpreter during a welcoming ceremony in Ramallah for visiting US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. (*AP*)

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton today ended three days of talks with Israeli and Palestinian leaders with no visible sign of progress on breaking a deadlock over building in West Bank settlements. Wrapping up a round of negotiations that began in Egypt on Tuesday, Mrs. Clinton headed to Jordan for lunch with King Abdullah after meeting President Abbas in Ramallah. Giving an upbeat assessment of her meetings with Israeli and Palestinian leaders, she told ABC News in Jerusalem: "I would say they're in a constructive channel and that has been very reassuring to us." (*Reuters*, *ABC News*)

Speaking in Amman following a meeting with King Abdullah, US Secretary of State Clinton said that Israeli and Palestinian leaders were committed to the ongoing efforts and that peace was "within reach." (*AFP*)

Arab League Secretary-General Amre Moussa said today that peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians should be given "a chance" despite suspicions about their results. Mr. Moussa was speaking to a meeting of Arab Foreign Ministers. (*AFP*)

Arab Ministers said today that they continued to extend an offer of peace to Israel, and called on the Palestinians to resolve their divisions to strengthen their hand in the talks. "The Arab Initiative is still being offered and it represents a chance for peace," Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari said at the start of an Arab League meeting in Cairo. "This peace cannot be possible without the full Israeli withdrawal to 1967 borders... and establishing an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital," he said. (*Reuters*)

In a [declaration](#), the European Council strongly welcomed the launch of the direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, calling for calm and restraint. The declaration also recalled that settlements were illegal under international law and called for an extension of the settlement moratorium. (www.consilium.europa.eu)

A World Bank [report](#) indicated that the Palestinian economy continued to grow in the first half of 2010 and was likely to reach 8 per cent growth this year, but that external financial aid remained the primary driver and that Israeli restrictions continued to undermine the viability of the economy. The report, issued ahead of the 21 September meeting of the AHLC stated that, if sustained, the PA's efforts in institution-building and delivery of public services would make it well-positioned for the establishment of a State at any point in the near future. At the same time, the World Bank approved an additional \$40 million grant for budget support to the PA. ([www.worldbank.org](#))

Despite Israel's promise to ease the closure of the Gaza Strip, the Gaza school year opened this week with a severe shortage of classrooms, the Israeli human rights organization Gisha reported. (*Wafa*)

Israeli authorities were reported to have started preparations for the construction of a bridge at the Bab al-Maghariba (Mughrabi) Gate adjacent to the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. The Al-Aqsa Foundation for Waqf and Heritage stated that the digging will have a direct impact on the foundations of the mosque. (*IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel's Foreign Ministry Director-General, Yossi Gal, told the Turkel Committee that Malaysia was considering petitioning the International Court of Justice in The Hague over the blockade of Gaza. Mr. Gal made the comment during his testimony to the Committee, which was investigating the Gaza flotilla incident. (*Haaretz*)

In an effort to increase the PA's influence inside Gaza, plans were being finalized to deploy PA officials at the Kerem Shalom crossing to the Gaza Strip in the coming months, according to Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) Maj.-Gen. Eitan Dangoth. He also said that the international community needed to make sure that the PA was involved in all the projects it was carrying out inside Gaza. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Filippo Grandi, expressed thanks to the Arab States and the Arab League's Secretariat for their continued support of UNRWA and for the Palestine refugees served by the Agency. Speaking at the meeting of the League's Foreign Ministers' Council in Cairo, Mr. Grandi called on Arab leaders to bolster their support for the refugees during a period of unprecedented financial difficulty for the Agency. ([www.unrwa.org](#))

UNRWA reported that 40,000 Palestinian children eligible to enrol in UNRWA schools in Gaza had to be turned away this week because materials for school construction had not been approved to enter the area since 2007. "UNRWA needs 100 new schools to meet the enrolment demands of the children of Gaza," the agency said in a [press release](#). (*UN News Centre, www.unrwa.org*)

According to *IMEMC, Israel Radio* reported that Israel intended to resume settlement construction immediately after the end of the freeze later this month and build 2,500 housing units in the "Modi'in Ilit" settlement near Ramallah. (*IMEMC*)

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In its weekly report on Israeli human rights violation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the Palestinian Center for Human Rights stated that Israeli forces had killed four Palestinian civilians in Gaza and one in the West Bank over the past week. ([www.pchrgaza.org](#))

US Special Envoy George Mitchell will be holding talks in Beirut with Lebanese President Michel Sleiman and other top leaders, stressing Washington's wish for a comprehensive resolution of the Middle East conflict that included peace between Israel and Lebanon and between Israel and Syria. Mr. Mitchell had held a similar meeting with Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad in Damascus the previous day. (*Haaretz*)

A senior Israeli Government official told *AFP* that Prime Minister Netanyahu had not changed his position and that "there is no question of extending the moratorium". (*AFP*)

In a [briefing](#) to the Security Council, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry, said that the direct negotiations renewed hopes for peace and that the UN Secretary-General echoed calls for Israel to extend the moratorium on settlements. (*UN News Centre*)

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In a *Channel 1* interview, Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak said that Israel's demand that Palestinians recognize Israel as a Jewish State was unnecessary. He said that in Israel there was a Jewish majority. "I say to Israeli citizens ... that there is no such thing as a state in which all the citizens are Jews," Mr. Mubarak said. He cautioned Israel against renewing settlement construction in the West Bank lest it torpedoed the founding of a Palestinian State and provoked increased terrorism against Israel and the United States. He opined that a continued settlement freeze and serious negotiations could lead to a framework for a peace agreement within a few months. Mr. Mubarak expressed optimism that both Prime Minister Netanyahu and PA President Abbas were serious about reaching a peace agreement. (*Haaretz*)

A member of the PA delegation to the peace talks said that PA President Abbas and the Palestinians would not make any concessions to Israel. He said that the continuation of the peace process depended on Israel's actions on the ground, especially regarding "settlement expansion" adding that, "If they extend the settlement freeze, the negotiations will continue. If not, the talks will be stopped." (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman said that there was no chance that Israel would extend its moratorium. "The settlement freeze is just a Palestinian excuse to undermine peace talks, and anyone who seeks excuses will find another excuse even if the freeze is extended," Mr. Liberman said. (*Haaretz*)

A large convoy organized by former British MP George Galloway began making its way from around the world to the Gaza Strip. Mr. Galloway said that the plan was for the more than 450 vehicles to come by ship to the Al-Arish Port in Egypt where they hoped to be allowed to unload and drive into Gaza. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces shut down a peaceful rally in Hebron that was organized by the Youth Against Settlements group to protest the continued closure of the city's main street, and the restrictions on residents' movements. Organizers said that Israeli soldiers blocked roads leading to the Old City and prevented demonstrators from marching to the city's main square, where a weekly sit-in was held near the municipality building. The building was adjacent to "Beit Romanu", an illegal outpost which took over a Palestinian primary school. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

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Abu Ubaida, Spokesman for Hamas' military wing, Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, warned Israel against "continuing its crimes against resistance fighters in the West Bank" following the IDF assassination of Eyad Shilabaya, a Hamas leader in Tulkarm. He said that this killing "would not pass without punishment", accusing the PA security forces of collaborating with Israel over the assassination. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A Palestinian man identified as Nader Ghubun, 23, was injured when the IDF opened fire while he collected aggregate near the border area in Beit Lahiya, northern Gaza, medical sources said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Egypt detained Hamas' Security Service Commander Mohammad Khamis Dababesh at the Cairo International Airport, an Egyptian security source said. The detention was made in connection with a thwarted attempt to smuggle millions of dollars worth of wireless communication devices into Gaza through the border-tunnel complex. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel does not plan to extend a moratorium on settlement-building in the West Bank, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said at the weekly Cabinet meeting. He said that there had been no change in Israel's position, adding, "I stand firmly behind Israel's security needs, to prevent a repetition of the rocket fire on Israel's citizens from Gaza". (*CNN International*)

In an interview with *ABC News*, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton reiterated the US call for a renewal of the settlement construction ban. She expressed the hope that Mr. Netanyahu would decide to extend the moratorium beyond its deadline. He said that the direct talks were just starting, adding, "So we are working hard to make sure there remains a conducive atmosphere to constructive thought." (*AFP*)

Former Israeli Prime Minister Olmert told a Geneva Initiative conference in Tel Aviv that during negotiations with PA President Abbas in 2008, he had offered a solution to the Palestine refugee problem that would have been in line with the Arab League peace plan and had promised that any measures would be the result of a coordinated agreement. He recalled that the Bush Administration had assured him that the United States would be willing to absorb some 100,000 Palestinian refugees as American citizens, should Israel reach a permanent settlement with the Palestinian Authority. He said that every ruling Israeli Government must accept the fact that peace negotiations would be based on the establishment of a Palestinian State, along the 1967 borders, and would include a land exchange and the realization that neither the Palestinians nor Israel would ever have full sovereignty over Jerusalem. He said that the Bush Administration had accepted the "eight-point document" drafted by Israel's defense establishment, which included Israel's central security interests, adding, "[President] Bush promised to pass this along to the Obama Administration", Mr. Olmert said. "The Palestinians recognized this document and they were not opposed to a single one of its points." (*Haaretz*)

Israel's Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman told reporters that the principle guiding the peace talks "must not be land for peace, but an exchange of land and people", redrawing the borders and transferring a number of Jewish Arabs to Palestinian rule, while also incorporating residents of Jewish settlements in the West Bank into Israel's borders. No one would be uprooted from their homes. He also said that Israeli Arab leaders do not recognize Israel's right to exist. Asked if Mr. Liberman's position reflected Israel's position, Israeli Government Spokesman Mark Regev said that the different parties in Mr. Netanyahu's coalition "have different political outlooks". Husam Zomlot, a Palestinian spokesman, said, "Mr. Liberman holds the second-most important position in the Israeli Government. Therefore we are extremely discouraged by his remarks". (*AP*)

Israeli President Shimon Peres and Defense Minister Ehud Barak as well as PA President Abbas travelled to New York for the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly. They were all expected to conduct top-level talks on the sidelines of the General Assembly meetings. (*AFP*)

Palestinian crossing official Raed Fattouh said that Israel would open two crossings into Gaza. He said between 190 and 200 truckloads of goods would be granted entry through the Kerem Shalom crossing in southern Gaza through which limited amounts of cooking gas and industrial diesel would also be allowed in. The Karni crossing, east of Gaza City, would also be open for the entry of 119 truckloads of wheat and animal feed.

(*Ma'an News Agency*)

A number of Israeli Ministers visited the parents of detained IDF soldier Gilad Shalit in their tent outside Prime Minister Netanyahu's resident in Jerusalem where they had been camping for more than two months. The Father Noam Shalit said that he had no plans to end his protest until his son returned. (*Ynetnews.com*)

The Dutch Association of Municipalities (VNG) said that it had cancelled a visit to the Netherlands by a group of 25 Israeli community leaders because several among them were from the West Bank. "The West Bank is not officially a part of Israel. And, negotiations are underway between Israelis and Palestinians about the West Bank. The VNG does not want to give the impression of favouring one side over the other by organising this visit," VNG's spokesman Arjen Konijnenberg said. The president of the Israeli group, Shlomo Buhbut, said in a statement that he regretted the cancellation of the trip, adding that the decision "harms the chances of furthering peace" in the Middle East. (*AFP*)

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Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said that Israel would want to keep its troops on the eastern border of a future Palestinian State, telling US Jewish leaders that an international force alone could not ensure Israel's security. (*Haaretz*)

Anti-wall protest organizers said that an Israeli force had entered Bil'in, searched homes and "tried to arrest local youth", firing tear gas at young residents who responded by throwing stones at soldiers. An IDF spokesperson said she was not familiar with the incident. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Egypt was closely monitoring its border with Gaza after receiving information that a group of Palestinian militants was attempting to infiltrate Egypt's Sinai to launch several projectiles toward Israel, an Egyptian security source said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In a statement, the Al-Nasser Salah ad-Din Brigades, the military wing affiliated with the Resistance Committees, said that its combatants fired three mortar shells at Israeli jeeps east of Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip overnight. An Israeli army spokeswoman could not confirm if a force was fired at, but said that a shell landed in the Eshkol Regional Council building overnight. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Hamas accused PA security forces of detaining 14 party affiliates across the West Bank. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

"The negotiations will continue as long as the settlement (construction) remains frozen, but I am not prepared to negotiate an agreement for a single day more," PA President Abbas told *AFP*. (*AFP*)

A diplomatic source, on condition of anonymity, said that Israeli President Shimon Peres met PA President Abbas on the sidelines of the General Assembly and said that Mr. Peres acknowledged the settlement issue was an obstacle, but was hopeful a solution could be found. "I do believe that the United States as well as Israel is in a serious search how to bridge over the present difficulties," President Peres told reporters at the UN. (*Reuters*)

Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak met with US National Security Adviser Jim Jones in Washington and discussed with him the peace negotiations with the Palestinians as well as the possible renewal of construction in settlements. He told his host that "the decisions that lie before Israel and the Palestinians are important ones, far more dramatic than the continuation of construction in [settlements]". Mr. Barak's office said that Mr. Jones had stressed the importance of achieving a permanent settlement with the Palestinians following the "recent attacks carried out by terror agents" trying to prevent a peace agreement. (*Ynetnews*)

The heads of the Israeli and Palestinian negotiating teams, Yitzhak Molcho and Saeb Erakat, were scheduled to meet sometime during the next 48 hours, Palestinian sources told *Ynetnews*. The sources said that the two will prepare for another round of direct talks between Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas, which had yet to be scheduled. (*Ynetnews*)

Arab League Deputy Secretary-General Ahmed Bin Helli denounced statements made the previous day by Israeli Foreign Minister Liberman on the principles that should guide the peace talks, describing them as unreasonable. He said that Mr. Liberman's statements were intended to derail the talks. (*BBC Arabic Service*)

Hamas said that it had passed messages in the past to the US Government requesting dialogue with the United States and supporting a two-State solution within the 1967 borders. In the organization's biannual report, it was stated that these messages were relayed to officials in Washington, D.C., through American political figures and academics that visited Gaza. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, speaking after a meeting hosted by Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre with Foreign Ministers of Arab States, said that the PA still needed about \$500 million this year to fund everything from salaries to infrastructure. Mr. Fayyad said that the PA had received \$3.8 billion in budget support since the Paris donor meeting in late 2007, where a total of \$5.7 billion had been pledged. (*AFP, Reuters*)

The EU had contributed over €3.58 million in its second disbursement to the PA to aid the rebuilding of Gaza's private sector, an EU statement said.

The EU would contribute a total of €22 million towards the programme, launched by the PA following Israel's "Operation Cast Lead". (*Ma'an*)

News Agency)

Twenty private cars were allowed into the Gaza Strip. In a statement issued the previous day, the IDF said that Israel would allow the import of private vehicles into the Gaza Strip for the first time since 2007. (AFP)

A Syrian ship carrying aid to be delivered to the Gaza Strip docked in the Egyptian port of Al-Arish, *Israel Radio* reported. The ship reportedly contains 650 tons of food and medical supplies that will be unloaded at Al-Arish and delivered to the Gaza Strip via land. (Haaretz)

During the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur on 17 and 18 September, Israeli forces set up cement road blocks at the entrances to several suburbs of Jerusalem, including Al-Isawiya, north-east of Jerusalem, and Sur Bahir in the south. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli settlers began harvesting Palestinian olives in Qalqilya and Nablus in the West Bank, a PA official said. Clashes broke out between settlers and villagers in the village of Burin as locals threw stones to prevent settlers from harvesting the crops. (Ma'an News Agency)

Settlers uprooted approximately a hundred grape trees in the Al-Buera village in Hebron, owners of the grape plantation said. (Ma'an News Agency)

The Israeli group Peace Now took a planeload of Knesset members, reporters, and photographers on an aerial tour of the northern West Bank.

The goal was to give a bird's-eye view of the growth of the settlements and outposts, and to argue that the land between the Jordan River and the sea would soon become indivisible for all practical purposes, and the two-State option would cease to exist. (The New York Times)

Hossam Ahmed, the Hamas official in charge of refugees, said that teaching human rights at UNRWA schools in the Gaza Strip is in contradiction to Islamic rules and laws, adding that UNRWA had exceeded its role by adding the subject to the curriculum without having Hamas' approval.

(Xinhua)

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Israeli President Shimon Peres discussed the recent launch of direct Israeli-Palestinian talks. Mr. Ban stressed the significance of extending and expanding the Israeli Government's settlement restraint. He repeated his condemnation of rocket attacks on Israel and spoke of the positive impact of the change in policy towards Gaza, including his hope that it would be sustained and expanded. The Israeli-Palestinian talks came up during Mr. Ban's separate meeting with King Abdullah II of Jordan, during which he highlighted the support of the Quartet in helping the parties achieve a final agreement within a year, and stressed the need for a conducive regional environment. He also praised the positive role of Jordan in Palestinian state-building efforts. Mr. Ban also discussed the launch of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations with French President Nicolas Sarkozy. (UN News Centre)

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Deputy Secretary-General Petko Dragand [told](#) the UNCTAD Board that the Palestinian economy would be boosted through a new joint programme involving six international agencies. He added that the three-year programme had three main goals: to contribute to the long-term development of the Palestinian economy; to enhance the institutional capacity of Palestinian economic institutions at the governmental and business levels; and to strike a balance between traditional UN assistance focusing on humanitarian needs and assistance and the long-term strategic development objectives of the Palestinian economy. The three-year programme is being finalized and will be submitted to the Palestinian Authority in the next few weeks. (www.unctad.org)

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IDF Chief of General Staff Gabi Ashkenazi warned that violent clashes could resume between Israelis and Palestinians should peace negotiations break down. He told the Knesset that he did not expect a cycle of violence as severe as the second intifada, but sufficient preparation was needed in any event. (Haaretz, Ynetnews)

The Quartet held a meeting at the UN Headquarters in New York, attended by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Catherine Ashton, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Quartet representative Tony Blair and UN Middle East Envoy George Mitchell. "The Quartet noted that the commendable Israeli settlement moratorium instituted last November has had a positive impact and urged its continuation. The Quartet recalled that unilateral actions by either party, including settlement activity, cannot prejudice the outcome of negotiations and will not be recognized by the international community", according to a [statement](#) issued after the meeting. (UN News Centre)

On the sidelines of the UN anti-poverty summit, US Secretary of State Clinton pressed Arab officials to bolster their financial contributions to the Palestinian Authority and to support the nascent peace talks more visibly. Ms. Clinton raised the question of aid to the Palestinians directly with the Emir of Qatar during a lengthy meeting, State Department Spokesman Philip Crowley [said](#). She also pressed for more aid when she met with members of the Arab League Follow-Up Committee on the Arab Peace Initiative. Arab diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity, said there was little trust that the Palestinian Authority would use the contributions wisely. (The Washington Post)

Speaking to a closed meeting of Jewish American leaders in New York sponsored by the S. Daniel Abraham Center for Middle East Peace, PA President Abbas made clear that he wanted to continue the dialogue with Israel and signalled that he was backing away from his ultimatum to walk away from peace talks. "I cannot say I will leave the negotiations, but it's very difficult for me to resume talks if Prime Minister Netanyahu declares that he will continue his activity in the West Bank and Jerusalem," Mr. Abbas said. (AP)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said during a tour of communities near Gaza that he would favourably consider a national referendum before finalizing any agreement with the Palestinians. "It's clear to me that any agreement I secure would be presented to the people to decide, and there are several methods for that. ... Such decision requires a national verdict, and I therefore said I would consider [a referendum]," he said in Sderot. (Ynetnews)

In a meeting with 60 Jewish leaders from The Israel Project in New York, PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad said that he would try to eliminate incitement against Israelis. According to a [press release](#) issued by The Israel Project, Mr. Fayyad had criticized Israeli military incursions, which undermined the credibility of the PA. (Ma'an News Agency, www.theisraelproject.org)

An Islamic Jihad spokesman said that Fatah had participated in a meeting in Gaza City called by Islamic Jihad and Hamas to form a stance on the direct talks and discussed "Israeli threats to launch aggression against the Gaza Strip". (Ma'an News Agency)

Nablus businessman and independent politician Munib Al-Masri arrived in Gaza to discuss the ratification of a unity deal between Hamas and Fatah.

Mr. Al-Masri said that he was scheduled to meet with Fatah leaders the following day to brainstorm and discuss what was going on in order to respond to any emergency that might threaten the national project. (Ma'an News Agency)

The AHLC [held](#) a meeting at UN Headquarters and called on donors to "make available without delay sufficient assistance to meet the [PA's] 2010 recurrent financing requirements". The AHLC also recommended "facilitating a more enabling environment for robust private sector-led growth and for enhanced sustainability of the Palestinian economy", and called on the Israeli Government "to take further steps to dismantle restrictions and

measures impeding development and trade including in area C, facilitate growth of agricultural services, and allow for broader public and private investment.” In his opening statement, the Chair of the AHLC, Norway’s Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre [said](#), “The Palestinian Authority’s need for regular and predictable financial support is all the more urgent, as the Paris pledges of 2007 will expire at the end of 2010. A new pledging conference is therefore required to shore up the next Palestinian development plan (PRDP) for 2011–2013. As the Chair of the AHLC, I stand ready to initiate preparations for a donor conference at an appropriate, agreed time.” ([www.regjeringen.no](#))

Haaretz reported that the AHLC meeting in New York had ended abruptly due to a disagreement between PA Prime Minister Fayyad and Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Daniel Ayalon on the terms of a two-State solution. Mr. Ayalon cancelled a scheduled joint press conference with Mr. Fayyad after the meeting. “Israel will continue to ease restrictions imposed on Palestinians,” Mr. Ayalon said, but stressed that that would only be done within the “confines of the security requirements.” Mr. Ayalon reportedly rejected the Palestinian demand that Israel allow exports from Gaza, arguing that any exports coming out of Gaza would have to pass through Israel, creating a real danger that Hamas would take advantage of the export commerce to reinforce its terrorist activity. (*Haaretz*)

The Israeli army announced that it would close all crossings between the West Bank and Israel at midnight ahead of the seven-day Jewish holiday of Sukkot, but Palestinians in need of medical attention would be allowed into Israel. (*Ma’an News Agency*)

Israel allowed the second shipment of private cars into the Gaza Strip in a move to fulfil its promise to lift a ban on vehicle imports into Gaza. (*Xinhua*)

Americans for Peace Now released an iPhone app which provides a comprehensive settlements database, integrated with mapping technologies. The viewer can easily see where the 1967 border is, follow the route of the separation wall or zoom in through satellite images on any spot in the West Bank. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

A number of Palestinians were wounded in clashes with Israeli settlers who had invaded olive orchards and attempted to steal olives belonging to Palestinian farmers in the village of Burin near Nablus. (*IMEMC*)

Israel released five Palestinian detainees. (*Ma’an News Agency*)

The UN Committee of Independent Experts monitoring and assessing Israeli and Palestinian investigations into serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws during the Gaza conflict issued its [report](#). “The parties responded, albeit in a different manner, to the call of the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council to meet their obligations to investigate allegations of crimes detailed in the Fact-Finding Mission report,” said the Committee’s chair, Christian Tomuschat. “The investigations, however, remain incomplete in some cases or fall significantly short of meeting international standards in others.” ([www.ohchr.org](#))

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to discuss the situation in the Middle East, among other issues. This followed a meeting of the Middle East Quartet with Foreign Ministers of the Arab League. (*UN News Centre*)

22

An Israeli security guard shot and killed a 32-year-old Palestinian in Silwan in East Jerusalem. Two other Palestinians were reportedly injured in the incident, one of them seriously. The guard told investigators that he was driving through the town and stopped at a gas station. When several Palestinians blocked and stoned his car, he shot several times in their direction. (*Haaretz*, *Ynetnews*)

Palestinians clashed with Israeli forces in Silwan after the killing of a Palestinian man. Also, Israeli riot police entered the compound of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem to push back Palestinians who had thrown rocks at the Western Wall below the Mosque. The action came after more than 10 Israelis were wounded when hundreds of Palestinian protestors began hurling stones at security officials. An Israeli man was stabbed and moderately injured by a rioter near Mount Scopus. (*Haaretz*, *Ma’an News Agency*)

Israeli forces arrested overnight and early in the morning 16 Palestinians from Nablus, Bethlehem, Hebron and Jenin. Israeli forces also raided a school in Hebron’s Old City and detained two ninth-grade students. (*Ma’an News Agency*, *Wafa*)

During a meeting with PA President Abbas, Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak said that “we must not miss the opportunity to reach a breakthrough”. (*IMEMC*, *The Jerusalem Post*)

The European People’s Party, the largest political group in the European Parliament, issued a [statement](#) expressing support for the resumption of direct negotiations and the Quartet. (*KUNA*, [www.eppgroup.eu](#))

Following a two-hour meeting, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak issued a joint statement calling on Israelis and Palestinians to show “courage and creativity”. (*AFP*)

Palestinian Liaison Officer Raed Fattouh said that Israeli authorities would partially open the Kerem Shalom crossing in the southern Gaza Strip and 100 truckloads of humanitarian aid and goods were scheduled for transfer into Gaza. (*Ma’an News Agency*)

A Norwegian representative said that the country’s Foreign Minister, Jonas Gahr Støre, regretted Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon’s “distortion of facts” regarding an AHLC meeting in New York earlier. Israeli news reports had quoted Mr. Ayalon as saying that the meeting had ended abruptly after a disagreement. “The meeting did not end abruptly, but was completed as normal,” the Norwegian Foreign Minister’s spokesperson said. (*Ma’an News Agency*)

The Syrian Red Crescent said that a Syrian-sponsored aid boat carrying goods for Gaza had docked in the Egyptian port of Al-Arish. (*Ma’an News Agency*)

The Fact-Finding Mission appointed by the UN Human Rights Council to investigate the 31 May incident onboard an aid flotilla headed for Gaza issued its [report](#), which concluded that Israeli forces violated international law, “including international humanitarian and human rights law”, during and after their lethal attack. (*The Guardian*, [www.ohchr.org](#))

Israeli forces razed a Palestinian home in At-Tur in East Jerusalem on the ground that it had been built without a license. (*Ma’an News Agency*)

In the wake of the shooting by an Israeli settler guard, which killed one Palestinian and injured two others, the Head of Jerusalem Affairs of the PLO, Ahmed Qurei, issued a statement, expressing outrage that Israel continued to enact its ethnic cleansing policy on Jerusalem through the work of settlers while the leaders were talking peace in New York. (*Ma’an News Agency*)

About 40 protesters gathered to call upon New Yorkers to boycott the Israeli dance troupe Batsheva Dance Company. The organizers said the company “is attempting to whitewash Israel’s image, which makes them complicit in the ongoing violations of Palestinian human rights”. (*Wafa*)

23

An Israeli settler in East Jerusalem opened fire during an altercation with a Palestinian resident of Silwan. Security in the Old City was significantly tightened following the previous day’s unrest in the Silwan neighbourhood. (*Ma’an News Agency*, *The Jerusalem Post*, *Ynetnews*)

Israeli forces arrested 16 Palestinians on suspicion of rioting in Jerusalem over the past two days. (*Ynetnews*)

In its [weekly report](#) on Israeli human rights violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights reported that in addition to the 22 September shooting by an Israeli settler guard, one Palestinian had been extra-judicially killed by Israeli forces. ([www.pchrgaza.org](#))

Hamas political official Ezzat al-Rushuq said that Fatah official Azzam al-Ahmad would meet with Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal on Friday in Damascus to discuss reconciliation efforts. (*AFP*)

Ehab Al-Ghsain, Spokesman for Gaza's Interior Ministry, said that Hamas had arrested many Palestinians in Gaza on suspicion of collaborating with Israel to kill senior Hamas members. (*Reuters*)

[Speaking](#) to the UN General Assembly, US President Obama stressed the importance of supporting the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, called on Israel to extend the settlement freeze and said that: "When we come back here next year, we can have an agreement that will lead to a new member of the United Nations – an independent state of Palestine, living in peace with Israel." (*AFP* , *Haaretz* , [www.un.org](#))

Israel should loosen restrictions in the West Bank and Gaza immediately as a sign of good faith that new peace talks can produce a deal within a year, PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad said. "Part of what really needs to happen in a hurry, if not the end to the occupation itself, is for there to begin to be signs of it ending," Mr. Fayyad told an audience in Washington. (*AFP*)

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu praised the report by the UN Human Rights Council investigative mission on the Israeli raid of a Gaza aid flotilla on 31 May and expressed the hope that Israel would "learn to use language of international law and act in line with it." (*AP* , *Haaretz*)

The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement saying that Israel would study the UN Human Rights Council investigative committee report but saw no reason to cooperate with it. (*Reuters* , [www.mfa.gov.il](#))

PA President Abbas met with Palestinian-Americans from across the US. In an hour-long meeting, he said: "If they want negotiations, then they will continue with [the] settlement freeze; otherwise, the negotiations will stop, and we are sorry to waste the opportunity." (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Jordan's King Abdullah II warned, in a media interview, that if the issue of the building moratorium in West Bank settlements was not solved, a regional war could break out by the end of the year. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The "Yesha Council" of settlers criticized US President Obama's speech to the General Assembly saying that he had given in to "Palestinian threats". (*AFP*)

Two leading Palestinian press advocacy groups, the Palestinian Centre for Development and Media Freedoms and the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate, spoke out against what they called Israel's escalation in arrests and violence against journalists in East Jerusalem. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

24

A Palestinian fisherman was shot dead by the Israeli navy off the coast of Gaza, medics said. (*AFP*)

A one-year-old Palestinian infant died in Al Esawiyya in East Jerusalem after inhaling gas fired by Israeli soldiers at dozens of youths hurling stones. (*IMEMC*)

In the village of Nî'lin, west of Ramallah, some 40 Palestinians, Israeli and international activists clashed with Israeli security forces. According to Palestinian reports, a protester had been lightly hurt by live ammunition used to disperse the anti-wall rally. Meanwhile, an IDF soldier was lightly injured in an anti-wall protest in the Palestinian village of Nabi Saleh, north-west of Ramallah. (*Ynetnews*)

Israeli police restricted the entry of male worshippers under the age of 50 to Al-Haram Al-Sharif. Some 6,000 worshippers attended the prayers. Massive police forces had been deployed in the area to prevent the resumption of riots. (*Ynetnews*)

"Israel is prepared to reach a compromise acceptable to all parties to consider extending the freeze on [settlement] construction, provided that the freeze will not be total," a senior Government official said on conditions of anonymity. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu had ordered his special envoy to the negotiations, Yitzhak Molcho, to remain in the US for further discussions, while President Abbas and his leading advisers were also in the US meeting with American officials (*AFP* , *AP*)

Israel is pressing the UN Human Rights Council to postpone debate on its report on the Gaza flotilla raid until it finishes its own internal inquiry into the incident, the Israeli envoy to the UN in Geneva said today. Aharon Leshno Yaar said that the outcome of the UN report had been pre-determined. (*Haaretz*)

Fatah and Hamas officials held a meeting in Damascus and reportedly managed to achieve some progress in solving disagreements. The meeting was headed by Azzam al-Ahmad of Fatah and Khaled Mashaal, Hamas Political Bureau Chief. Moussa Abu Marzouq of Hamas read out a joint statement following the meeting and said that it had been held in a positive atmosphere. He added that the two sides had agreed to meet again soon in an effort to achieve a final draft for national unity in cooperation with all factions. (*IMEMC*)

25

A number of Israeli settlers working as security guards opened fire at Palestinian homes in the Al Sa'diyya neighbourhood in East Jerusalem. No injuries were reported. Furthermore, clashes were reported after Palestinian youths took off to the streets and burned tires. The Israeli police said a Molotov cocktail had been hurled at a settler home in East Jerusalem. A 35-year-old Palestinian woman was hit in the head by a rubber-coated bullet fired by the Israeli army and moderately injured while standing on her balcony in Al Esawiyya in East Jerusalem. (*IMEMC*)

The armed wing of Hamas said that a 21-year-old Palestinian, Mahmud al-Ahmarine, had died in the Gaza Strip from wounds received from Israeli tank fire on 14 September. (*AFP*)

Israeli soldiers fired rounds of live ammunition at activists participating in a weekly protest in the West Bank village of Bil'in against the wall and settlements. A Palestinian was shot in the leg. (*IMEMC*)

Israeli soldiers attacked a non-violent protest in Beit Ummar against an Israeli military order preventing farmers from reaching their land near a settlement, wounding at least four persons, including two international activists. A Palestinian photographer, Nasser Shiyoukhi, working for the *AP* , suffered a broken rib. He said he had been kicked and verbally abused while in custody before being released without charge. (*AP* , *IMEMC*)

In his [address](#) during the General Assembly's high-level debate, PA President Abbas said Israel must stop all settlement activities, dismantle the barrier and end its policy of blockade and closures before a lasting Middle East peace agreement could be reached. He pledged nevertheless to exert every effort to achieve such a deal within the next year, which would address all final status issues, such as Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, borders, water, security, and prisoners. He added that Israel was deliberately distorting the religious, spiritual, and historical identity of Jerusalem; engaged in "an unjust and unprecedented blockade by land, air and sea" of the Gaza Strip; imprisoned thousands of Palestinians in jails and detention centres; and maintained checkpoints and closures that restricted the daily lives of Palestinians. (*UN News Centre* , [www.un.org](#))

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon held a meeting with Arab League Secretary-General Amre Moussa at UN Headquarters in New York. Their talks focused on the recently launched direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians and the importance of establishing conditions for sustaining the talks, including the extension of the Israeli moratorium on settlement activity. (*UN News Centre*)

A Palestinian protestor sustained critical injuries when he was shot by Israeli soldiers as he approached the border fence near Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip. According to the Israeli army, Palestinians refused to back away even after soldiers had fired warning shots in the air. (*Ynetnews*)

Israeli forces raided a school in Hebron's Old City and detained a seventh-grade student. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Palestinian gunmen opened fire on two Israeli cars near Hebron, lightly wounding a man and his pregnant wife. The second car targeted by the gunmen evaded fire. (*Haaretz*)

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine announced in a statement that it was suspending its membership in the PLO to protest US-backed peace talks, saying that it would not be a cover for policies that would devastate the national cause. (*Haaretz*)

A boat carrying eight Jewish activists from Israel, Europe and the United States, the "Irene", set sail for Gaza. (*AP*)

27

Three Israeli tanks, three bulldozers and a troop carrier crossed the Gaza border near Khan Yunis and levelled the area, a Hamas source said. The troops opened fire towards Palestinian land, but no injuries were reported. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces raided the village of Talfit in the Nablus district and detained five Palestinians. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Three members of the Saraya Al-Quds Brigades (armed wing of Islamic Jihad) were killed in an Israeli air strike outside El Bureij refugee camp in the southern Gaza Strip. An Israeli army spokeswoman said that a group of fighters preparing to fire a rocket at Israel had been targeted, and that the air strike caused an explosion. (*english.aljazeera.net*)

A Palestinian family from the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip narrowly escaped death when an Israeli drone fired a missile at the family's home, relatives said. The shelling coincided with an air strike on the nearby El Bureij camp which killed three militants. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

[B'Tselem](#) said in a report that 6,371 Palestinians and 1,083 Israelis had been killed since 29 September 2000 in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

According to the report, 1,317 of the Palestinians were minors, at least 2,996 did not take part in fighting and 2,193 died while they were participating in fighting. Of the Israeli casualties, 741 were civilians, 124 of them minors, and 342 were security personnel. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

French President Nicolas Sarkozy said that he would ask PA President Abbas, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and Egyptian President Mubarak to peace talks in Paris before the end of October. Mr. Sarkozy made the announcement at a news conference with Mr. Abbas after a meeting in Paris, saying the talks should help prepare a summit in late November of leaders from European and Mediterranean countries, including from the Middle East. Mr. Sarkozy said both Mr. Abbas and Mr. Netanyahu had agreed to the Paris talks. Mr. Sarkozy also called for the EU to have a greater role in the peace talks. "I want to pay homage to the considerable efforts of President Obama to relaunch the peace process. ... But I observe that, 10 years after Camp David, we have made no progress and perhaps we've even gone backwards in terms of resuming dialogue. You can see there is a methodological problem," he told journalists. (*AFP, Reuters*)

Speaking at a press conference with PA President Abbas at the Élysée Palace, France's President Nicolas Sarkozy invited Mr. Abbas, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and Egyptian President Mubarak to come to Paris in late October to prepare for a larger meeting of the EU-sponsored multilateral organization, the Union for the Mediterranean, to be held in November. He said that while nothing would be solved without the strong engagement of the Americans, such engagement does not have to be exclusive. Mr. Sarkozy said, "We don't want to be spectators who just watch as time goes by," adding it was not viable to continue with Europe financing everything while staying outside the political process. (*euobserver.com*)

In a statement, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton [said](#), she regretted the Israeli decision not to extend the moratorium on settlements. The position of the EU is very clear: settlements are illegal under international law, constitute an obstacle to peace and threaten to make a two-State solution impossible. (www.consilium.europa.eu)

The Spokesman of the PA Presidency, Nabil Abu Rudeineh, said that PA President Abbas would make no immediate decision on how to respond to resumption in Israeli settlement building in the West Bank. "Before 4 October, there will not be an official Palestinian answer," he said, as Mr. Abbas held talks with French President Sarkozy in Paris. Mr. Abu Rudeineh said that until then the PA President would consult with Arab Governments and then discuss it with the Palestinian leadership. (*AFP*)

Faisal Abu Shahla, a Fatah Revolutionary Council member, said that "serious progress" had been made in finalizing a unity deal between Fatah and Hamas following a meeting in Damascus. Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal said that the two groups had taken serious and real steps towards reconciliation and would meet in early October in Cairo. (*Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency*)

The principal of the Shaar HaNegev School near Sderot had been summoned by the Israeli Ministry of Education over using a textbook entitled "Learning the Historical Narrative of the Other", which gave Israel and Palestinian narratives of the conflict, the Israeli daily *Haaretz* said. Each page of the book was split into three, with the Israeli narrative on the right, the Palestinian version on the left and a blank column in the middle for students to enter their own thoughts. The Education Ministry made a statement to *Haaretz* saying the textbook had been "rejected" five years ago. (*The Jordan Times*)

Israeli authorities partially opened the Kerem Shalom crossing for the limited transfer of goods and fuel in approximately 210 trucks, said Palestinian crossings official Raed Fattouh. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Building work at the "Ariel" settlement in the West Bank restarted after the 10-month construction moratorium expired at midnight. Construction of dozens of housing units also resumed in the settlements of "Revava", "Yakir" and "Kochav Ha'shachar", where bulldozers began clearing ground for new developments. Settlers currently have plans for around 2,000 new homes across the West Bank, of which around 600 have up-to-date paper work and are expected to be completed in the coming months. Construction is expected to begin tomorrow at a number of sites including "Shavei Shomron". "Adam", "Oranit". "Sha'arei Tikva", "Kedumim" and "Karmeit Tzur." (*Haaretz*)

PA President Abbas said that he would wait at least a week before deciding whether to pull out of peace talks, giving US mediators time to broker a compromise following the end of the settlement moratorium. Mr. Abbas said during a visit to Paris that he would weigh his options with Palestinian leaders before discussing the matter with the Arab League on 4 October. (*AP*)

The Spokesperson for Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon issued the following statement:

The Secretary-General recalls the Quartet statement of last week which reflected the united call of the international community urging Israel to extend the settlement restraint policy. He is disappointed that no such decision has yet been taken and concerned at provocative actions taking place on the ground. He reiterates that settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, is illegal under international law, and urges Israel to fulfil its Road Map obligation to freeze settlement activity. The Secretary-General supports ongoing efforts to find a way to continue peace talks in an environment conducive to progress. This is the only route to a viable Palestinian state living in peace with a secure Israel. (*UN News Centre*)

The Land Research Centre reported that Israel had continued settlement activities in more than 120 settlements during the temporary settlement

freeze. Some 1,520 units were built or are currently under construction, and Israel also prepared contracts for the construction of 2,066 units for settlements. Israel annexed 5,906 dunums of Palestinian farm land and orchards, and demolished 280 homes and structures, according to the Centre. (IMEMC)

The Human Rights Council [took up](#) its agenda item entitled "Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories", under which it considered the [report](#) of the Committee of Experts established in the context of follow-up to the Goldstone report, and held an interactive dialogue on that report. It also heard a presentation of the reports of the Secretary-General and of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the Goldstone report by all concerned parties. ([www.unog.ch](#))

Amnesty International [urged](#) the International Criminal Court to decide on whether it could investigate alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the 2008-2009 conflict in Gaza and southern Israel. "Both Israeli and Hamas authorities have been given adequate time and opportunity to ensure justice for the victims, yet they are both failing to do so. ... An international justice solution must now be found," said Widney Brown, Senior Director of International Law and Policy. ([www.amnesty.org](#))

At the official chamber of the Royal Palace, Spain's King Juan Carlos, accompanied by Foreign Minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos received Mus'amer Odeh, Palestine's Representative in Spain, at a ceremony equivalent to the presentation of diplomatic credentials, acting upon a recent decision by the Spanish Government to give Mr. Odeh ambassadorial status in the interest of affirming "the friendship and solidarity" that unite both peoples. Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero's administration had also agreed to the decision. ([www.poten.com](#))

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The IDF shot and injured 21-year-old Fadi Tamboura, a Palestinian worker from the northern Gaza Strip, who was collecting stone aggregates near the Erez crossing. An Israeli military spokesman said that soldiers had identified a man approaching the border area, fired warning shots toward him, and when he did not retreat, soldiers aimed at the lower body of the man and "identified a direct hit". Another was injured by Israeli fire in the same area. A medical services spokesperson said that the 23-year-old had been collecting scrap. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli artillery shelling was reported overnight in two Gaza districts near the border area. No injuries were reported. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli radio reported that Palestinian youths had hurled Molotov cocktails at the IDF near Qalqilya. No injuries were reported. (IMEMC)

Israeli forces arrested four Palestinians in the West Bank overnight. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

PA President Abbas said: "Of course we don't want to end negotiations. We want to continue, but if colonization continues, we will be forced to end them." He added that he would make his "historic decision" on the talks after an Arab Foreign Ministers meeting on 4 October. (*The Irish Times*)

Israel's Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman addressed the 65th session of the General Assembly saying that the Middle East peace "may take decades". He said that because of the mistrust between Israelis and Palestinians, there should be "a long-term intermediate agreement, something that could take a few decades". He stressed that militant groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas "cannot exist without Iran", adding "relying on these proxies, Iran can, at any given time, foil any agreement between Israel and the Palestinians, or with Lebanon". (BBC)

Foreign Minister Liberman's UN General Assembly speech did not reflect the official Israeli position, Prime Minister Netanyahu's Office said in a statement. Mr. Netanyahu was the one who handles the diplomatic negotiations, said the statement, adding, "The various arrangements for peace will be determined only around the negotiating table and nowhere else". (AFP)

Arab League Secretary-General Amre Moussa said that the emergency meeting of the Foreign Ministers for the Arab Peace Initiative Follow-up Committee would be devoted to discussing the latest developments on Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and the settlements. Mr. Moussa told the press that the settlements issue was crucial for the success or failure of any negotiations. (KUNA)

European Parliament President Jerzy Buzek issued a [statement](#) which said, among other things, "The Israeli decision not to extend the [settlement] moratorium threatens the peace process and I regret this decision." ([www.europarl.europa.eu](#))

Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Muallem addressed the 65th session of the General Assembly, saying that the new Middle East peace talks were a "dead letter" because of Israel's renewed settlement building in the OPT. "In Israel, there is much talk about peace yet the drums of war continue to sound," Mr. Muallem said. But he offered to resume mediation talks with Israel that had been brokered through Turkey. (AFP)

US Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George Mitchell was expected in Israel today to try to rescue Israeli-Palestinian peace talks brought to the brink of collapse by the resumption of West Bank settlement building. (AFP)

A senior PA official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that the PLO Central Committee would meet in the next two days to formulate a position before PA President Abbas met with Arab League envoys. ([www.israelnationalnews.com](#))

Three Arab families in East Jerusalem said that they were terrified they might be the next group of families living on the streets of the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood once their lease ended on 30 September – after an Israeli Supreme Court decision on 25 September had determined that dozens of houses in Sheikh Jarrah would revert to Jewish ownership. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

A PA official denied that Israeli settlers had been granted permission to restore Joseph's Tomb in Nablus, saying that only the PA would be allowed to undertake the work. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Human Rights Council held a meeting with the UN Fact-Finding Mission to investigate violations of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, resulting from the Israeli attacks on the Gaza aid flotilla. Justice Karl Hudson-Phillips, Chief of the Fact-Finding Mission, explained that the Mission had to rely on eyewitness accounts and the members did their best to maintain impartiality under the circumstances. Mary Shanti Daiyam, member of the Mission, said that the intention of the Fact-Finding Mission was to establish the truth, and it was satisfied that grave violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law were committed by Israel. The victims were civilians, and not core belligerents, and therefore the extent of the violence was disproportionate, and excessive, and the Mission stood by that conclusion. What was of paramount importance was justice for the victims, and the Human Rights Council should move towards ensuring that it prevailed and was carried out. Apart from whatever action would be initiated for judicial remedies, the Council should see fit to ensure that existing human rights mechanisms of the United Nations would be used for follow-up, in particular the treaty-body system. (UNOG press release HRC10/111)

After ignoring two warnings transmitted by the Captain of the Israeli naval ships, IDF naval forces intercepted and boarded the aid ship "Irene" and led it to the Ashdod seaport along with its passengers. The boarding occurred without incident and no violence. The aid ship, sailing under a British flag, left Cyprus two days ago and was carrying Jewish anti-blockade activists bound for the Gaza Strip. (DPA, [www.idf.il](#))

IDF soldiers used excessive force while taking over their Gaza-bound aid ship, passengers said, countering the military's official version, which claimed that the takeover of the "Irene" had been uneventful. (*Haaretz*)

Both the PA and Hamas condemned the Israeli interception and seizing of the Gaza-bound aid boat. (*Xinhua*)

Dozens of Israeli peace activists gathered on the beach near Ashdod port to which the latest Gaza-bound aid ship was being towed, to protest its capture the continued blockade of Gaza. (*Wafa*)

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The IDF arrested four Palestinians overnight in the West Bank. (www.idf.il)

Local sources reported that a Palestinian resident was wounded by Israeli military fire as he was working at one of the evacuated settlements in the Gaza Strip. (*IMEMC*)

Marking the 10th anniversary of the Al-Aqsa Intifada, Gaza's Popular Committee organized a rally to voice dissent against the separation wall in the West Bank and no-go zone in Gaza. Speaking at the rally, Popular Committee coordinator Mahmoud Az-Zaq said: "It is impossible to talk about a peace and a political track under this settlement blitz." (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In an interview on *Al-Arabiya* television channel, Egyptian Minister for Foreign Affairs Ahmed Aboul Gheit said that despite international efforts, he did not expect the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations to continue in the wake of Israel's refusal to extend the settlement moratorium. (*Al-Arabiya, Ma'an News Agency*)

In a joint [press conference](#) following their meeting at the US State Department, US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton said that they would continue to work with the Israelis and Palestinians to remain in the direct negotiations. Ms. Ashton also [called](#) for an extension of the settlement moratorium. (www.europa.eu, www.state.gov)

The United States was "determined more than ever" to achieve Middle East peace, US Special Envoy Mitchell said during talks in Israel aimed at salvaging negotiations with the Palestinians. There was no sign, in public comments at a meeting between Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and the envoy, of any progress towards a formula that could avert a threatened Palestinian walkout over settlement building. "We knew this would be a road with many bumps, and there have been many bumps, and that continues to this day," Mr. Mitchell said. Mr. Mitchell was to meet with President Abbas on 30 September. (*AP, Reuters*)

The EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, said she would depart for the Middle East today as diplomatic pressure intensified to save Israel-Palestinian peace talks. "I'll meet [US Envoy] George Mitchell when I land tomorrow," she told *Reuters* in an interview in Washington, adding that she also planned to meet Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, PA President Abbas, PA Prime Minister Fayyad and Israeli Defense Minister Barak. (*AFP, AP, Reuters*)

Israeli Foreign Minister Liberman, speaking on *Israel Radio*, insisted that his General Assembly speech represented a clear and consistent view he had articulated before, and one that was supported by a majority of Israelis. (*DPA*)

The PA did not expect "effective" US pressure on Israel to halt settlements in the West Bank, Yasser Abed Rabbo, a member of the PLO Executive Committee said. Neither the PA nor the PLO had been aware of any US pressure on Israel to get peace talks back on track, he said. (*Xinhua*)

Israel had accepted France's invitation to hold direct talks with the Palestinians in Paris next month. But President Abbas' office said that no decision had been made regarding the invitation. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

At a press conference in Silwan, a local committee of medics and lawyers revealed that the Israeli army had used expired tear gas and sound bombs to suppress the demonstrations which took place in Jerusalem last week. Head of the Jerusalem Information Center Muhammad Sadeq had accused Israeli forces of using the people of Jerusalem as a laboratory to test unsafe chemicals, and called for an international investigation. (*IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency*)

The UN Human Rights Council [voted](#) in favour of adopting the texts on the follow-up to the reports of the Fact-Finding Mission on the flotilla attack and of the Committee of Independent Experts on Gaza conflict (the Goldstone report). The resolution on the flotilla attack, tabled by Pakistan on behalf of the OIC, was approved with 30 votes in favour and 15 abstentions. The United States opposed the resolution. Palestinian human rights groups, including Al-Haq and the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, deplored the PA-backed resolution on the follow-up to the report on the Gaza conflict, which would delay action on the recommendations of the Goldstone report. (*AP, AFP, Ma'an News Agency, www.ohchr.org*)

Northern Ireland's Nobel laureate and peace activist Mairead Maguire was fighting a legal battle today over the right to enter Israel after her involvement with an aid boat to Gaza, her lawyer said. Ms. Maguire had been refused entry at Ben Gurion airport. Lawyers for the Adalah legal rights group obtained an injunction preventing her deportation and were due to attend a court hearing to debate her case. (*AFP*)

The faculty senate at the University of Johannesburg rejected calls, endorsed by Desmond Tutu, to sever ties with Ben-Gurion University, but called on the Israeli university to work with its Palestinian counterparts. (*AP*)

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A Palestinian worker collecting stones and rubble in the northern West Bank was moderately injured in an explosion. (*IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency*)

Palestinians threw stones at an Israeli vehicle travelling north-west of Ramallah. No injuries were reported. (*Ynetnews*)

The PA Ministry of the Interior approved the construction of 10 police stations for West Bank towns and cities. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The meeting of the Foreign Minister of the Arab League on the continuation of the direct negotiations, in light of Israel's resumption of settlement construction, had been postponed from 4 to 6 October, reportedly to allow PA President Abbas to attend the meeting and to give more time to the US efforts to salvage the talks. (*AP, Ma'an News Agency*)

The Palestinian leadership was expected to meet on Saturday to make a formal decision to end the direct negotiations ahead of Wednesday's meeting in the Arab League. PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erekat said that "there are no half-way solutions on the settlements issue", while adviser to President Abbas Nabil Sha'ath said, "Unless the settlement activities stop completely, there is no use in continuing these negotiations". (*AP, Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency*)

Mr. Mitchell met for two hours with PA President Abbas, trying to convince him to remain in the talks despite the expiration of the settlement moratorium. (*AFP, AP*)

US President Obama was [reported](#) to have sent a letter to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, offering to support the presence of IDF soldiers in the Jordan Valley even after the establishment of a Palestinian State, if Israel would agree to a two months' settlement building freeze. Prime Minister Netanyahu was, reportedly, inclined to reject the offer, to which he had not yet replied. (*Haaretz, The Jerusalem Post, www.washingtoninstitute.org*)

US State Department Spokesman Philip Crowley [denied](#) that President Obama had sent a letter to Prime Minister Netanyahu proposing a set of US guarantees to Israel in exchange for Israel extending its settlement freeze. (www.state.gov)

The White House confirmed that President Obama had called British Prime Minister David Cameron to discuss the Middle East peace process. (KUNA)

US Vice-President Joe Biden called Egyptian President Mubarak to discuss the peace talks, according to official Egyptian sources. (The Jerusalem Post)

All crossings between Israel and Gaza were sealed off this morning in connection with the Jewish holiday Sukkot. (Ma'an News Agency)

In its [Weekly Report](#) on Israeli Human Rights Violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights said that Israel continued its systematic attacks against Palestinian people and property and in the past week had killed 5 Palestinians, including a fisherman and a toddler, in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. (www.pchrgaza.org)

World Bank representative Miram Sherman signed an agreement with PA Prime Minister Fayyad to deliver a \$40 million grant to the PA. Mr. Fayyad said that the grant was aimed at enabling the PA to continue building State institutions and developing the infrastructure for a Palestinian State. (Ma'an News Agency)

The Jerusalem Magistrates' Court had ordered that 11 young Arabs arrested for disturbing the peace at Al-Haram Al-Sharif be banned from the site for a month and a half. (Ynetnews)

The infrastructure for four unauthorized outposts was being constructed around Hebron, a Palestinian settlement affairs expert said. The expert said that the outposts would be integrated to form a new settlement, which would be linked with "Kiryat Arba", the largest settlement in the district.

In addition, the construction of a new school and kindergarten had begun earlier this week, also in an outpost in Hebron. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli settlers launched a campaign calling for the demolition of a mosque in the village of Burin, near Nablus. Israeli settlers were seen hanging up inciting posters in various areas. (Wafa)
