

Division for Palestinian Rights
Chronological Review of Events Relating to the
Question of Palestine

Monthly media monitoring review

February 2012

Monthly highlights

- Palestinians attack Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's convoy in the Gaza Strip ([2 February](#))
- UN Secretary-General calls on Palestinians to stop launching rockets into Israel and on Israel to uphold human rights ([2 February](#))
- PA President Abbas and Hamas Political Bureau Chief Mashaal agree to form interim Government ([5 February](#))
- Two-day UN seminar on assistance to the Palestinian people opens in Cairo ([6 February](#))
- UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Serry expresses concern about the deteriorating conditions of a Palestinian prisoner on a hunger strike ([10 February](#))
- UNRWA is to discontinue cash allowances for impoverished families in the Gaza Strip after April due to shortage in donor funds ([13 February](#))
- UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing says that the Gaza blockade constitutes the most extreme expression of separation and restriction ([13 February](#))
- Palestinian prisoner agrees to end two-month hunger strike after reaching deal with Israel for his release in April ([21 February](#))
- Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu orders a halt to construction of new settlement homes in East Jerusalem ([24 February](#))
- Qatar urges UN investigation of Israel's settlement expansion in East Jerusalem ([26 February](#))
- International Conference on Jerusalem in Doha concludes with a decision to request the UN to investigate all Israeli measures taken in East Jerusalem since its occupation ([27 February](#))

I

Four rockets fired from the Gaza Strip struck inside Israel. Neither casualties nor damage were reported, a police spokesman said. (AFP)

Dozens were wounded in clashes between Israeli security forces and Palestinian activists in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Issawiya after Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers arrested a Palestinian for throwing stones at them. (The Jerusalem Post)

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon met with Israeli President Shimon Peres in Jerusalem. According to senior Israeli officials, the Secretary-General told Mr. Peres that Israel should take steps to assist the Palestinians and illustrate that the Palestinian State was already being built on the ground. (Haaretz)

At a news conference, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that settlements were "not helpful". He urged Israel to refrain from further construction as a goodwill gesture. He also pressed Israel to present concrete proposals on borders and security to the Palestinians. Mr. Netanyahu said that the question of settlements should be part of "final peace talks", not a precondition for restarting negotiations. (AP)

The Palestinians expect Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to come up with "practical steps" for resuming the peace talks, Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) official Hanan Ashrawi said. "There are States that only deal with the necessity of resuming the negotiations without providing the atmosphere or conditions to let them succeed or be credible," Ms. Ashrawi said. (Xinhua)

Jordan's Foreign Minister, Nasser Judeh, held discussions with Quartet Representative Tony Blair. They stressed the importance of making all necessary efforts by all concerned parties, including the Quartet, to push the Palestinian and Israeli sides to direct negotiations. (Petra)

In Ramallah, visiting German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle announced that Germany had upgraded the Palestinian diplomatic representation in Berlin from a delegation to a mission headed by an ambassador. Commenting on Germany's decision, Israel's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Yigal Palmor said: "The Palestinians will certainly interpret this as an encouragement to proceed with their rejection of direct talks and that is a pity." (AP)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu won a new mandate to head Likud, defeating challenger Moshe Feiglin, an ultranationalist settler opposed to any land-for-peace deal. (Reuters)

World Bank President Robert Zoellick met with PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad in Ramallah. "World Bank research shows that the economic growth in the West Bank and Gaza from 2008 to 2011 was driven primarily by donor aid, and therefore will be difficult to sustain without greater private sector growth. ... To boost private sector investment and creation of jobs, Israel needs to take further decisive action to ease access and movement constraints," Mr. Zoellick said in a statement after the meeting. (Ma'an News Agency)

Visiting the Rawabi project in the West Bank, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said: "This housing project is a very good one, a very impressive one, and I would like to support all this in a sustainable way. As the peace process should be in a sustainable way, this also should be sustainable economically, socially and environmentally." (Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General)

Israeli authorities handed notices to several Palestinians in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Silwan for the demolition of their houses under the pretext of building without a permit, according to a local activist. (Wafa)

US Department of State Spokesman Mark Toner called Israeli plans to subsidize settlements "unconstructive and unhelpful". (www.state.gov)

Islamic Jihad would not remain committed to the Gaza ceasefire if its jailed leader, Sheikh Khader Adnan, who was on a hunger strike, died, a spokesman for the group said. Sheikh Adnan was protesting his administrative detention without trial. (Xinhua)

Dozens of Palestinians threw shoes and stones at Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's convoy as it entered the Gaza Strip. Many of those who protested were family

members of Palestinians held in Israeli prisons. They hit the vehicles with signs accusing the Secretary-General of pro-Israeli bias and of refusing to meet with relatives of Palestinian prisoners. No one was injured in the vehicles. (AP, Ma'an News Agency, Reuters)
Israeli tanks fired at a crowd of people in Beit Hanoun, in the northern Gaza Strip, medics said. (Ma'an News Agency)

In his [remarks](#) at a security conference in Herzliya, in Israel, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, "Negotiations have bogged down. We see too many pointless provocations. Israel continues to erect settlements, some in the most sensitive areas for any future peace. Meeting with Palestinians in the West Bank yesterday, I heard their deep frustration. The international community's position is well-known: these settlements are illegal. I strongly agree." (AP, [www.un.org](#))
Hamas leader Mohammed Nasr said that a meeting between Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas and Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal, that was to be held in Cairo, had been postponed indefinitely at the request of Mr. Abbas. (Ma'an News Agency)
Waseel Abu Yousef, a member of the PLO Executive Committee and the Palestinian representative to the exploratory talks with Israel in Jordan, said that the Quartet had put together an incentive package that would build trust between the sides and jump-start the stalled peace process. Quartet Representative Blair relayed an outline of the package to PA President Abbas during Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's visit to Ramallah but Mr. Abbas opposed it. The outline called on Israel to allow a Palestinian police presence in Area B in the West Bank. Israel would ease restrictions on Palestinian traffic in the West Bank, more working permits will be issued to Palestinians who work in Israel and Israel would allow the export of goods from Gaza to the West Bank. During the second phase of the Quartet's plan, which was scheduled for implementation in March, Israel would release Palestinian prisoners, the PA will be authorized to develop gas reserves off Gaza's coastline, the IDF activity in Area A would be reduced and Israel would permit the launching of international projects in Area C. In return, the Palestinians were asked to come back to the negotiations without demanding that Israel freeze settlement construction or recognize the 1967 borders as the foundation for the talks. (Ynetnews)

"I thank the people of Gaza for the warm welcome," Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told a [news conference](#) at a housing project of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in Gaza. He said that he had sympathy for the complaints of people in Gaza: "This is why I am here for the third time. This is a very dire economic, social, humanitarian problem." He called on Israel to lift all restrictions on the Gaza Strip and urged Israel and the Palestinians to keep the peace process alive. He called on Palestinians to stop launching rockets into Israel. Indiscriminate killing of civilians was unacceptable under any circumstances, he said. The Secretary-General also called on Israel to allow the Palestinians "freedom and fair lives", and to uphold human rights. (Ma'an News Agency, The Jerusalem Post, [www.un.org](#))

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said during a press encounter in Sderot: "Let us be clear: it is not how anyone, anywhere, should have to live. Nothing justifies the indiscriminate firing of rockets and mortars into Israel. It is completely unacceptable to target and terrorize citizens on a near-daily basis. It must stop. Any such attack must be condemned... Just before coming here, I visited Gaza. Gaza's civilians are also suffering. They are vulnerable to militant activity and military operations by Israel. I reiterate here today my call for an end to violence and to militant activity. Both sides must respect international humanitarian law and human rights... I have come to the region at this time to encourage the parties to continue the discussions that they have started in Jordan in January of this year. Both sides should act constructively, refrain from provocations, and take steps that will build confidence." (Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu had complained about Palestinian "hate speech" after the relatives of a man who killed a family of five settlers praised him as a hero in a phone call to a live show on *Palestine TV*. Palestinian Spokesman Ghassan Khatib said that the television station could not be held responsible for the opinions of viewers expressed in a live call-in show. Mr. Netanyahu's Arab Affairs Adviser, Ofir Gendelman, insisted that the calls from the Awad family had been prearranged. (The Washington Post)

Representatives from Norway and the World Health Organization signed a \$3.9 million agreement to establish the Palestinian National Public Health Institute. (Wafa)

The Israeli authorities opened the Kerem Shalom crossing to allow 20 cars and 270 truckloads of commercial and agricultural goods into the Gaza Strip. One truck of flowers was also allowed to be exported from Gaza, said Palestinian border crossing official Raed Fattouh. (Ma'an News Agency)

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

Today, the Secretary-General travelled to Gaza and visited an UNRWA housing project and a school, where he joined girl students in their classroom. He also met with children who suffered serious injuries during the conflict. He was deeply moved by their stories. Unfortunately, representatives of civil society cancelled a scheduled lunch to protest against the situation of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. The Secretary-General regrets this missed opportunity for an important exchange with Gazan civil society representatives. The Secretary-General is concerned about the situation of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. Last night, he met with the Palestinian Minister of Prisoners Affairs, Issa Karake, and received a letter outlining specific concerns. The United Nations continues to call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law. (SG/SM/14090-PAL/2150)

Israeli officials said that new financial incentives, designed to lure Israelis to poorer outlying areas, had been revised to exclude settlements in the West Bank. An earlier Government announcement about the Cabinet decision had identified some 550 communities that qualified for the subsidies, including 70 West Bank settlements. "The Government decision on Sunday does not apply to communities in the West Bank," Spokesman Mark Regev said. (AP)

Representatives of Gaza civil society said that they had decided to boycott a scheduled meeting with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, during which they had intended to hand him an open letter expressing dissatisfaction with the UN because they had received an "unjustified negative response indicating that the Secretary-General refused to meet with representatives of families of prisoners." (Palestinian Centre for Human Rights)

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Israel Air Force jets carried out overnight strikes at six targets in the Gaza Strip, in response to Palestinian rocket fire on 1 February. Palestinian sources reported that one teenage boy and a four-year-old girl had been injured in a strike in Beit Lahia. (Ynetnews)

Israeli forces injured eight people in the village of Nabi Saleh near Ramallah during a demonstration against land confiscation by Israel. (Ma'an News Agency)

Hundreds of Palestinians joined in a popular demonstration in Qaryut village, south of Nablus, before opening a road which had been closed by Israel during the intifada. PA official Ghassan Daghlal said that residents were tired of having to travel 16 kms through bypass roads to reach their homes. (Ma'an News Agency)

A 20-year-old Palestinian shepherd was moderately injured after being attacked by settlers from "Mehola" in the northern Jordan Valley. (Ma'an News Agency)

4

King Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa of Bahrain and Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh discussed the siege on Gaza and the electricity crisis in the enclave. King Hamad reiterated support for the Palestinian people in its struggle for inalienable rights and the establishment of its independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital, official media reported. (KUNA)

Israeli police detained three marathon runners near Hebron including two French nationals, witnesses said. They had been taking part in a marathon from Hebron to Jenin organized by Fair Trade groups and US-based community development group On the Ground. The project aimed to raise awareness and support for small farming communities and fair trade practices across the West Bank. (Ma'an News Agency)

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In a statement, the Popular Committee against the Wall said that Israeli forces had arrested campaign coordinator Mazin al-Aza and three others during a protest near Bethlehem. (Ma'an News Agency)

Protesters from the West Bank village of Nabi Saleh released video footage showing that a French woman wounded during a weekly protest the previous day had been hit by an IDF gas grenade. (Haaretz)

PA President Abbas and Hamas Political Bureau Chief Mashaal agreed to form an interim Government during a meeting in Doha. The Cabinet of independent technocrats would be headed by President Abbas and would oversee elections and Gaza's restoration. The line-up was to be announced on 18 February in Cairo, a Palestinian official said. (AFP, Ma'an News Agency, Reuters)

Hundreds of Palestinian protesters in Ramallah called for Prime Minister Fayyad's resignation over tax and price increases. (AP)

Palestinian residents of the Ramallah area village of Nabi Saleh said that armed settlers on motorcycles entered their village after midnight in an apparent attempt to vandalize the village mosque. Villagers threw rocks at them and forced them to retreat. (Wafa)

Israeli forces uprooted olive trees in the village of Kafr Qaddum, east of Qalqilya. Witnesses told Ma'an News Agency that tanks and soldiers began digging up land in order to expand the nearby settlement of "Kedunim". (Ma'an News Agency)

More than 200 Israeli teachers signed a letter declaring that they would refuse to participate in an Education Ministry programme to take pupils on "heritage tours" in

A rocket fired by Palestinian militants from the Gaza Strip hit southern Israel causing no casualties or damage, an Israeli military spokesperson said. (AFP, Now Lebanon)

Hamas had been making concerted efforts to renew its activities in the West Bank, Israeli security officials noted. Over a few weeks, the IDF and Shin Bet intercepted relatively large amounts of funds that Hamas activists abroad had tried to smuggle into the West Bank as part of these efforts. (Haaretz)

Israeli security forces arrested a Palestinian resident of the West Bank on suspicion of stabbing an Israeli security guard at the entrance to the "Ma'ale Adunim" settlement, police said. (The Jerusalem Post)

Jordanian Foreign Minister Judeh held talks with US Special Envoy for Middle East Peace David Hale and Quartet Representative Blair to seek "a suitable climate" for direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. (Petra News Agency, AFP)

The European Union (EU) would provide financial aid to a new Palestinian Government as long as it was peaceful and accepted Israel's right to exist, an EU spokesman said after the unity agreement between rival factions Fatah and Hamas. (European Union)

"As we've said many times, questions of Palestinian reconciliation are an internal matter for Palestinians," said US Department of State spokeswoman Victoria Nuland. "Any Palestinian Government must unambiguously and explicitly commit to non-violence. It must recognize the State of Israel and it must accept the previous agreements and obligations between the parties, including the Road Map," she said. (AFP)

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged PA President Abbas not to abandon talks with Israel after Fatah signed a deal on governing with Hamas. Mr. Ban and Mr. Abbas spoke by telephone about the accord signed in Qatar. The Secretary-General "pointed out that the two tracks – of Palestinian reconciliation and negotiations with Israel – should not be seen as contradictory and mutually exclusive," the Secretary-General's Spokesperson said. (AFP)

Representatives of the Geneva Initiative said that the announced agreement to implement the Palestinian unity deal between Fatah and Hamas presented a diplomatic opportunity that might not present itself again. "Now it is Israel's turn to present a serious proposal in order to test the stance of the unified Palestinian leadership on peace," a spokesperson of the Geneva Initiative said. (Geneva Initiative)

Hamas Spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri told reporters that Hamas Political Bureau member Imad el-Alami had arrived in Gaza for a visit but refused to say how long Mr. El-Alami was going to stay. (DPA)

PA Prime Minister Fayyad met with union leaders and employers to pursue an agreement on the 2012 budget after a public outcry against austerity measures had thwarted his first plan to tackle a debt crisis. An abrupt freeze in more than \$150 million in US aid the previous year had slowed growth in the economy, widening the deficit to \$1.1 billion. (The Jerusalem Post)

Israel allowed the transfer of 30 cars and 200 truckloads of goods into the Gaza Strip. Palestinian liaison official Fattouh said that two truckloads of tomatoes had also been exported to European countries. Israeli authorities also allowed the export of tomatoes to Jordan for the first time since 2007. (Ma'an News Agency)

In a recent [report](#), Human Rights Watch announced that Israeli policies on Palestinian residency had arbitrarily denied thousands of Palestinians the ability to live in and travel to and from the West Bank and Gaza. It added that Israel should immediately stop denying or cancelling the residency of Palestinians and their close family members who have deep ties to the West Bank and Gaza, and should end blanket bans on processing their applications for residency. (www.hrw.org)

Palestinian resident Ayid Mazloum, 47, said that settlers sprayed his home with the words "Death to the Arabs" before being chased from the village of El-Jinya. (AP)

The list of sites submitted by the Palestinians to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for inclusion on the World Heritage List included the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, the Old City of Nablus, Sebastiya, the ancient port of Gaza, Hisham's Palace and Tel al Sultan in Jericho, Mount Grizim, and Rehan Forest. The Palestinians were also considering submitting sites under Israeli control such as the Qumran Caves and the Dead Sea. (Ynetnews)

The United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People [opened](#) in Cairo, convened by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, with the theme "The economic cost of continued Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory: local, regional and international efforts towards mitigating it". Ahmed Fathalla, First Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, represented Egypt. Maxwell Gaylard, UN Coordinator for Humanitarian and Development Activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, represented the Secretary-General. Ali Al-Jarawi, PA Minister for Planning and Administrative Development, represented Palestine. (Division for Palestinian Rights)

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, in a [message](#) to the opening of the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, said that occupation measures that stifled Palestinian life must be rolled back, as the status quo was unacceptable and only guaranteed continued conflict and suffering. (UN News Centre)

Israeli forces assaulted a Palestinian in Jenin and took him to an unknown destination. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said that it would be impossible to hold peace talks if the Palestinians went through with a new reconciliation deal between Fatah and Hamas. Mr. Netanyahu said that PA President Abbas had chosen to "abandon the way of peace" by reaching a power-sharing deal with Hamas. (SperoNews)

Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman met with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee John Kerry and Republican Senator John McCain. During the meeting, Mr. Liberman reconfirmed Israel's commitment to the two-State solution. (Haaretz)

Israel's former Ambassador to the US, Sallai Meridor, said that if Washington felt a peace deal between Israel and the Palestinians was possible in the near future, it would become actively involved even during an election year. He expressed the feeling that Prime Minister Netanyahu had made concessions to the Palestinians, albeit "probably too late". He said that after watching PA President Abbas walk away from a deal put on the table by former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, it was hard "not to have doubts about whether he [Abbas] is ready to make concessions". (The Jerusalem Post)

After the announcement of the agreement to form a new Government, senior Palestinian official Nabil Sha'ath said that the unity Government would take complete responsibility for the management of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including security matters, and not just preparations for the elections. (IMRA)

Hamas official Ismail al-Ashqar said that the Doha agreement "contradicted basic Palestinian law and overstepped the Palestinian Legislative Council". He urged President Abbas to take serious steps to implement the Cairo agreement as a whole, rather than being selective about which articles to implement. (Ma'an News Agency)

The head of the Private Sector Coordination Council, Mohamed Masrouji, called on the PA to reconsider its tax reform plans, saying that they could further harm the Palestinian economy. He said that the Council had made several suggestions to increase public revenues without a blanket tax rise that "might prove counterproductive in the light of current economic conditions". He said that the PA should crack down on tax evasion and review import taxes, which were currently collected by Israeli authorities on behalf of the PA. (Ma'an News Agency)

The EU launched a three-year €2.2 million programme to support olive farmers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Area C. (www.reliefweb.int)

The EU and Sweden contributed €24.7 million to the PA to cover the salaries and pensions of around 84,300 PA employees for the month of January. The European Commission contributed €22.5 million, which was part of the €155 million package of financial assistance to the PA for 2012. (Ma'an News Agency)

The fast food chain KFC opened its first store in Ramallah. The main reason that no such eateries had opened in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in the past was an alleged insistence by Israeli franchisees that any such outlets be acquired through them and not independently, which contradicted PA law requiring that franchisees deal directly with the parent company. (The Consumerist, The Los Angeles Times)

Israel opened the Kerem Shalom crossing to allow 220 truckloads of goods into the Gaza Strip. Palestinian liaison official Fattouh said that one truckload of flowers was also exported from the coastal enclave. (Ma'an News Agency)

Kuwait would help rebuild the war-ravaged Gaza Strip, the country's Emir, Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah, said after talks in Kuwait City with Hamas leader Haniyeh. (AFP)

Jewish extremists sprayed racist anti-Arab slogans on the walls of a school in Beit Safafa, East Jerusalem. "Death to Arabs" and "Kahane was right" were sprayed in

Hebrew on walls in the school's playground. Both Jewish and Palestinian students attend the school. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A Jerusalem monastery where the tree used for the cross of Jesus Christ was said to have once stood, was defaced with graffiti saying "Death to Christians". The words "price tag", daubed on a vandalized car parked outside the 11th century Monastery of the Cross, suggested that militant settlers were responsible. Police said that they were investigating that possibility as well as other angles. (*Reuters*)

Amnesty International said that the Israeli authorities must release Khader Adnan, 33, who was arrested on 17 December 2011 at his home in the village of Arrabe near Jenin, or charge him with a recognizable criminal offence and promptly try him. There were fears that the man could die in detention after having been on hunger strike for more than 50 days. (*Amnesty International*)

Hamas' former Jerusalem Affairs Minister and Palestine Legislative Council member Khaled Abu Arfa and Muhammad Tutah, who were arrested at the compound of the International Committee of the Red Cross in East Jerusalem, had been charged with belonging to a terror organization, supporting a terror organization and illegally residing in Israel. The indictment was submitted by the Jerusalem District Prosecution to a local court. (*Ynetnews*)

Women, children, the elderly and the disabled were the focus of a three-day conference entitled "Strengthening Palestinian awareness on the importance of protecting the most vulnerable groups" held in Lebanon's most populous refugee camp, Ein el-Hilweh, near Sidon. The meetings had been organized by local Palestinian civil society groups and supported by the Palestinian Embassy and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. Other factors emphasized included the general lack of civil, social, humanitarian and cultural rights for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Initial recommendations included a proposal to strengthen collaboration between Palestinian civil society organizations and develop a strategy for their operation. (*The Daily Star*)

Israeli authorities issued evacuation orders to several Palestinian farmers in the village of Beit Ula, near Hebron. The landowners found notifications in their fields demanding that they evacuate 10,000 square meters of land. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Under the protection of Israeli soldiers, settlers from the settlement of "Karmi Zur" set up two new homes on land owned by Palestinians in Beit Ummar, in the Hebron district, a popular committee spokesman said. Meanwhile, elsewhere in Beit Ummar, settlers uprooted more than 25 olive trees that were planted the previous week by solidarity campaigners. (*WAFA*)

Israeli policies towards the Occupied Palestinian Territory not only limited the growth of the Palestinian economy, amid the cost of crippling closures and obstructed passage, but transferred Palestinian resources to the Israeli economy, speakers said at the [United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People](#), held in Cairo. (*UN News Centre*)

The UN Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People completed its two-day meetings in Cairo. In closing, the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Abdou Salam Diallo, said that the Seminar had aimed to make the point that the occupation came with "a heavy price tag" that was destructive for the Palestinian people, negatively affecting the economy, socio-economic development and the daily lives of millions of Palestinians. The occupation and its effects on the Palestinians also came at a cost for the international community, diverting precious funds from supporting development to mitigating the damage caused by the Israeli policies. (*Press release GA/PAL/1221*)

8

Israeli forces arrested 12 Palestinians across the West Bank. (*WAFA*)

In a statement rejecting the agreement between Messrs. Abbas and Mashaal in Doha whereby Mr. Abbas would serve both as President and Prime Minister, the Hamas Change and Reform Parliamentary bloc said, "We call upon the parties who signed and those who sponsored Palestinian reconciliation to reconsider and ... not to bypass Palestinian law", arguing that a dual role for Mr. Abbas would be illegal. The bloc includes Hamas leaders Haniyeh and Mahmoud Al-Zahhar. (*Reuters*)

Fatah official Azzam Ahmad said that no law prevented the PA President from heading the Government and taking charge as Prime Minister. "I advise those who reject this to read the laws again; we are a presidential system, not parliamentary", he said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A delegation of Hamas officials arrived in Cairo, where PA President Abbas and PLO members were expected in the next few days to announce the structure of a transitional Government that had been agreed upon in Doha. The accord also included agreements on releasing political prisoners, reforming the Palestinian National Council and activating the PLO for the following elections, *Palestine TV* said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon [told](#) reporters: "It is crucial for Israelis and Palestinians to remain engaged, submit proposals on territory and security, and build confidence. I spoke with President Abbas two days ago, following his agreement with Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal to form a new Government of technocrats under the leadership of the Palestinian Authority. I believe that Palestinian reconciliation and negotiations with Israel need not be mutually exclusive. ... Goodwill gestures and positive facts on the ground will go a long way towards setting the stage for progress in the negotiations." (*UN News Centre*)

The Governor of Nablus, Jibreel al-Bakri, said that he had reached an agreement with the owners of 300 tractors to plough private lands and help farmers in areas close to settlements and the separation wall for free while providing them with free fuel. "We decided to reach these lands and reclaim them without any exceptions, especially as these areas have been declared military zones by Israeli forces," Mr. al-Bakri said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Luxembourg announced a multi-year financial commitment to UNRWA, increasing its annual contribution to the Agency's General Fund to € 3.75 million until 2015. (*UNRWA*)

In a new [report](#), the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs announced that, in 2011, the Israeli authorities had demolished over 200 Palestinian-owned structures in the Jordan Valley, displacing around 430 people and affecting the livelihoods of another 1,200 Palestinians. ([www.ochaopt.org](#))

In a new [briefing paper](#), Amnesty International called on Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak to cancel military plans to forcibly displace some 2,300 Bedouin residents of the West Bank to an area beside the Jerusalem municipal garbage dump. ([www.amnesty.org](#))

General Assembly President Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser called on countries to throw their support behind a UN housing programme for Palestinians, stressing that it would enhance not only their living conditions but also prospects for peace in the region. The [Special Human Settlements Programme](#), led by UN-Habitat, sought to improve the living conditions of the Palestinian people while simultaneously contributing to peace, security and stability in the region. (*UN News Centre*)

In a report, the PA Ministry for Prisoners' Affairs announced that the Israeli authorities had escalated an arrest campaign against Palestinian Parliament deputies, adding that 27 members were being held in Israeli jails and that two, Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine leader Ahmad Saadat, had been handed prison sentences. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

French President Nicolas Sarkozy met with former Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit and his father in the Presidential palace in Paris. (*Haaretz*)

9

Israeli forces arrested three Palestinian minors, including a 14-year-old and a 15-year-old, after storming the old city of Hebron. Forces also stormed several towns in the Hebron area, setting up military checkpoints at their entrances. (*WAFA*)

Hamas leader Yousef denied that Hamas was split on a plan to reconcile, saying that misunderstandings were due to the sudden nature of the announcement. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

During his meeting in Ramallah with Luxembourg's Minister of Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs, Marie-Josée Jacobs, PA Prime Minister Fayyad renewed the Palestinian call for the international community to be effectively and seriously involved in pressuring Israel to respect international law and end its illegal occupation, and for donor countries to abide by their commitments to financially support the PA so that it can perform its duties. (*IMEMC*)

In Amman, the Islamic Development Bank, in its capacity as coordinator for the Programme of the Gulf Cooperation Council for the Reconstruction of Gaza, signed four agreements with UNRWA, worth more than \$15.3 million in total. The funds will support health, sanitation, infrastructure and emergency shelter reconstruction in the Gaza Strip. (*UNRWA*)

Kanan Obeid, President of the Gaza Energy Authority, announced that if the Gaza Strip was not provided with fuel within 72 hours, it would face a severe electricity crisis. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In Jerusalem, Israeli forces demolished a Palestinian house in Beit Hanina and a tin shack in the village of Al-Jib. (*Wafa*)

The Palestinian prisoner Khader Adnan reached the 55th day of his hunger strike, the longest ever waged by a Palestinian detainee. The spokesman for Islamic Jihad was protesting his "administrative detention" by Israel without charge. Lawyers and his wife said that he had lost 27 kg, his hair had fallen out, and that he could not walk. (*AP*)

In Atil, a town north of Tulkarm, Israeli forces raided and vandalized the house of Khalil Wajeeh, a Palestinian detained in an Israeli jail. Mr. Wajeeh was sentenced to 16 life terms and 50 years and has been banned from family visits for two years. (*Wafa*)

Israeli forces detained two Hamas leaders, Faze Sawafah, 41, and Nader Sawafah, 37, after raiding their homes in Tubas. The previous day, the PA Ministry for Prisoners' Affairs had issued a report stating that Israel was escalating a campaign of arrests against Palestinian leaders. Twenty-seven Palestinian lawmakers were being held in Israeli jails. Only Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine leader Saadat had been sentenced. All other detainees were being held under "administrative detention". (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The United Nations Development Programme held an official ceremony in Ramallah to celebrate the launch of the National Strategy to Combat Desertification in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture had prepared the agricultural sector strategy, entitled "Shared vision 2011-2013", which focused on managing water resources. (*Wafa*)

10

Palestinian security forces raided an area near Hebron and arrested 56 suspects. The raid, coordinated with Israeli authorities, was the second time in recent weeks that Israel had approved a Palestinian raid in an Israeli controlled area. (*Ynetnews*)

In a meeting in New York, Israeli Foreign Minister Liberman told 15 UN envoys, including nine Security Council Ambassadors, that a new Palestinian unity Government including Hamas would be a setback to peace attempts and "does not contribute to the advancement of peace negotiations or the well-being of the Palestinian people". (*The Express Tribune*)

Fatah Central Committee member Mahmoud Al-Aloul said that Palestinian leaders would seek Arab support for their decision not to return to direct negotiations with Israel. Palestinian officials said that they could not return to talks while Israel continued expanding settlements on land needed for a viable Palestinian State. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Jordanian Health Minister Abdul Latif Wreikat agreed with his Palestinian counterpart, Fathi Abu Moghli, to review the health cooperation protocol signed between the two sides and upgrade it to meet the needs of the Palestinian side. (*Jordan Directions*)

Settlers from "Yizhar" settlement clashed with Palestinians in the village of Burin, claiming that villagers broke into one of the houses in the settlement. IDF forces called to the scene fired tear gas at the Palestinians. (*Ynetnews*)

In a report, the Euro-Mediterranean Observatory for Human Rights expressed its deep concern about Israel targeting academics and the Palestinian scientific elites. The report described Israel's detention campaigns against academics and lecturers at universities on a regular basis and without any charge. (*Al Resalah*)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu rejected demands presented by representatives of the EU to release a number of Palestinian political prisoners. Mr. Netanyahu told Quartet envoys that it was not the time to release political prisoners to boost Palestinian support for President Abbas. He added that the release of prisoners should not be a "demand, or one of preconditions" for the resumption of talks, but hinted that he might grant the Palestinian Security Forces more privileges in Area B of the West Bank. (*IMEMC*)

UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Robert Serry, in a statement on Palestinian prisoners, expressed his concern about the deteriorating condition of one Palestinian man held in administrative detention who was on hunger strike. He called on the Government of Israel to do everything in its power to preserve the health of the prisoner and resolve the case while abiding by all legal obligations under international law. (*UNSCO*)

UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 Richard Falk was to conduct a field mission from 10 to 20 February, visiting Egypt, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Jordan to gather information on the broad range of human rights concerns connected to the Israeli occupation. (*UNOG*)

UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing Raquel Rolnik was on a visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory from 29 January to 12 February. In the territory, she was to visit communities in East Jerusalem, the Jordan Valley and the Gaza Strip. On 12 February, the Special Rapporteur would present her preliminary findings at a press conference in Jerusalem. (*UNOG*)

11

The Israeli Air Force launched four airstrikes in the Gaza Strip, killing one Palestinian and injuring two others, a Palestinian health official said. (*DPA*)

Hamas Leader Al-Zahhar was quoted as telling the Egyptian news agency *MENA* that Hamas Political Bureau Chief Mashaal had not consulted with others in the movement before signing the reconciliation deal in Doha. He said that giving PA President Abbas the post of interim prime minister was "wrong" and "strategically unacceptable". (*AP*)

12

The Israeli navy detained two fishermen off the beaches of Beit Lahia, northern Gaza. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The IDF detained 10 Palestinians in various West Bank cities, all reportedly wanted by security forces, an IDF spokeswoman said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The IDF entered a construction site in the Jenin area village of Yaabad and detained five Palestinians, witnesses said. Israeli soldiers said that the men were arrested in connection with a suspected stone-throwing incident earlier during the day. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Confrontations erupted between Israeli soldiers and Palestinians during an Israeli raid on several areas of Jericho, injuring three, including one seriously, according to Majed Al-Fetyani, Governor of Jericho and the Jordan Valley. Mr. Al-Fetyani called upon the international community to pressure Israel to cease such measures against Palestinians. (*Wafa*)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu issued a statement sharply criticizing a speech that PA President Abbas gave hours earlier at a meeting of the Arab Foreign Ministers at the Arab League in Cairo. He said that Mr. Abbas had turned his back on peace negotiations, adding, "Instead of engaging in negotiations that would bring an end to the conflict, Abbas prefers to link to the terror organization Hamas – the same Hamas that embraces Iran." In Cairo, Mr. Abbas said that peace negotiations could not resume without an Israeli settlement freeze. He said that he would be sending a letter to Mr. Netanyahu with his demands for resuming negotiations. In case of a negative response, he would resume the campaign for membership of a State of Palestine at the UN. He harshly condemned Mr. Netanyahu, saying that he had not presented any serious proposal during the talks in Jordan and blamed him for failing to make any significant trust-building steps towards the Palestinians. Mr. Abbas said that Mr. Netanyahu had offered to impose another settlement freeze but one that only included a freeze on new State tenders and not a halt in private construction in the settlements that constituted 90 per cent of settlement construction. (*Haaretz*)

Arab League Foreign Ministers, meeting in Cairo, issued a statement after supporting a Palestinian request for an international peace conference aimed at reaching a comprehensive solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In the statement, the Ministers said that, at the international meeting, they would seek "an end to the occupation of Palestinian territories and to reach a comprehensive solution to the issues of borders, security, Jerusalem and refugees based on the Arab Peace Initiative". The Ministers also called on the members of the Arab League to contribute financially to support the PA by providing \$100 million a month. (*The Windsor Star*)

The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, told visiting Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh that the Islamic Republic of Iran would always stand by the Palestinian "resistance" against Israel and warned him against "compromisers". President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad for his part said that it was the duty of the Islamic Republic of Iran to stand by the Palestinians. (*AP*)

Israeli police closed access to the Al-Aqsa compound for fear of unrest after leaflets were distributed around the city by far right politician Moshe Feiglen calling for the removal of "Israel's enemies" from the site. Police also blocked Mr. Feiglin from entering the compound "for security reasons", Israeli police said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli police used tear gas and rubber bullets against stone-throwing Palestinians in the Issawiya district of East Jerusalem. A police spokeswoman said that five Palestinians had been arrested after attacking a police and border guard patrol with stones". (*AFP*)

13

Israeli naval forces detained two fishermen in northern Gaza. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Witnesses and Israel's army said that Israeli forces arrested 12 Palestinians. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Hamas leader Haniyeh compared Israel to a cancer that was threatening to spread to other parts of the body. Rounding up a three-day visit to the Islamic Republic of

Iran, Mr. Haniyeh said in an interview with an Iranian TV station that Israel remained the "main enemy" of the Arab and Islamic world. Reiterating Hamas' refusal to recognize Israel or compromise on Palestinian rights, he praised the Islamic Republic of Iran for its "unconditional support" for the Palestinians and his movement. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

In the budget unveiled by the Obama Administration, the Palestinians would see a roll back in economic aid from \$395 million in 2012 to \$370 million in 2013, as well as a cutback in police training from \$150 million to \$70 million. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Israeli Health Ministry officials refused to allow 35 Palestinian doctors from East Jerusalem to attend Israeli certification exams. The ministry said that the doctors, who graduated from Al-Quds University, were not eligible to sit for the certification exams because Al-Quds University could not be considered a "foreign university" since it had offices in Jerusalem. (*Haaretz*)

The Jerusalem Municipality District Planning and Construction Committee approved the construction of a new visitors' centre at the City of David National Park in Silwan. As part of the decision, Israel Nature and Parks Authority representatives also razed a complex built by Silwan residents that included a playground, community centre and a café. The Israeli forces also removed the protest tent that was installed by the Palestinian inhabitants of Silwan in 2007 to protest the takeover of Palestinian homes by extremist groups. (*Haaretz, Wafa*)

Settlers from the West Bank outpost of "Migron" said that they had reached a deal with the Israeli Government to allow them to stay for two more years, despite Israel's Supreme Court's orders to evacuate them the following month. The "Migron" settlement was built in 2001 on private Palestinian land. Itay Chemo, spokesman for the "Migron" settlement, said that Israel would build a new settlement on a nearby hilltop to house the evicted "Migron" dwellers. (*AP*)

The Israeli Government rejected a claim by residents of the West Bank outpost of "Migron" that they had reached an agreement with the State allowing them to stay put for two more years despite Supreme Court orders for their evacuation. (*Haaretz*)

Israeli bulldozers entered the Palestinian neighbourhood of Silwan in East Jerusalem and demolished a US-funded community space, playground and sports centre known as a "cultural café" according to a press release by the Middle East Children's Alliance. (*Ahramonline*)

Israeli forces demolished 22 buildings in the Palestinian village of Khirbet al-Rahwa, south of Hebron, displacing 120 villagers, residents said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel's Ofer military court rejected an appeal by Khader Adnan, the Palestinian prisoner who had been on hunger strike for eight weeks to protest his detention without charge, his lawyer Jawad Bulus said. PA Prisoners' Affairs Minister Issa Qaraqe said that the rejection of the appeal was tantamount to murder. Mr. Bulus said that Mr. Adnan's legal team would take the case to the Supreme Court. (*AFP*)

In remarks to the 2012 [opening] [session](#) of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed that the parties must cease provocations and take concrete steps to restore trust and create a conducive environment for direct talks. He also pledged to do everything in his power to help the parties advance the peace process, stressing that: "Palestinian reconciliation and negotiations with Israel need not be mutually exclusive". The Committee elected Ambassador Abdou Salam Diallo (Senegal) as Chair, Ambassadors Zahir Tanin (Afghanistan) and Pedro Núñez Mosquera (Cuba) as Vice-Chair, and Ambassador Christopher Grima (Malta) as Rapporteur. It adopted its programme of work for 2012 (A/AC.183/2012/1) and approved the request of Ecuador to become a full member. The Committee approved the provisional programme of the UN International Meeting on the Question of Palestine, to be held at the United Nations Office at Geneva in April. (*UN News Centre*)

Representatives of UNRWA said that the Agency would not be able to continue cash allowances for impoverished families in the Gaza Strip after April due to a shortage in donor funds. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing Raquel Rolnik [said](#) that the right to housing was denied in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In areas under Israeli military control, policies adopted by Israel restricted Palestinians from building legally through various means. At the same time, settlements, built in violation of international law, had led to a decrease in the amount of land and resources available to Palestinians. The Gaza blockade constituted the most extreme expression of separation and restriction. (*UNOG*)

14

Four Palestinians were injured by rubber bullets when Israeli forces raided Zubaba village near Jenin. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

During a joint press conference with Croatian President Ivo Josipović in Ramallah, PA President Abbas stressed that the Israeli measures made the two-State solution impossible, pointing out that the PA had lost control over most of the land given to it under the Oslo Accords. "We will not accept the continuation of this situation and we will soon take action ... with the Arab countries," Mr. Abbas said. (*Wafa*)

The Gaza Strip's only power station, which supplies up to two thirds of its energy needs, was shut down because of a shortage of fuel smuggled in from neighbouring Egypt. The closure led to widespread blackouts for Gaza's 1.7 million inhabitants. The local power company warned that households would receive only six hours of electricity a day until the problem was resolved. Gaza's Energy Authority said that "measures taken" on the Egyptian side of the border meant that not enough fuel was entering the territory. (*Reuters*)

The PA approved income tax increases as it sought to tackle a debt crisis. The Cabinet said in a statement that the top tax rate would rise from 15 per cent to 20 per cent effective during the year. The plan to double the rate to 30 per cent had been withdrawn after a public outcry. (*Reuters*)

Ammar al-Ikir, chief executive of the Palestinian Telecommunications Company Paltel, said: "There is an electronic war against Palestine, which began after Palestine became a member of UNESCO." He called on Internet companies to collaborate over mechanisms to fend off hackers. A number of Palestinian banks had recently been subjected to unsuccessful hacks, he said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel's Interior Ministry Spokesperson Efrat Orbach said that a Jerusalem planning committee had given permission for the construction of a new archaeological centre in Silwan in East Jerusalem. The public had 60 days to appeal. The centre is planned by Elad, a pro-settler group that ran archaeological digs in Silwan. It will be built above an excavation area called the City of David, leaving the ruins underneath it accessible. (*AP*)

Israeli authorities demolished three tin shacks, including a barn, in Nablus, according to a Palestinian activist. (*Wafa*)

Poland's Deputy Foreign Minister, Jerzy Pomianowski, told *Polish Radio* that he had invited the Israeli Ambassador to meet to discuss the Polish Foreign Ministry's concern over the actions of the Israeli authorities in the West Bank related directly to the destruction in the village of El Rahawia of a well rebuilt by Polish Humanitarian Action with funds from the Polish Foreign Ministry. (www.thenews.pl)

Hamas Spokesman Abu Zuhri said that Israel had violated the terms of the prisoner exchange deal by recently re-arresting two men released under the agreement. He called on Egypt, which had mediated the deal, to hold Israel responsible. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In a joint report, the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network and the Association of World Council of Churches related Development Organisations in Europe regretted that the EU had not used all the means at its disposal to push Israel to comply with its obligations under international humanitarian law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. (*Agence Europe*)

15

Israeli forces detained three young men from the West Bank village of Bil'in according to the local officials. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Three [Qassam](#) rockets fired from the northern Gaza Strip exploded in the Western Negev. No injuries were reported. (*Ynetnews*)

Israeli settlers backed by soldiers uprooted olive trees in the West Bank village of Tumus Ayya, north of Ramallah. (*Wafa*)

Senior Palestinian negotiator Erakat said that Palestinians would give Israel three weeks to respond to their upcoming messages on the resumption of peace talks before taking other steps. Within a week, the Palestinian leadership would send its messages to Israel, asking it to recognize the two-State solution, halt its settlement activities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and release the Palestinian prisoners. (*Xinhua*)

Over 500 settlers visited Joseph's Tomb in Nablus accompanied by Israeli soldiers. The settlers and soldiers left early with no reported incidents. (*Ma'an News Agency, IMEMC*)

PA Prime Minister Fayyad said in his weekly radio address that the PA was working in East Jerusalem despite Israeli restrictions on its activities. "Israel must realize that there won't be any chance of a long-lasting peace without East Jerusalem as the capital of an independent Palestinian State," the Prime Minister said. A

statement from his Cabinet, meanwhile, condemned "continued Israeli violations against our people," including an "attempted raid" on the Al-Aqsa Mosque following calls from members of the Likud party. (*Ma'an News Agency, Wafa*)

Israeli forces demolished several structures in Hebron, such as three tin sheds, two water wells and a number of animal barns. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Palestinian prisoner Khader Adnan, who had refused food for 60 days, petitioned Israel's Supreme Court against his detention without charge, as thousands took to the streets of the West Bank and Gaza in solidarity with him. (*AFP*)

UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 Falk expressed his urgent and extreme concern regarding the situation of Palestinian prisoner Khader Adnan. "I call on the international community, especially States with close relations with Israel, to urge the Israeli Government to fulfil its responsibilities under international law, most urgently with regard to Mr. Adnan," the human rights expert said. Mr. Adnan, whose life was reportedly in jeopardy, had maintained a hunger strike for 60 days in response to the humiliating circumstances of his imprisonment without charges by Israel. (www.ohchr.org)

Representatives of Palestinian factions started an open hunger strike near the offices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Gaza City in solidarity with Khader Adnan. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces arrested five Palestinians across the West Bank. (*Wafa*)

16

Israeli troops broke into the homes and offices in Jenin of elected legislators, members of Hamas' Change and Reform Parliamentary bloc. Hamas issued a press release denouncing the IDF incursion. (*IMEMC*)

Israel launched air strikes on the northern and central Gaza Strip, injuring six people. (*Ma'an News Agency, IMEMC*)

Hamas leader Haniyeh ended a regional tour that had included Bahrain, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. Mr. Haniyeh said that some of the countries had offered to provide fuel for Gaza in order to end the blackout. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A group of settlers raided An Nabi Elias, a village near Qalqilya, burned a car and wrote anti-Arab graffiti at the village entrance. (*Wafa*)

In a press release from the German representative office in Ramallah, the German Minister of Economy and Development Cooperation, Dirk Niebel, condemned the demolition of a German-funded centre in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Silwan. (*Wafa*)

Israeli troops rearrested a Palestinian woman who was one of hundreds of prisoners released under a swap deal with Israel in October 2011. (*AFP*)

Filippo Grandi, Commissioner-General of UNRWA, voiced deep sadness over the deaths of at least eight Palestinian schoolchildren and a number of adults killed as a school bus collided with an Israeli truck north-east of Jerusalem. (*UN News Centre*)

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination considered the combined fourteenth to sixteenth periodic reports of Israel under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. During the discussion, experts noted with concern that the Convention was not being applied in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and asked if Israel would reconsider its opposition to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. The Committee repeated that the wall erected in the West Bank promoted racial segregation and could be seen as a form of apartheid. The Committee urged Israel to establish a national human rights institute to monitor the State and help it to implement the obligations under the Convention. (www.unog.ch)

17

Israeli soldiers conducted a pre-dawn raid on Al-Issawiya in East Jerusalem and broke into several homes, starting with the home of former political prisoner Samer al-Esawy. No injuries were reported. (*IMEMC*)

Israeli soldiers posted 200 warning signs in open areas around the Gaza Strip, fearing that militant groups would try to repeat an April 2011 attack by firing anti-tank missiles at vehicles or groups of travellers. The signs read: "This area is restricted in the light of sniper and rocket fire." (*Ynetnews*)

In a report, representatives of the Mezan Centre for Human Rights stated that Israeli troops had killed 114 Palestinians, including 15 children and 2 women, and injured 467, including 120 children and 25 women, in dozens of attacks, air strikes and bombardments carried out against the Gaza Strip in 2011. (*IMEMC*)

Gaza health official Dr. Bassem Naim was to declare a state of emergency in Gaza's hospitals due to acute power cuts and fuel shortages. (*Middle East Monitor*)

Several thousand Palestinians rallied in Gaza and the West Bank in support of jailed Islamic Jihad leader Khader Adnan, who was on the 62nd day of a hunger strike to protest against his detention by Israel. "We are all Khader Adnan," chanted crowds gathered in the Gaza Strip, with activists from the main political parties joining forces. (*Haaretz*)

18

A rocket fired at Israel by Palestinian militants hit a house in the Gaza Strip instead, but witnesses said there were no casualties. It apparently exploded prematurely and damaged the house. No further details had been provided. (*AFP*)

Egypt promised to provide diesel fuel for the Gaza Strip's sole power plant which went down after running out of fuel, Ahmad Abu al-Amrin, from the Gaza energy authority, said. (*AFP*)

PA President Abbas said that the next Palestinian Government would respect agreements signed by the PLO, referring to the peace accords with Israel. (*AFP, Yahoo news*)

19

Two Qassam rockets launched by Palestinian militants in Gaza exploded in open areas within the limits of the Sdot Negev Regional Council. There were no reports of injury or damage. Israeli aircraft attacked a number of targets in Gaza in response. At least six Palestinians were injured in the strikes, including a father, mother and their two children. (*Ynetnews, IMEMC*)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu addressed the 38th Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations in Jerusalem. He said that unrest in the region had put enormous pressure on Israel's security, which in turn was creating difficulties in reaching an agreement with the PA. (*Ynetnews*)

The PLO Executive Committee met to discuss the failed talks with Israel. Palestinian Chief Negotiator Erakat said that the meeting, at which participants considered next steps after exploratory talks with an Israeli envoy had ended without agreement for continuing negotiations. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli police arrested 13 Palestinians on the grounds of the Al-Aqsa Mosque complex after police and tourists visiting the site were attacked with stones, a police spokesman said. (*AFP*)

Palestinian residents of Immatin, near Nablus, filed a petition with the High Court of Justice, asking that the Court issue injunctions to halt all construction in the "Havat Gilad" settlement. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The Special Envoy of China to the Middle East, Wu Sike, said that Israel should accept the reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas. Mr. Wu, who was on a visit to the region, stressed that the Palestinian move was a step towards a final agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. He also urged Israel to let Hamas, which he described as an "integral part of the political process", to join the negotiations. (*China Daily Europe*)

20

Hundreds of dunums of Palestinian crops were damaged during an Israeli military drill in the northern West Bank. Hundreds of soldiers drove through planted fields and practised shooting, destroying the agriculture. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A limited consignment of fuel arrived in the Gaza Strip, brought in through underground tunnels from Egypt. Palestinian Energy Authority Director Omar Kattana said that he expected a long-term solution to the widespread blackouts to be agreed with Egypt. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces detained nine people, including two men released as part of the prisoner swap between Hamas and Israel in October 2011. Three people were detained in Qalqilya, one north of Ramallah, three in Beit Ummar, one in Yatta, Hebron, and one near Jericho, an Israeli army spokeswoman said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Senior Hamas leader Khalil al-Hayyay said that the group was committed to the Doha agreement but still disputed PA President Abbas' dual role of Prime Minister and President. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Hamas leaders arrived in Egypt for talks on a Palestinian reconciliation deal with Fatah, as well as fuel shortages in the Gaza Strip. (*Trend*)

In a press conference in Amman, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories Falk hailed Jordan's active involvement in the field of international humanitarian law. Mr. Falk outlined violations committed by the Israeli Government against Palestinians, adding that he would submit a report on the issue to the Human Rights Council in June 2012. He urged the Israeli Government to respect its legal commitments towards thousands of Palestinian detainees. (*Petra News Agency*)

In a [press release](#), UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories Falk reiterated his urgent appeal to the Government of Israel to release Palestinian prisoner Khader Adnan. (*OHCHR*)

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, through the Saudi Fund for Development, signed an agreement with UNRWA to donate \$10 million towards UNRWA's programmes in Gaza and the West Bank. The contribution would be used to purchase essential education materials and supplies such as textbooks, library books, stationery and IT equipment, and to repair and upgrade educational facilities in 27 of the 341 schools in Gaza and the West Bank that had been identified as being most in need of improvement. The contribution would also fund the repair and upgrade of health clinics together with procurement of medicines, medical supplies and equipment. (*UNRWA*)

21

An explosive device was found along the Israeli border with Egypt by Israeli security forces. The bomb was defused with no injuries, the army said. (*Al Arabiya News*)

Israeli forces detained three Palestinians after an Israeli police officer and a soldier were injured after clashes in the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem. According to Palestinian witnesses, eight Israelis and a group of tourists, escorted by more than 40 Israeli soldiers, toured the Al-Haram Al-Sharif. Later, 22 Israeli women entered the Al-Aqsa Mosque where they clashed with Palestinian women praying there. The witnesses said that a group of Palestinian youths intervened, sparking an intervention by Israeli police. After the incident, entry was blocked to people under 40 years of age. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli troops entered the town of Al-Khadr, west of Bethlehem, firing rubber coated metal bullets and gas bombs at dozens of youths who hurled stones and empty bottles at them. The soldiers also attacked dozens of bystanders and violently beat a 15-year-old before detaining him. (*IMEMC*)

Israeli soldiers detained three Palestinians who approached the border fence area east of Rafah in the Gaza Strip. Israel had enforced a "no-go" zone near the fence, preventing Palestinians from entering their own farmlands. (*IMEMC*)

Israeli army units opened fire at a non-violent demonstration against the buffer zone between Israel and the Gaza Strip near Beit Hanoun, north of Gaza. The buffer zone encompasses 30 per cent of Gaza's agricultural land, according to the Gaza-based Palestinian Center for Human Rights. Palestinians, mainly farmers and landowners, are denied access to the land, with Israeli forces using live fire against anyone within the buffer zone. (*Wafa*)

PA President Abbas met with EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Ashton in Amman where they discussed the latest developments in the peace process. (*Wafa*)

In a statement, PLO Executive Committee Member Ashrawi called on the EU to rescue the two-State solution and the peace process. At a political briefing with the EU Special Representative to the Middle East Peace Process, Andreas Reinicke, at the PLO Headquarters in Ramallah, Mrs. Ashrawi discussed Palestinian reconciliation efforts, Israel's escalating settlement campaign, particularly in and around Jerusalem and in the Israeli-controlled Area C of the West Bank, extremist settler attacks on Christian and Muslim holy sites, Palestinian political developments and issues of mutual concern. She said, "The Israeli Government is still able to create facts on the ground due to the inability of Europe and the United States to hold Israel accountable for violating the global rule of law... With this, there is no sign of a breakthrough in the revival of the so-called peace process." (*Wafa*)

At a meeting with a visiting delegation from the Conference [of Presidents] of Major American Jewish Organizations, King Abdullah said that Israel's unilateral measures, particularly those aimed at altering the identity of Jerusalem and its holy sites, were a main impediment to efforts to move the peace process forward. He said that Jordan would continue efforts for a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, adding that the agreed-on solution should ensure the establishment of an independent Palestinian State side-by-side with Israel. For his part, the Chair of the Conference, Richard Stone, commended the King's vision for reform and efforts to build bridges of trust between the Palestinians and Israelis. (*The Jordan Times*)

PA President Abbas started a tour of Arab countries that would include Egypt and Qatar, Presidential Spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeineh said. Mr. Abbas would stress the importance of Arab support, namely the role that Arab countries could play to preserve the Arab character of Jerusalem, Mr. Abu Rudeineh said. (*Wafa*)

Nearly 100 leaders of US Jewish organizations met with King Abdullah II in Jordan and showed support for his sponsorship of the previous month's Israeli-Palestinian talks. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Jamal Muheisen, member of the Fatah Central Committee, said that Fatah wanted progress to be made on the preparation for elections before an interim Government was formed. He said that President Abbas would not start selecting members of his Government before he agreed with Hamas on practical steps that would allow the Central Elections Commission to start preparing for polls in the Gaza Strip. (*Xinhua*)

Israeli police were on high alert around the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound over fears that Jewish and Muslim groups were set to clash at the flashpoint site. The alert was raised after various Muslim groups had posted calls online urging people to head to the compound to "protect" it, after a Jewish group of right-wing extremists said that they were planning to visit, police spokeswoman Luba Samri said. (*AFP*)

Vandals sprayed anti-Christian graffiti at a Baptist church located in West Jerusalem in what appeared to be a "price tag" attack. The graffiti was scrawled on the walls of the Baptist Narkis Street Congregation. (*International Business Times*)

The Palestinian Cabinet issued a statement condemning and holding the Israeli Government responsible for continuous attempts by Israeli settlers and extremists to raid the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, which had provoked Muslim sentiments and created tension. The Cabinet also condemned the Israeli demolition of more than 40 buildings, including 15 inhabited homes where 126 citizens had lived, including 62 children. It said that the policy revealed the racism of the occupation, which built settlements and expanded them on occupied Palestinian land, while the original owners of the land were prevented from building homes. (*Wafa*)

Israeli security prevented dozens of settlers from rebuilding an unauthorized outpost near "Kiryat Arba", east of Hebron. The outpost of "Mitze Aviha" had been evacuated in January. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Settlers from West Bank outposts had taken control of land in Area B and were thus in breach of the 1995 Oslo agreement between Israel and the Palestinians, said Dror Etkes, an anti-settlement activist. Area B was defined in the Oslo Accords as land under joint Palestinian civil and Israeli military control. According to Mr. Etkes, who had monitored the settlements for years, the takeover of land in Area B was a combination of unbridled thievery by settlers and impotence on the part of the Israeli authorities. He said that the Israeli side had turned the West Bank into an area where the strongest dominated. (*Haaretz*)

The IDF Civil Administration in the West Bank was promoting legislation that would allow settlers to build new dirt roads without planning approval if their purpose was to protect State-owned land. The creation of any new road or even changing its route currently requires full approval of the planning authorities, including the National Planning and Building Council, and is followed by the issuance of individual building permits. If approved, the new policy would substantially expand the ability of settlers in the West Bank to take control of additional land. (*Haaretz*)

Israeli forces handed Palestinians in Bartaa al-Sharqiya village near Jenin demolition notices for nine structures, according to the head of the village council Tawfiq Kabaha. Israeli forces, accompanied by members of the planning department of the Israeli Government, handed the orders to the Palestinian residents and gave them until mid-March to demolish them. The structures would include chicken coops, animal barns and retaining walls. (*Wafa*)

Palestinian prisoner Khader Adnan agreed to end a two-month hunger strike after reaching a deal with Israel that would free him in April, the Israeli Justice Ministry said. Under the deal, Mr. Adnan agreed to resume eating immediately, the Justice Ministry said. Meanwhile, several thousand Palestinians rallied in Gaza and the West Bank to support Mr. Adnan. (*Haaretz, AP*)

A meeting was set to be held in Cairo between Fatah and Hamas leaders to discuss the implementation of a reconciliation agreement, in order to accelerate the establishment of a long-awaited representative body for all Palestinian groups in Lebanon. (*The Daily Star*)

A Lebanese woman married to a Palestinian died after UNRWA allegedly refused permission to transfer her to a hospital, which led to riots in the Tyre refugee camp of Al-Shabreeha in Lebanon. A group of Lebanese and Palestinians set fire to a vehicle and a medical dispensary belonging to UNRWA. (*Now Lebanon*)

22

Palestinians threw five Molotov cocktails at IDF soldiers and border police near Abu Dis, north of Bethlehem, *Israel Army Radio* reported. The IDF responded with crowd dispersal weapons. There were no injuries or damage reported. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Japan donated \$10 million to UNRWA to fund 10 health clinics in Gaza in 2012. The agreement was signed at a ceremony in Amman by UNRWA Commissioner-General Grandi and Junichi Kosuge, Ambassador of Japan to Jordan. (*UNRWA*)

In Cairo, PA President Abbas was set to chair a meeting of heads of Palestinian factions, PLO leaders and the speaker of the Palestinian National Council (PNC). The Secretary-General of the Palestinian Liberation Front, Wasil Abu Yousif, said that reconciliation and evaluation of the performance of the committees that emerged from the Cairo agreement would dominate the agenda, adding that the participants would discuss the formation of a technocratic Government to be headed by Mr. Abbas as agreed in Doha. The upcoming Government, Mr. Abu Yousif highlighted, would prepare for presidential and legislative elections as well as for elections of a new leadership of the PNC. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

PA President Abbas and Hamas Political Bureau Chief Mashaal said, after meeting in Cairo, that they were determined to continue with reconciliation. (Wafa)
At an internal Hamas meeting in Cairo chaired by Political Bureau Chief Mashaal, Hamas officials united behind new demands, a Palestinian official involved in the talks said. He added that Hamas had demanded to keep the key ministries in the new Government, including the Ministry of the Interior and that there be no change in the structure of security services in the Gaza Strip. (Ma'an News Agency)

In a statement, the Foreign Ministry of France condemned the act of vandalism perpetrated against a Baptist church in Jerusalem the previous day, saying that such an attack against a place of worship was unacceptable. It added that France hoped that full light would be shed on these acts and that those responsible would be brought to justice, and reaffirmed France's attachment to the freedom of religion, worship and belief. (www.ambafrance-us.org)

The Israeli authorities left notes notifying Palestinian farmers from the town of Beit Ulla, northwest of Hebron, of their intention to take over about 20 dunums of their land, according to the Coordinator of the Popular Committee against the Wall, Issa al-Omla. He said that the notices had given the farmers 45 days to file a complaint at the Ofer military camp, near Ramallah, or else the army would evict them by force and make them pay the costs of their eviction. (Wafa)

The Israeli authorities issued notices to stop construction work on eight Palestinian houses in the Hebron area village of Surif as a prelude to demolishing them under the pretext that they had been built without a permit. (Wafa)

The Norwegian Ambassador to Lebanon announced a \$2 million donation toward the reconstruction of the Nahr al-Bared Palestine refugee camp. The contribution brought total funds up to nearly half the amount needed to rebuild the camp. (The Daily Star)

Israel's Civil Administration approved the construction of 500 new homes in the West Bank settlement of "Shilo" and retroactively legalized "for humanitarian reasons" more than 200 units in "Shilo" and "Shvut Rachel" that had been built without permits, spokesman Guy Inbar told AFP. PLO Chief Negotiator Erakat said: "These decisions are designed primarily to attack and destroy the option of the two-State solution," adding: "We strongly condemn this new settlement decision, which once again confirms beyond any doubt that the Government of Israel has chosen settlements instead of peace." He said that there were some parties in the Quartet that provided protection for Israeli settlement practices and its continued occupation of the Palestinian territory, adding: "It is time for these countries to increase the pressure on Israel's practices against the Palestinian people and stop dealing with Israel as a country above the law." Yavir Oppenheimer, head of the settlement watchdog Peace Now, said that the decision proved that Prime Minister Netanyahu was "doing everything he could to prevent the creation of two States for two peoples." (AFP)

US Department of State Deputy Spokesman Mark Toner said: "We don't believe [settlement activity is] in any way constructive to getting both sides back to the negotiating table ... We want to see, clearly, a comprehensive settlement that delineates borders and resolves many of these issues." (The Jerusalem Post, www.state.gov)

Israeli officials played down the decision to build 600 new homes in the West Bank settlement of "Shilo", saying that it had been made by a low-level planning committee under the control of the Ministry of Defense and would not be realized for years. A defence official, speaking on conditions of anonymity, said that the project was in the "embryonic" phase and would require "multiple stages of authorizations", including approval by top leaders, that would take years to complete. (bicom.org.uk)

In a statement, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Ashton said that: "The High Representative is deeply concerned by the approval on 22 February by the Israeli Civil Administration of new construction in the settlements of "Shvut Rachel" and "Shilo", as well as the retrospective approval granted for housing units already built ... It is particularly important at this point that neither party in the Middle East peace process undertakes provocative actions which undermine the prospects for continuing the dialogue which was re-established in January. The High Representative calls on Israel to respect its obligations under the Road Map and reverse this decision." (www.consilium.europa.eu)

The following statement was issued today by the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Serry on Israeli settlement approvals:

During his recent visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the Secretary-General reiterated the well-known position of the United Nations that settlement activity is illegal, contrary to Israel's obligations under the Road Map and will not be recognized by the international community. Today's announcement by Israel to approve a large number of new units deep inside the Occupied Palestinian Territory in the settlement of "Shilo" and retroactively legitimize hundreds in a nearby outpost is deplorable and moves us further away from the goal of a two-State solution. (www.unsco.org)

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Israeli border patrol soldiers successfully subdued a Palestinian woman who attempted to stab soldiers at a checkpoint in Hebron. (The Jerusalem Post)

Palestinian militants launched two rockets at southern Israel causing no casualties or damage. (AFP)

Israeli forces apprehended a Palestinian man walking from work to his Hebron-area village, beating him severely. (Ma'an News Agency)

Mohammad Shtayyeh, a senior member of the Palestinian delegation to the exploratory talks in Jordan, told Haaretz that the Israeli delegation had submitted no position or offer to the Palestinians during the talks. "What the Israelis did was to present a list of parameters that looked more like a plan to consolidate the current reality of Bantustans than ending the Israeli occupation," he said. Shtayyeh said the Palestinian position presented in Amman was in keeping with international law and had been submitted to the members of the Quartet. (Haaretz)

Former Yesha [settler] Council Director Naftali Bennett presented a new initiative which had been dubbed the "mollification plan". He suggested the annexation of Area C, which constitutes 62 per cent of the West Bank, then addressed the full naturalization of some 50,000 Palestinians who reside there. Mr. Bennett's plan further proposed annulling the right of return. The IDF must maintain full control over the West Bank, he said. The plan also suggested cementing a full disconnect between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and a gradual annexation of Gaza by Egypt. Mr. Bennett said that politicians and defence officials who reviewed the plan had high praise for it. (Ynetnews)

PA President Abbas and Hamas leader Haniyeh met in Cairo and discussed the process of reconciliation, including ways to overcome the obstacles to the Cairo and Doha agreements, a Hamas official said. (Ma'an News Agency)

According to a Fatah official, PA President Abbas and Hamas leader Mashaal postponed talks on forming a unified Government because Hamas continued to prevent the elections [commission] from registering voters in Gaza. He added that Hamas had not yet informed Abbas of its formal approval to end internal disputes on forming the Government. (AFP)

Hamas officials played down reports that the movement was placing barriers on the reconciliation deal that it had signed with Fatah earlier during the month. Spokesman Fawzi Barhoum said that Hamas was moving forward with the deal in line with the terms agreed in Doha by PA President Abbas and Mr. Mashaal. "We don't have any demands which would block the reconciliation," Mr. Barhoum said. "Any amendment to be added by Fatah or Hamas is to protect the process of reconciliation," he added. (Ma'an News Agency)

Hamas Spokesman Taher al-Nunu said that a deal had been reached after "intensive negotiations" between Gaza leader Haniyeh, Egyptian officials and the Islamic Development Bank, to alleviate the Gaza electricity crisis. In the first stage, Egyptian companies would pump fuel directly to Gaza. The second agreement would see the Islamic Development Bank finance a project to increase the capacity of Gaza's sole power plant by 40 megawatts. In the third part of the agreement, the Gaza electricity grid would be connected to Egypt's, and its power plant would be converted from diesel fuel to gas. (Ma'an News Agency)

The International Committee of the Red Cross supplied 150,000 litres of emergency fuel for Gaza hospitals. (ICRC)

Palestinian President's Spokesman Abu Rudeineh condemned repeated visits by Jewish groups to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which he described as a provocative and serious break-in that completed a series of raids by extremists on sacred mosques and churches. He called on the international community to force Israeli authorities to stop the provocations that harm the freedom of worship. (Xinhua)

Local residents said that Israeli bulldozers and military jeeps arrived in the village of Surif near Hebron at dawn and began digging up land in order to confiscate it. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli forces demolished a Palestinian house and two water wells in Beit Ulla, a town north-west of Hebron, according to a local activist. (Wafa)

PA Spokesman Khatib condemned an Israeli plan to convert Qalandiya airport into an industrial zone, considering it a violation of international law. He added that re-opening the airport was part of the PA development plans for the future. The airport had been closed by the Israeli authorities since the second intifada and never reopened. (Wafa)

A press release by the PA Ministry of Planning revealed that the French Development Agency pledged to allocate € 22 million to finance several development projects. (Wafa)

Israel allowed the transfer of 230 truckloads of goods and 20 cars into the Gaza Strip, Palestinian liaison official Fattouh said. Two truckloads of flowers were exported to Europe. Limited quantities of cooking gas were scheduled to be transferred to Gaza, he added. (Ma'an News Agency)

Palestinian sources reported that IDF forces arrested Majdi Atiya Suleman Ajuli, a Hamas operative released from Israeli prison as part of the Shalit deal, north of Tulkarm. Sources said that Mr. Ajuli's wife and daughter were also arrested. (Ynetnews)

Inspired by Khader Adnan's hunger strike, hundreds of Palestinian prisoners under administrative detention [without charge] in Israeli jails decided to boycott the Israeli military courts and its judicial system. In a statement, the Palestinian Prisoners' Club said that the prisoners did not recognize the legality of a system that violated international conventions. (www.gulfnews.com)

The Jordanian Government called on Israel to release all jailed Palestinians, including Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti, and called for the resumption of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, reiterating Jordan's support for the Palestinians and the PA. (Xinhua)

Norway's Minister for Foreign Affairs Jonas Gahr Store said, "I deeply deplore the recent authorization by the Israeli authorities of housing units in the West Bank. The building of settlements on occupied land is illegal and a violation of international law." (www.regjeringen.no)

A tour of the Palestine Medical Compound in Ramallah by Israeli physicians triggered a wave of protests in the city and other parts of the West Bank and Gaza, with Ramallah medical staff stating that the meeting promoted "normalization" with Israel. During the visit, the Israeli physicians were accompanied by PA Health Minister Fathi Abu Moghli and one of the medical centre's directors, Ahmed Bitawi. (The Jerusalem Post)

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Israeli warplanes carried out two air strikes on the Gaza Strip, slightly wounding two Gaza residents. Hours later, the Israeli army said that it carried out another strike on northern Gaza. (AFP)

A 25-year-old Palestinian man was killed during a demonstration near the Qalandiya military check point between Jerusalem and Ramallah after he was hit by a bullet fired by Israeli soldiers. (Haaretz)

Israeli soldiers entered an area east of the Al-Bureij refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip, firing dozens of rounds of live ammunition. (MEMC)

Israeli forces entered Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque compound after the Friday noon prayers and fired tear gas and stun grenades, while Palestinian youths threw rocks at them. Red Crescent medics said that 30 Palestinians were injured and an Israeli police spokesman said that 11 police officers were slightly hurt. Four Palestinians were detained at the site, according to Israeli police Spokesman Mickey Rosenfeld. (AFP, Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu ordered a halt to the construction of new [settlement] homes in East Jerusalem to avoid conflict during his and President Peres' upcoming visit to the White House, according to a report by Yediot Ahronot. Concretely, he asked the Housing and the Interior Ministries to freeze all bidding on new projects in the settlements of "Gilo" and "Pisgat Ze'ev." (AFP)

The Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People adopted a statement expressing alarm over the Israeli authorities' recent decision to construct more than 500 new homes in the "Shilo" settlement and the attempt to retroactively "legalize" some 200 settlement units built without a permit in the West Bank, while demolitions of Palestinian homes were being accelerated. It called upon the Security Council to act decisively against the continuing disregard by Israel for its resolutions and the continuing obstruction of a peaceful settlement. The Bureau reiterated its call on the Israeli Government to immediately cease all settlement activity. (Division for Palestinian Rights)

Riyadh Al-Ashqar, a Palestinian researcher specializing in detainees' affairs, said that female detainee Hana' Yahia Ash-Shalaby had declared a hunger strike after Israel had placed her under "administrative detention" without charges for a period of six months. Ms. Ash-Shalaby had previously been released under the Shalit prisoner-swap deal. (MEMC)

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said in a report that there were over 300 Palestinians being held by Israel under administrative detention. (Wafa, www.ochaopt.org)

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The Israel Air Force bombed several targets in the Gaza Strip after three Qassam rockets were fired at Israel. Two Palestinians were injured when Israeli planes struck an area west of Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, causing severe damage. (Wafa, Ynetnews)

At least nine Palestinians were injured in clashes with Israeli troops in Al-Ram adjacent to East Jerusalem after the funeral of a Palestinian protestor killed the previous day. (AFP)

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Qatar urged the UN to investigate Israel's settlement expansion in East Jerusalem, warning that Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territory was unacceptable. "We must act quickly to stop the judaization of Jerusalem," Qatar's Emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, said at the International Conference on Jerusalem in Doha. PA President Abbas told the Conference: "We reached an agreement with the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation to work together in order to reinforce Palestinians' resistance in Jerusalem by supporting health, education, housing, infrastructure, religious sites and the economy." (AFP, Wafa)

Israeli diplomats criticized UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Processerry for taking part in the Doha conference. "It is extremely disappointing and infuriating that the UN Secretary-General's Envoy, who never finds the time to properly condemn the shootings on Israeli territory from Gaza, has all the time in the world to take part in what is unashamedly an anti-Israel propaganda-fest, intended to subvert and deny the very foundations of Jewish history," one diplomat said. (The Jerusalem Post)

A Hamas official said that the group's leaders would sign a deal with the Qatari Government to secure more than \$250 million for reconstruction projects in the Gaza Strip. (Xinhua)

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A group of Israeli men entered the Hebron village of Halhul overnight, sparking clashes with locals, witnesses said. No injuries were reported. (Ma'an News Agency)

A member of the PLO Executive Committee, Hana Amira, said that the PA was weighing whether to continue its security and economic cooperation with Israel or instead spark a popular uprising against the Israeli occupation. The PA may reconsider the diplomatic agreements it had with Israel, given Israel's repeated violations of those agreements. (Haaretz)

Israel Railways had prepared a major plan for providing a train service throughout the West Bank to serve both Israelis and Palestinians. The plan, prepared at the request of Transportation Minister Yisrael Katz, would establish 11 new rail lines. (Haaretz)

The representative of Japan to the PA, Naofumi Hashimoto, and the representative of the Japanese Campaign for the Children of Palestine, Tetsuya Nakamura, approved a grant worth \$824,075 for a three-year project to support the agricultural sector in the Gaza Strip. (Wafa)

Thousands of young Palestinians were to receive access to financial loans to support their new businesses through a UN-backed initiative that sought to stimulate the creation of new jobs in the Middle East. The "Mubadarati" loan programme would be carried out by UNRWA, in collaboration with Silatech, a social enterprise company that focuses on creating opportunities for youth in the Arab world. (UN News Centre)

Palestinian officials, business leaders and EU representatives launched a € 3 million initiative to increase Palestinian exports. Funded by the EU, the project would support the services sector, develop a national export strategy and improve access to markets by promoting alternative trade routes to Israel. (Ma'an News Agency)

Egypt's Ambassador to the PA, Yasser Othman, said that the electricity crisis in the Gaza Strip would be solved within two years, as the reconciliation deal, once implemented, would include multiple stages to improve delivery of power from Egypt. (Ma'an News Agency)

The PLO Negotiations Affairs Department said that Israel had denied over 14,000 Palestinians the right to live in East Jerusalem, their city of birth. Around 50 per cent of the denials had been from 2006 to 2008. In addition, since 1967, Israel had demolished 3,300 Palestinian homes and historical and religious sites in the city, around 500 of which had been in the previous six years. (Wafa)

At the International Conference on Jerusalem, the Ambassador of Cuba to Qatar, Amando Vergara, defended the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to establish an independent State, with its capital in East Jerusalem. Mr. Vergara said that Cuba supported all the decisions that might come out from the conference, including those that reaffirmed that East Jerusalem was an inseparable part of the occupied Palestinian State. He said that Cuba supported the steps taken at the General Assembly to achieve the proclamation of the Palestinian State as a full member. (*Prensa Latina*)

The International Conference on Jerusalem concluded its deliberations with a decision to request the UN to investigate all Israeli measures taken in East Jerusalem since its occupation. In its final statement, the Conference concluded that it was essential to expose the Israeli violations, especially amidst excavations under the Al-Aqsa Mosque and other areas in occupied Jerusalem. (*IMEMC*)

Hamas rejected an invitation by PA President Abbas for Arab leaders to visit Jerusalem, dismissing Mr. Abbas' insistence that such a visit would not amount to normalization with Israel, *Al-Jazeera* reported. Hamas Spokesman Barhoum said that Hamas officials would enter Jerusalem only to "save it from the occupation and strengthen the resilience of its people". (*Al-Jazeera*)

A settler opened fire at Palestinian farmers and their livestock in Khirbet Janba, south of Hebron, after failed attempts to steal their sheep. (*Wafa*)

Over 40 residents of the "Yizhar" settlement threw stones at a Palestinian house near the settlement and cut down olive trees surrounding the house, witnesses said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

During negotiations between the Israeli Government and settler representatives, an agreement had been reached according to which the State would ask the High Court of Justice to postpone the evacuation of the "Migron" outpost until 2015, during which a permanent outpost would be built elsewhere. (*Haaretz*)

Israeli forces arrested eight Palestinians from Kufri Qaleel, a village near Nablus. Also, Israeli soldiers detained a Palestinian boy in Hebron. He was released after the Red Cross intervened. (*Wafa*)

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In a statement, the military wing of Fatah said that its operatives fired a locally made shell at the Israeli city of Ashkelon in response to Israeli attacks on Jerusalem. No injuries were reported. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A PA Minister denied that the PA had decided to end security coordination with Israel. The Minister was responding to reports that the PA was planning to reconsider its security, political and economic agreements with Israel in the following days, as a PLO official had said on 26 February. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

PA President Abbas was set to arrive in [Turkey](#) and hold talks with Turkish President Abdullah Gül, Prime Minister [Recep Tayyip Erdoğan](#) and Foreign Minister Ahmet

According to energy authority in the Gaza Strip, Gaza's only power plant had been forced to shut down for the second time in two weeks due to a fuel shortage. Energy officials appealed to Egypt to provide Gaza with a sufficient amount of fuel to allow regular operation of the plant. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

At the monthly briefing on the situation in the Middle East, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, B. Lynn Pascoe, [told](#) the Security Council that the talks that had started between Israelis and Palestinians in Amman on 3 January had unfortunately stalled, and that, so far, prospects for the resumption of direct bilateral negotiations remained dim. ([www.un.org](#))

The Palestinian leadership, during the monthly briefing on the situation in the Middle East, called on the Security Council to visit the occupied territories to see the impact of Israel's settlement campaign. The Permanent Observer of Palestine to the UN, Riyad Mansour, said that he had sent a letter to the Security Council calling for the visit to take place as soon as possible. (*AFP*)

PLO official Ashrawi called Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's response to a conference on Jerusalem a "malicious campaign of distortion and other inflammatory statements". At the conference in Doha on 26 February, PA President Abbas had accused Israel of conducting ethnic cleansing of East Jerusalem, prompting Mr. Netanyahu to slam the statement as "contemptible remarks". (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The chief justice of the Palestinian high religious court died of a heart attack two days after soldiers had raided his home, the Fatah movement said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli President Peres promised the Roman Catholic Church that it would step up efforts to combat the vandalism of Christian holy sites by suspected Jewish extremists. Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Vatican's custodian of religious sites in the Holy Land had previously asked the President to intervene following the spraying of graffiti on two Christian churches in Jerusalem during the month. (*AP*)

The Israeli police chief, Niso Shaham, continued a ban forbidding non-Muslims from praying at the Al-Aqsa Mosque site, a police representative said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

PA Religious Endowments Minister Mahmoud al-Habbash called on the head of the International Union of Muslim Scholars, Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, to step back from an edict prohibiting non-Palestinians from visiting Jerusalem. He said that the edict was wrong, violated the Koran and Sunnah, and rendered a free service to the Israeli occupation that wants to isolate the holy city from its Arab and Islamic surroundings. (*The Egypt Independent*)

Dozens of settlers, accompanied by Israeli soldiers, raided a house in Fara'ta village, east of Qalqilya, and seized three of its residents, witnesses said. (*Wafa*)

Palestinians and Israeli settlers clashed in the West Bank after a building was set on fire in a settlement outpost, police and witnesses said. (*Yahoo news*)

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Israeli troops raided two private Palestinian TV stations before dawn, seizing transmitters and other equipment, the military said. It added that one of the outlets, al-Watan TV, had been a pirate station whose frequencies interfered with legal broadcasters and aircraft communications. It said that several transmitters had been confiscated in the operation initiated by Israel's Communications Ministry. The military also confirmed a second raid at Jerusalem Educational TV, a Ramallah-based station owned by Al-Quds University, but did not elaborate. PA Prime Minister Fayyad denounced the raids as "aggression against what remains of the Palestinian Authority". (*washingtonpost.com*)

Israeli forces arrested 20 Palestinians from all over the West Bank, according to local and security sources. (*Wafa*)

Jordanian Foreign Minister Judeh told the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament that there was no complete Arab Spring or Arab awakening without peace in the Middle East, and that there would not be peace in the Middle East without a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He also said: "Our position in this regard is very clear and well known. It is the two-State solution, whereby the independent variable, contiguous Palestinian State is established, along the basis of the 1967 lines, and whereby Israel lives in security and the two of them, Israel and Palestine, live in a secure, stable, prosperous Middle East." (*KUNA*)

Hamas leader Al-Zahhar said that the Gaza Strip was an alternative destination available for leaders returning from living abroad in the light of the upheavals taking place in a number of Arab nations, and especially in the Syrian Arab Republic. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The PA had started lobbying for a United Nations resolution against the building of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, a Palestinian official said. The draft resolution was supposed to call for an international inquiry into all measures Israel had applied since it first occupied the West Bank and East Jerusalem in 1967. (*Xinhuanet.com*)

The Indonesian Government conveyed its commitment to supporting the Palestinian cause by intensifying bilateral relations with Palestine. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono had sent Indonesia's Ambassador to the US, Dino Patti Djalal, to Amman to deliver a letter to PA President Abbas. According to Ambassador Djalal, the letter comprised several points, including Indonesia's plan to appoint an honorary consul to Palestine who would be based in Ramallah. (*The Jakarta Post*)

The EU Heads of Mission in Jerusalem and Ramallah, following their first joint visit to Gaza, called for further efforts and complementary measures to achieve a fundamental change of Israeli policy that allowed for the reconstruction and economic recovery of Gaza, including through the resumption of exports. In their statement, the Heads of Mission said that the EU reiterated its calls for an immediate, sustained and unconditional opening of crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza. The Heads of Mission met in Gaza with representatives of international organizations, civil society, women and the private sector. (*Wafa*)

The Government of the Netherlands was to donate to the PA state-of-the-art gantry cargo scanners which would be installed for operation at the Allenby crossing and other locations. The scanners would boost the transit of Palestinian goods in and out of the PA by reducing transit costs for businesses and increasing the volume and range of goods allowed through the crossings. Quartet Representative Blair said that the agreement was the result of extensive technical discussions between his office, the Palestinian Authority and the Governments of Israel and Jordan, and would have a real impact on the income of local businesses and producers. (*Quartetrep.org*)

Over 300 heavily armed Israeli police officers raided cells of Palestinian prisoners in Ashkelon prison, terrorizing the prisoners who were protesting mistreatment by

the prison administration, according to a statement issued by the Palestinian Prisoner's Club. *(Wafa)*

According to media reports, the Ofer military court postponed the hearing of Hana Shalabi, a prisoner on hunger strike, until the judge had examined secret evidence with the intelligence services on 3 March. The defence opposed the court's decision and called on it to immediately release the detainee since she had been on a hunger strike since her first day of administrative detention. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

The Israeli Prison Administration had imposed thousands of dollars in fines on Palestinian prisoners for trivial reasons, the PA Ministry of Prisoners said. It said that one prisoner, Mohammad Abed Rabbo, who had been serving a 17-year prison sentence since 2004, was fined over \$3,600 that the prison authority automatically had deducted from his prison bank account as punishment for whatever act of protest he had carried out. Families of prisoners normally deposited money in special prison accounts for their sons allowing them to buy food or other items from the prison canteen. The Ministry said that the prison authority took the liberty of seizing whatever amount it saw fit from the prisoners' accounts to punish them if they participated in a hunger strike or any other form of protest. *(Wafa)*
