

Division for Palestinian Rights
**Chronological Review of Events Relating to the
 Question of Palestine**
 Monthly media monitoring review
 September 2008

Monthly highlights

- Israeli Defense Minister Barak says Arab neighbourhoods of Jerusalem could become part of future Palestinian capital under a peace accord. ([3 September](#))
- EU foreign ministers call for an active EU role in the coming months to support the Annapolis process. ([6 September](#))
- Arab foreign ministers urge the Arab League to help resolve intra-Palestinian conflict. ([8 September](#))
- Head of High-level Fact-finding Mission Archbishop Tutu says the shelling of Beit Hanoun may have constituted a war crime. ([15 September](#))
- Ad Hoc Liaison Committee expresses concerns that access and movement restrictions continue to stifle Palestinian economic development. ([22 September](#))
- 21 international aid organizations say the Quartet "lost its grip" on the Middle East peace process. ([24 September](#))
- Security Council meets to address the Israeli settlement activities. ([26 September](#))
- The Quartet meets in New York. ([26 September](#))

1

Egypt closed the Rafah crossing after allowing 4,545 Palestinians and Egyptians to cross, including 3,437 who entered Egypt and 1,108 Palestinians who headed for the Gaza Strip, according to an Egyptian official. (*AFP*)

Israeli troops shot and critically wounded a mentally disabled Palestinian in the face with three rubber bullets, during an overnight raid in the village of Ni'lin in the West Bank. (*AFP, AP*)

Three children and one adult participating in a demonstration against the construction of the separation wall in Ni'lin were injured by live bullets. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces arrested a Palestinian boy, 15, at the Huwwara checkpoint, south of Nablus, after he reportedly attempted to stab a soldier. Local sources in the village of Beita, home of the boy, denied reports that he had been carrying a knife. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Israeli Government had decided to allow Palestinians to visit the Al-Haram Al-Sharif (Temple Mount) in East Jerusalem during the month of Ramadan, an IDF statement said. Married Palestinian men, aged 45 to 50, and married Palestinian women, aged 30 to 45, with special permits from the Israeli authorities, would be able to attend Friday prayers. Palestinian men over the age of 50 and women over the age of 45 would have free access. (*Xinhua*)

Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas sent a letter to Egypt expressing his intention to end the Palestinian internal political crisis, according to Mr. Abbas' office. In the letter, Mr. Abbas said that Palestinian national dialogue, with all the factions participating, must start with the goal of forming national unity, paving the way for holding early presidential and parliamentary elections. (*Xinhua*)

Israeli Foreign Ministry Director Aharon Abramovich met with Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit in Cairo to discuss the peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians. Mr. Aboul Gheit said that Israel "should show understanding of the need to strengthen Palestinian infrastructure and improve Palestinian living conditions." (*AFP*)

Senior leaders of two Palestinian groups arrived in Cairo for talks with Egyptian mediators on means of ending the current intra-Palestinian crisis. The Secretary-General of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Nayif Hawatmah, would present a paper to mediators on the issue. Earlier in the day, the head of the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front, Samir Ghawshah, also arrived in Cairo. (*Xinhua*)

An official Palestinian population census published by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics showed that the Palestinian population in the West Bank had grown to 2,350,000. The census did not include the population in the Gaza Strip, whose recent figure was placed at around 1.5 million. (*imra.org.il, www.pcbs.gov.ps, Xinhua*)

Raed Rajab, Deputy Director of the Palestinian Petroleum Agency said that the amount of cooking gas that Israel allowed into the Gaza Strip had increased recently.

He said, "If the occupation forces did not close the crossing point two days last week, we would have felt the increase." Palestinians, traditionally, consumed more cooking gas during the month of Ramadan. (*Xinhua*)

Israeli forces released Noura Al-Hashlamoun, 37, from Israeli custody after serving 26 months in prison and after 27 days of a hunger strike. She was arrested on 19 June 2006 and had been under administrative detention without trial or charges. Her husband has been detained since September 2006, accused of being affiliated with Islamic Jihad. They have six children, aged 3 to 14. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

2

Two Israeli border policemen were convicted of manslaughter for their part in the kidnapping and wrongful death of a Palestinian teenager from Hebron in 2002.

The two, Shahar Botbeka and Denis Alhazov, had been posted in Hebron in 2002, when they, along with two other patrolmen, abducted several Hebron residents.

They abused the men and beat them with truncheons and rifles. They threw Abu Hamadiya, 17, out of a moving vehicle, causing his death. (*Haaretz*)

Shin Bet Head Yuval Diskin said that the PA security forces in the West Bank had improved, thanks to Israeli and US pressure. (*Haaretz*)

Workers at Palestinian universities went on strike, demanding increased pay. The strike by the General Union of University Employees would affect nine universities in the West Bank and two in the Gaza Strip. The workers were demanding a unified salary system and pay increases. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

On the first day of Ramadan, 200,000 students returned to schools run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). UNRWA had offered 100 shekels to each student returning to school and had also promised to provide 120,000 students with lunchtime meals at school for the academic year. Some 8,500 teachers would start in 200 schools in the Gaza Strip. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A new public opinion poll, conducted in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip from 28 to 30 August, showed the popularity of Hamas retreating in favour of Fatah.

The poll, conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR), said that PA President Abbas would win 53 per cent of the vote if the presidential election were held today, compared to 30 per cent for Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh. (*Xinhua, www.pcpsr.org*)

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People held its 311th meeting. The Committee heard a briefing on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, agreed to forward to the General Assembly Nicaragua's request for membership, and approved the

provisional programme for the United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, to be held in Santiago, from 11 to 13 December 2008. (UN News Centre)

3

Israeli forces seized 10 Palestinians during raids in the West Bank. (Ma'an News Agency)

Palestinian security forces reported that five Palestinian security officers were arrested by Israeli forces for operating in the so-called area B of the West Bank, where Israel exercises security control. According to sources, Israeli soldiers stopped a Palestinian car near the Huwwara checkpoint outside Nablus, and the five men were detained after arresting a long-time suspect in Ramallah. The men were released a short time later, after an intervention by high-level Palestinian officials.

(Ma'an News Agency)

Hamas' senior leader Mahmoud Zahar said that talks on exchanging Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit for Palestinian prisoners had broken down because Israel would not meet the group's demands to release prisoners convicted of killing Israelis. Mr. Zahar also said that the talks had stalled because Israel and Egypt would not open their border crossings with Gaza. (AP)

Israel's Defense Minister Ehud Barak told the *Al-Jazeera* news channel. "Our basic position is that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel but that we can find a formula under which certain neighbourhoods, heavily populated Arab neighbourhoods, could become in a peace agreement part of the Palestinian capital that of course will include also the neighbouring villages around Jerusalem." On the issue of settlements, Mr. Barak said, "We are not expanding [settlements]. We didn't announce even a single new settlement; but there is a well-known dispute. We clearly believe that within Jerusalem we have the right to build as we need." He confirmed that the West Bank barrier would form the basis for the future border between Israel and the future Palestinian State. (Deutsch Presse-Agentur (DPA))

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's office said in a statement that the Israeli Government would discuss for the first time at the Cabinet meeting on 7 September a plan to compensate Israeli settlers who agree to voluntarily leave their homes in the occupied West Bank. The statement said that the issue will not be brought to a vote.

The plan was proposed by Vice Prime Minister Haim Ramon (Reuters)

Lauren Booth, a British journalist and sister-in-law of former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, said that she was trapped in Gaza because Israel had refused to let her leave the Palestinian territory. "This is a real Palestinian experience of being between the devil and the deep blue sea," Ms. Booth said. Gil Kari, spokesman for the Israeli military office in charge of liaison with Gaza, said that Ms. Booth's request to leave the Gaza Strip was rejected on the grounds that she did not enter legally when she and 43 other pro-Palestinian activists travelled by boat to the Strip in defiance of an Israeli blockade. (Reuters)

4

IDF troops detained nine Palestinians during raids in the West Bank location near Bethlehem, Hebron, and Nablus. Another Palestinian, Wasim Akram Jaber, was hospitalized for injuries sustained when settlers from the "Kiryat Arba" settlement in Hebron threw stones at him. (Ma'an News Agency)

During a press conference at An-Najah University in Nablus, Quartet Representative Tony Blair said that Israeli checkpoints hindered the economy of the city. He said that up to \$2 billion in investment could result from a follow-up economic conference that was planned to take place in the city in November 2008. Mr. Blair also praised the work of the Palestinian Authority's security forces, who were charged with restoring order to the city. He said that investors were prepared to put their money in the city and to demand freedom of movement in Nablus, which was surrounded by the Israeli military. Mr. Blair said that he was optimistic about the Palestinian-Israeli peace talks and that his presence in Nablus was a sign of progress. Palestinian businessman Munib Al-Masri said that 400 to 500 Palestinian, international and Arab investors were expected to attend the conference. (Ma'an News Agency)

Around half of Gaza's doctors, nurses and administrative medical workers had walked off the job since the previous week, according to the World Health Organization. Hospital workers carried out a similar strike last year when Hamas fired several senior doctors, who were never reinstated, and the slowdown fizzled after five days. The union had called for the strike the previous week to demand that Hamas reinstate workers that Fatah said had been fired for their political loyalties. The union also said that Hamas police had forced some essential staff to report to duty under the threat of arrest. The strike had strained medical services throughout the territory. Gaza hospitals were barely functioning because working doctors and nurses were putting in 12- to 24-hour shifts and running on skeleton staff, many only treating emergency cases while many clinics were closed. (AP)

5

Hundreds of Palestinians threw rocks at Israeli soldiers in the West Bank after the army prevented them from attending Friday prayers at the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. Israel had restricted Palestinian access to men older than 50 and women over 45. Israeli police said that 90,000 worshippers attended prayers at Al-Aqsa, with no incidents. (AP, Haaretz)

Israeli forces arrested 13 Palestinians in Beit Kahil, north of Hebron, another four in towns surrounding Ramallah, and two Hamas-affiliated activists near Bethlehem. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israel approved the recent shipment from Jordan of about 1,000 new assault rifles for PA President Abbas' security forces, Israeli defense officials said. (The Jerusalem Post, Ma'an News Agency, Haaretz, Reuters)

Palestinian Legislative Council member Samira Halaykah Dweik said that former speaker Abdel-Aziz Dweik was moved by Israel from Megiddo prison to Hadareim prison. Another lawmaker, Samir Al-Qadi, was moved from Ofer prison to Megiddo. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli President Shimon Peres appeared side by side with PA President Abbas at the Ambrosetti Forum, an annual gathering of global political and business leaders in Italy. President Abbas pledged to try to reach a final status peace agreement by the end of the year, but he admitted that the goal might not be achieved.

President Abbas also rejected the notion that Israeli Prime Minister Olmert might put forth a partial document outlining the area in which they do agree and leaving open other issues. "It is necessary for the agreement to address all issues ... It's all or nothing, really," said President Abbas. (AP, Haaretz)

France was looking at the possibility of sending a European Union (EU) mission to help security in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, diplomats said before a meeting of EU Foreign Ministers. A diplomat working for the French Presidency of the EU said that Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner would put preliminary ideas for a European role in a possible international force to his peers at a meeting in Avignon, France, the following day. "If there is an [Israeli-Palestinian] peace agreement by the end of this year, the international community must mobilize to provide guarantees for this agreement ... The international community, not only the EU but including the EU, would help guarantee this agreement with an international force that would include Europeans, so that the withdrawal of Israeli forces could go smoothly," the diplomat said. (Haaretz, Reuters)

An investigation carried out by Israeli human rights group Yesh Din and published by Haaretz indicated that there was ongoing cooperation between the Israeli military and settlers in illegally confiscating and controlling privately owned Palestinian land. The army issued military orders confiscating land and the settlers took over, with the Palestinian residents not even seeing the related documents. In recent weeks, settlers had constructed two homes in an outpost, north of the settlement of "Beit El". The Israeli Army had issued orders confiscating the land in question. Yesh Din said that according to official documents, vast areas of the northern neighbourhoods of "Beit El" were built on private Palestinian land. (IMENC)

6

At a two-day informal meeting of EU Foreign Ministers (Gymnich) held in Avignon, France, which opened the previous day, "the ministers evoked the reinforcement of the European Union's commitment to the peace process in the Middle East, particularly in the context of the meeting of the Quartet that would be held in parallel with the United Nations General Assembly. They agreed on the necessity for the European Union to play an active role in the coming months to support the dynamic created by the Annapolis process." (www.ue2008.fr)

7

Jordan's King Abdullah II conferred with PA President Abbas and called for progress to be made on core issues in negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

"The monarch expressed Jordan's backing to the Palestinian Authority's efforts aimed at finding just solutions to all final status issues, particularly Jerusalem and the refugees," a Royal Court statement said. Mr. Abbas told reporters after the meeting that his discussions with the monarch had tackled the Israeli excavations near the Bab al-Maghariba Gate in Jerusalem and that the two sides would continue to coordinate their efforts with a view to preventing Israel from building a walkway there. (DPA)

The Israeli Government postponed discussion of legislation that would pay Israeli settlers to leave their homes in the West Bank, but said that it would take up the matter the following week. At the opening of the weekly cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Olmert said that Israel would likely have to uproot West Bank settlers as part of a future peace agreement. In the light of Israel's continuing peace talks with the Palestinians, he said "it would be proper" to think about providing cash

incentives for settlers to leave voluntarily. "I think it is good to start thinking about these issues and to see how we prepare for them in the right way," Mr. Olmert said. (AP, www.pmo.gov.il)

8

Israeli forces arrested 11 Palestinians in Nablus, two in the village of Anata near Ramallah, and two others in Illar, north of Tulkarm. (Ma'an News Agency)

At an Arab League meeting in Cairo, Foreign Ministers expressed exasperation over continued violence between Fatah and Hamas, urging the League to take action.

"It is about time that the Arab countries take a solid and decisive stance against those who shed Palestinian blood and deepen the Palestinian division. Palestinians have to take full responsibility, they have inflicted damage upon the Palestinian cause through their internal struggle," said Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal at the opening ceremony. The Ministers also agreed that Saudi Arabia would request the UN Security Council to hold a special session, within a month, of foreign ministers of its Member States to discuss "ways to confront Israel's blatant violation of international legitimacy through the continuation of its settlement policy," read the League's final communiqué. Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit repeated an earlier suggestion that an Arab military force should be deployed in Gaza. (DPA, Haaretz, The Jordan Times, Ma'an News Agency)

9

Israeli President Shimon Peres said that the difference between Israeli and Palestinian negotiating positions on the final borders of a Palestinian State was less than 5 per cent, Israeli daily Haaretz reported. (Xinhua)

PA President Abbas, speaking at a press briefing following the meeting with Arab Foreign Ministers in Cairo the previous day, refused any partial agreements with Israel at the end of current negotiations. The President said: "If we ensure reaching a comprehensive, not partial or transitional agreement with Israel, we will continue dealing with Olmert, the same way we are dealing with the American administration." (IMENC)

Secretary-General of the Palestinian People's Party Bassam al-Salhi said that Egypt was intending to host an inter-Palestinian dialogue in September to end Palestinian division. "The comprehensive Palestinian dialogue should succeed and time should not be wasted in order to end the status of inter-division between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank," he said. (Xinhua)

US Special Envoy for Middle East Security Gen. James Jones arrived in Israel for what would be his last visit in that capacity, to meet with Israeli and Palestinian senior officials. After the meetings, he would be expected to report back to US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on drafting a document defining Israel's security interests that would be acceptable to Israel and the United States. (Haaretz)

Saeb Erakat, Head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), commenting on news reports that PA President Abbas intended to disband the Palestinian Legislative Council, said: "This is not true and has no legal basis. Abu Mazen himself asserted that during the sessions of the Arab League board and in his meeting with Arab Foreign Ministers." (Ma'an News Agency)

The PA Ministry of Education agreed to raise the salaries of university employees in the West Bank and Gaza, thus ending the weeklong strike. (Ma'an News Agency)

A special ministerial task force had completed drafting a list of 450 prisoners whom Israel would be willing to release in exchange for Israeli soldier Gilat Shalit. The ministerial panel, headed by Israeli Vice Prime Minister Haim Ramon, finished drafting the list which was submitted to Prime Minister Ehud Barak. Of the 450 names specifically requested by Hamas, Israel agreed to release only about 70. (Haaretz, Xinhua)

At the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict Radhika Coomaraswamy said that 400 children were among the Palestinian prisoners held by Israel. (www.un.org)

10

A Palestinian woman threw acid in the face of two Israeli soldiers at the Hawara roadblock, south of Nablus, and fled the scene, witnesses and Israeli army sources said. The woman was among tens of Palestinians waiting to be checked by the IDF. Israeli sources said that the two soldiers suffered light burns and were taken to a hospital. (Xinhua)

Israeli forces killed 25-year-old Walid Freitikh and arrested two Palestinians during a wide-scale military incursion into Nablus involving some 30 military vehicles. Palestinian security sources reported that one of the seized Palestinians, 22-year-old Jafar Ja'ara, affiliated to the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, had previously received a partial amnesty from Israel. The other, Ra'if Sha'ban, had been released by Israel just two weeks prior. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli gunboats opened fire on a Palestinian fishing boat in the Mediterranean, causing major damage but no injuries, fishermen in Gaza said. (Ma'an News Agency)

Senior Israeli Defense Ministry official Amos Gilad said talks with Hamas designed to secure the release of captured IDF soldier Gilad Shalit had gone better since a truce went into effect in June, but he added that a deal was not close. He said current peace talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority in charge of the West Bank were unlikely to bear fruit until they retook Gaza from Hamas. "It's very difficult to sign an agreement with half your body," he said. (AP)

Egyptian police stopped a convoy of four buses heading towards the Gaza Strip, police and eyewitnesses said. The convoy was the first of several which were supposed to travel to Gaza to try to break the blockade of the Palestinian territory. (Reuters)

Senior Hamas official Mahmoud Al-Zahhar warned Israel that any attempts to rescue abducted IDF soldier Gilad Shalit would spur Hamas to abduct more soldiers, the newspaper Asharq al-Awsat reported. He added that Israel had exhausted all military means to win the captive's release with no results, adding that Hamas remained adamant that Israel pay the full price it was demanding in exchange for Mr. Shalit. (Haaretz)

The US State Department issued the following statement: "The US Government has not taken a position on borders. While the discussions between the parties are confidential, we can state that the parties have not in any way prejudiced long held views on borders. A senior US official who participated in the discussions denies that the Israeli side, led by chief negotiator Foreign Minister Livni, has been willing to negotiate concerning Jerusalem. The Secretary participated in the negotiations in a way that respected the Israeli position." (www.state.gov)

In a letter sent to Kadima party members, Israel's Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni said that she would work to sign a final status agreement with the Palestinian Authority if she won the upcoming Kadima primary. (The Jerusalem Post)

Israeli President Peres said that Hamas must decide whether it would participate in the next Palestinian general election or "continue shooting." (Ma'an News Agency)

The Gaza Strip's only pharmaceutical factory will shut down owing to the Israeli blockade of the coastal territory, said Marwan Al-Astal, chairman of the board of directors of Ash-Sharq Al-Awsat factories. Mr. Al-Astal said that the factory, which had been operating at 20-per cent capacity for a year, would suspend operations because Israel did not allow sufficient materials into the Gaza Strip to continue operations. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israel had recently stepped up its policy of forcibly transferring Palestinians, with registered addresses in Gaza, from the West Bank, said Israeli human rights group B'tselem. The policy was described as taking unilateral steps to institutionalize a new reality of separation between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. B'tselem argued that thousands of Palestinians might be liable to imminent deportation to Gaza and that Israel was making them "illegal dwellers in their own houses". (www.btsilem.org)

An Israeli court officially informed the Local Council of the West Bank village of Jayous about the imminent seizure of 427,000 sq.m. of land from the eastern part of the village for building the separation wall. About 200,000 sq.m. of the land would be used for the expansion of the Israeli settlement "Tsufin". This seizure would take away 75 per cent of land belonging to Jayous, which was used mainly for farming, impacting the livelihood of the villagers. (Wafa)

11

Two Palestinians died in the tunnels underneath the Rafah border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli forces seized nine Palestinians, including three minors, from Ni'lin and Ramallah. (Ma'an News Agency)

A group of settlers from "Talmon" clashed with Israeli soldiers at an IDF position in the West Bank, a military spokesman said. Israel's Public Radio said that the settlers were angry that troops had seized construction materials that were to be used to build a new outpost. (AFP)

The Mayor of Tubas, a city in the northern West Bank, signed an agreement with the United Nations Development Programme to distribute \$70,000 worth of food and Ramadan meals to needy families in the town. (Ma'an News Agency)

A survey published by PalTrade and financed by the World Bank concluded that the commercial movement of goods through Gaza-Israel crossing points was very

slow. The survey showed that 83 per cent of the goods allowed into Gaza during September were food products. (*Xinhua*)

Israel had been fencing off the settlements located to the east of the separation wall, to create buffer zones which are blocking Palestinian access to thousands of acres of lands, a B'Tselem report stated. These obstacles had been erected either independently by settlers, or by the Israeli military as part of the "Special Security Area" plan. (www.btselem.org)

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told reporters: "We have strongly supported the Annapolis process with its ambitious goal of a comprehensive peace by the end of 2008 – a peace that will encompass the reality of two States, Palestine and Israel, living in peace and security. The meetings I will host on the margins of the General Assembly offer an opportunity to assess the situation and chart a way ahead. There will be meetings of the Quartet and the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee as well as an *iftar* for Arab Leaders." (*UN News Centre*)

John Ging, UNRWA Director of Operations in the Gaza Strip, told reporters: "A fair political solution enables the Palestinians to get their rights in work, travel and all other rights given in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights... We deal with the political conflict and the solution should be political, not only humanitarian." (*Xinhua*)

12

Israeli forces entered Bethlehem and four surrounding villages overnight, seizing three Palestinians, and shot a Palestinian during a raid on the village of Anabta near Tulkarm. Also, Israeli forces seized three Palestinians in Ramallah and Jenin and another from the village of Tammun, south of Tubas. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

An Israeli soldier was sentenced to 14 days in prison after a Palestinian woman delivered a stillborn baby when she was delayed at a checkpoint inside the occupied West Bank. "The incident is one that could have been prevented," the army said. The woman, Nahil Abu Raja was being driven from her village to a hospital in Nablus earlier this month when she was held up at an Israeli checkpoint outside the city while she was in labour. Their vehicle was denied entry because it did not have an entrance permit, the army said in a statement. An ambulance called by the family arrived about 30 minutes later, but Ms. Raja gave birth to a premature stillborn baby and was evacuated by the ambulance to the hospital in Nablus for further treatment. Between 2000 and 2006, at least 68 Palestinian women gave birth at Israeli checkpoints, including 35 who miscarried and 5 who died in childbirth, according to the PA Ministry of Health. (*AFP*)

Israeli soldiers reportedly beat and detained two PA national security officers in Hebron. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Speaking to *Haaretz*, PA President Abbas expressed doubt that any peace agreement could be reached by the end of the year as none of the six key issues in a final agreement had yet been resolved, but insisted that any future deal would have to include the right of return for Palestinian refugees. "We expressed our ideas and demands regarding the six issues but have not received any answer from the Israeli side," Mr. Abbas said. (*Haaretz*)

PA President Abbas met in Ramallah with Javier Solana, High Representative for the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy. He informed Mr. Solana that Palestinians were seeking a comprehensive peace agreement and partial agreements would be rejected. He also updated Mr. Solana on the Egyptian efforts for Palestinian reconciliation. PA Prime Minister Fayyad told Mr. Solana that Israel was blocking PA efforts to impose law and order and preventing the achievement of economic recovery. He updated Mr. Solana on President Abbas' efforts to restore Palestinian unity and compose a coalition Government of independent figures, to serve until elections were held. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In statements made to *Haaretz* after his arrival for a tour of Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana expressed doubt whether a deal in Israeli-Palestinian peace talks could be completed by the end of the year, saying that the longer the sides waited to go forward with talks, the less they were likely to succeed. Mr. Solana expressed his hope that peace talks would go forward regardless, saying, "It will be much more complicated to do [in 2009]." (*Haaretz*)

13

Israeli troops fatally shot a Palestinian teenager and wounded another during a clash with stone-throwing youths in the village of Teqoa near Bethlehem, witnesses said. (*AP, Ma'an News Agency*)

A Palestinian stabbed a 9-year-old Israeli boy in an outpost near the settlement of "Yitzhar" after setting fire to a trailer, the IDF said. His injuries were described as light. The Ahrar Al-Jalil Brigades, a self-proclaimed militant group, claimed responsibility. (*AP, Ma'an News Agency*)

Dozens of "Yitzhar" settlers raided the nearby Palestinian village of Asira Qubliyah, shooting guns, smashing windows and overturning a car, Mayor Hosni Sharaf said. Four Palestinians suffered gunshot wounds. Prime Minister Olmert condemned the raid as a "pogrom". Israeli police requested footage of the incident filmed by human rights groups but did not arrest any perpetrators. (*AP, BBC, Ma'an News Agency*)

Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Moratinos, on a six-day tour of the Middle East to boost ties and express support for peace in the region, expressed his conviction that "we'll soon have a State of Palestine," after meeting with PA President Abbas in Ramallah, and afterwards inaugurated an orphanage in Jericho created with the aid of Spanish funding. For his part, Mr. Abbas said that Palestinians did not want a temporary accord and sought definitive solutions, "because without that, there is no accord." (*EFE*)

14

Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip launched a rocket which landed in an open area near the town of Sderot in southern Israel, setting fire to a field, Israeli police said. Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility. (*Haaretz, Reuters*)

Jordan's King Abdullah II highlighted the importance of the EU role in the Middle East peace process during his meeting with Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy. He urged the EU to back the PA efforts to build institutions and improve the living standards of the Palestinians. The continuation of the Israeli settlement activities and attempts to change the identity of Jerusalem would undermine the peace efforts, the King warned.

"Momentum of the negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis will continue until next year, if nothing was achieved this year," Mr. Solana said. Asked about the EU role in ending the Israeli blockade on Gaza Strip, he said that "our policies and goal is to open border crossings before people and goods, but opening these crossings is not our responsibility." (*Petra, Xinhua*)

Prime Minister Olmert said, as his Cabinet prepared to debate a plan to pay compensation to settlers willing to evacuate their West Bank homes: "'Greater Israel' is finished. There is no such thing as that any more. Whoever talks in those terms is only deluding himself ... We have to share this land with the people who dwell here, that are if we don't want to be a bi-national State." The compensation plan, submitted by Vice Prime Minister Haim Ramon, proposes to pay NIS 1.1 million (around \$ 305,000) to settlers who voluntarily vacate their homes east of the separation wall. Mr. Ramon told the Cabinet: "Right now, we don't see reaching a shelf agreement or a declaration of principles on the horizon." (*AFP, DPA*)

"We will apply the Basic Law regarding the expiration of the President's term if no presidential elections are called before 9 January," said Hamas spokesman Salah al-Bardawil said. As Palestinian Legislative Council Speaker Abdel-Aziz Dweik was in jail in Israel, Gaza-based Deputy Speaker Ahmed Bahar would be the Hamas-appointed President, he said. (*Xinhua*)

15

The Israeli Army arrested four members of the Islamic Jihad near Tulkarm, amid intensive gunfire, the faction said in a statement. (*Xinhua*)

The Israeli Army shut down the commercial crossing points into Gaza. Palestinian security sources said that the work at the Kami and Sufa crossings had completely stopped. Israel also closed fuel pipes at the Nahal Oz crossing and left the Erez pedestrian crossing open only for urgent medical cases. (*Xinhua*)

Israeli forces raided Qalqilya in the northern West Bank and ransacked several shops, Palestinian security sources said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

"Every day that goes by without our reaching a deal with the Palestinians is a day we may regret in the future, and I say this as a man who once had, and fought for very different ideas," Prime Minister Olmert was quoted as telling the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. "I join in expressing sorrow for what happened to the Palestinians and also for what happened to the Jews who were expelled from Arab States," he said. "Under absolutely no circumstances will there be a right of return," he declared, "but we are prepared to be part of an international mechanism that will work to solve the problem." (*AP, BBC, Haaretz*)

In an interview with *Haaretz*, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Moratinos said that PA President Abbas was seriously considering Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's proposal of an agreement in principle on the core issues in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. He expressed conviction that the peace talks were going to continue, saying "Whatever happens in Israeli internal politics and in the US administration — both sides and the international community need to work to make them irreversible". Mr. Moratinos said that he had received details of Mr. Olmert's proposal to Mr. Abbas, and that the proposal was "based on a long series of bilateral negotiations" between Messrs. Olmert and Abbas. (*Haaretz*)

The report to the Human Rights Council of the High-level Fact-Finding mission to Beit Hanoun, headed by Archbishop Tutu, said: "In the absence of a well-

founded explanation from the Israeli military... the mission must conclude that there is a possibility that the shelling of Beit Hanoun [in November 2006] constituted a war crime... As the mission has repeatedly stressed (including to representatives of Hamas), those firing rockets on Israeli civilians are no less accountable than the Israeli military for their actions." (www.ohchr.org)

16

At least 11 Palestinians were killed, including 2 children, and 40 others wounded in clashes between Hamas forces and members of the Doghmush clan in Gaza City, Palestinian security officials said. The fighting erupted when Hamas forces moved to arrest three members of the Doghmush family accused of shooting a police officer the previous day. (AFP)

IDF troops arrested seven Palestinians in various parts of the West Bank, including Jenin, Ramallah, Bethlehem and Hebron, Palestinian security sources said. Meanwhile, the Israeli forces wounded two Palestinian youths near the "Beit El" settlement in the northern West Bank. The Israeli sources said that the two threw Molotov cocktails at a post of the settlement guards. (Xinhua)

Israeli military bulldozers dug up large areas of agricultural land planted with potatoes in the Qishda neighbourhood of Tubas in northern West Bank. An irrigation network was also destroyed in the area. (Ma'an News Agency)

Prominent Hamas leaders were re-elected when thousands of Hamas members voted in a secret internal ballot in the Gaza Strip, signalling no change in policy, a Hamas official said about last month's vote, citing security considerations for the decision to keep it secret. Officials in the group said that some veteran leaders had lost seats on the Shura Council to younger candidates but senior figures like Ismail Haniyeh, Mahmoud Al-Zahhar and Saeed Siyam were re-elected to the Council and the Political Bureau. (Haaretz)

17

Two Palestinians were injured when they were attacked by Israeli settlers near Nablus. They were taken to a hospital in Israel for treatment. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli forces arrested 18 Palestinians in Bethlehem, Qalqilya, Nablus and Hebron. (Ma'an News Agency)

Two Israeli soldiers were lightly injured during clashes with settlers in the West Bank. The first incident took place at the "Yad Yair" outpost where one settler unleashed his dog on a soldier. In the evening, some 40 settlers arrived at an IDF position near the "Talmon" settlement, west of Ramallah, and assaulted reservists manning the post. Settlers torched fields belonging to Palestinian villages in response to the forced evacuation of the "Yad Yair" outpost by the IDF and police.

Israeli police detained two settlers from the "Yitzhar" settlement on suspicion that they had set on fire farmland belonging to the Palestinian villages of Ma'adama and Burin (Nablus area) and to fields belonging to the Kfar Sara village near the "Havat Gilad" settlement south-east of "Kedumim." Villagers from Ma'adama in the northern West Bank said some 200 trees had been set on fire. (Haaretz, The Jerusalem Post, Ynetnews)

Ynet reported that Israel was examining the possibility of expanding the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority's security forces to include Hebron, following a request made by the PA. (Ynetnews)

Hamas said that a large delegation representing the group would head to Cairo on 8 October to take part in Palestinian reconciliation talks. (Ma'an News Agency)

In a [report](#), prepared for a meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee on 22 September, the World Bank said that the Palestinians were becoming more dependent on foreign aid, mainly owing to a sluggish economy stifled by continued Israeli restrictions on trade and movement. The Bank said that while the Palestinians had moved forward with reform and donors had delivered significant sums of aid, Israel had only removed a few obstacles and its economic restrictions on the Palestinians had increased. "Aid and reform without access are unlikely to revive the Palestinian economy. As such, international manifestations of support toward a viable Palestinian State and institutions are incomplete insofar as they do not tackle Israeli economic restrictions in parallel," the World Bank said in the report. (AP, www.worldbank.org)

18

At least two Palestinians, 19-year-old Ibrahim Zo'rob and 23-year-old Ahmad Abu Silagh, were killed and three others were missing when a tunnel they had been digging beneath the Egypt-Gaza border collapsed. (Haaretz, IMEMC)

Seven Palestinians from the West Bank towns of Nablus, Bethlehem, Hebron and Ramallah were detained by Israeli troops. Israeli forces also detained Ra'ed Fayeze Saleh Enteer, a resident of Al-Eizariya village near Jerusalem. Soldiers surrounded his house and raided a store he owned, destroying property. Mr. Ra'ed, affiliated with Fatah, had been released earlier after a six-month detention. (IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency)

Israel's Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni won the primary of the Kadima party with 43.1 per cent of the vote, against Transportation Minister Shaul Mofaz, who won 42 per cent. She was expected to form a new Government with herself as Prime Minister. Saeb Erakat, Head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO, said that Ms. Livni "was deeply involved in the peace process so we think she will continue peace-seeking with us" and expressed hope that her election would lead to a return to political stability. Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum stated that Ms. Livni's election "meant the continuation of Israel's aggressive policies against the Palestinian people." (The Financial Times, Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency, Reuters)

The IDF demolished several structures in the unauthorized outpost of "Yad Yair" near Ramallah, in the West Bank, prompting settler protests throughout the area. The army declared "Yad Yair" a closed military zone and announced that they would arrest anyone who came near the site. Palestinian sources stated that IDF troops had turned back settlers approaching the vicinity of the "Dolev" settlement near Ramallah, who threw stones at Palestinian homes. Palestinian sources indicated that settlers were also throwing stones at Palestinian vehicles on the road between the "Ofra" and "Shilo" settlements. (The Jerusalem Post)

The Israeli High Court of Justice issued a temporary restraining order against the intention of the IDF to tear down structures in the West Bank outpost of "Yad Yair." The order came too late since the IDF forces and Civil Administration officials had already razed the buildings. (Ynetnews)

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, head of the United Nations High-level Fact-Finding Mission to Beit Hanoun, [reported](#) to the UN Human Rights Council that the shelling by Israel of the town of Beit Hanoun in the Gaza Strip in November 2006, in which 19 civilians were killed, might constitute a war crime. He criticized the Israeli inquiry that concluded that the shelling was due to a flawed artillery system, stating that the "Israeli response of a largely secret internal military investigation was absolutely unacceptable from both legal and moral points of view." Archbishop Tutu also criticized the international community for "failing to fulfil its role in respect of the suffering of the people of Gaza", saying that "it is the silence of the international community in the face of what is happening there which most offends.

This silence begets complicity." He appealed to the Human Rights Council to show the same concern for protecting Israelis from Palestinian attacks as it does for Palestinian suffering under Israeli occupation. (AFP, BBC, Haaretz, IMEMC, The Jerusalem Post, Reuters, Voice of America)

Roberterry, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, [told](#) the Security Council that 10 months after negotiations were re-launched at Annapolis, the Middle East peace process stood at a crossroads. He said that while there were some positive developments, there were also several factors that caused concern and that the important period ahead must see decisive advances towards peace. Mr. Serry said, "It appears that so far no agreement has been reached on the core issues, however, it also appears that there have been substantive discussions, the potential of which must be built on with a continuation of intensive negotiations." While welcoming Israel's release of 198 Palestinian prisoners, he underlined that over 600 obstacles to movement remained across the West Bank and that actions taken so far to ease closures were insufficient. On the Gaza Strip, Mr. Serry stated that the humanitarian situation remained "extremely grim" but that one piece of positive news was the continuation of the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. (www.un.org)

The President of the sixty-third session of UN General Assembly, Fr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, during a speech in honour of his election, urged the UN to work toward implementing General Assembly resolution 181 (II). He said that the UN should work without delay to fulfil its old obligation of creating an independent Palestinian State. "The greatest failure of the United Nations is the lack of a Palestinian State ... Article 22 of the covenant of the League of Nations pledged as a sacred trust to establish a Palestinian State on a Palestinian territory that was part of the Ottoman Empire. At this very moment, people continue to die as a result of our incapacity to implement a resolution adopted more than 61 years ago. As a consequence, today the Palestinian situation is at the lowest, more critical point in its tragic history." (Haaretz)

19

Israeli soldiers fired tear gas and sound bomb canisters injuring dozens of Palestinians at their Friday demonstration in Bil'in, spraying water mixed with blue dye and tear gas that is absorbed by the skin. (Ma'an News Agency)

A [report](#) issued by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory said Israel took steps aimed at easing internal movement for Palestinians in the West Bank. While these actions were positive and welcomed, the impact was limited geographically. Overall, the freedom of movement of Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem remained highly constrained and neither territorial contiguity nor pre-2000 status quo was restored.

(www.ochaopt.org)

The Wall Street Journal published an Op-Ed page by PA President Abbas entitled "Israel and Palestine Can Still Achieve Peace." President Abbas wrote, "I continue to believe that we can achieve a lasting peace, with the Israeli and Palestinian peoples living as neighbours in two independent states. But if we do not succeed, and succeed soon, the parameters of debate are apt to shift dramatically. Israel's continued settlement expansion and land confiscation in the West Bank makes physical separation of our two peoples increasingly impossible. The number of settlers grew by approximately 85 per cent after the Oslo agreement was signed ... We are impatient for our freedom. Yet, partial peace, as proposed again by my current interlocutors, is not the way forward. Partial freedom is a contradiction in terms. Either a Palestinian lives free or continues to live under the yoke of Israeli military occupation ... Israeli leaders insist that Jerusalem not be physically divided. I agree. Although Jerusalem's sovereignty must be divided, the city itself can be shared as the capital of two States – east for Palestine and west for Israel. While claiming to abhor dividing the city in half, Israel nonetheless splits the city through its complex of walls, tunnels and laws that segregate and discriminate between Muslim and Christian Palestinians and Israeli Jews. Israel continues to encircle the holy city with exclusively Jewish settlements that sever it from the rest of the occupied West Bank... Rather than a partial outcome, we seek an agreement resulting in two viable and sovereign States based on 1967 borders, including a Jerusalem that is the capital of two States and a just resolution that honours the rights of the Palestinian refugees." (*The Wall Street Journal*)

Hamas would not renew negotiations for the release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit unless Israel met its preconditions, the London-based newspaper *Asharq Alawsat* quoted a senior official of the group as saying. According to the report, Hamas had laid out three conditions for the renewal of negotiations with Israel: the release of all Palestinian prisoners whose name appear on the list that had been given to Israel via Egyptian mediation; the implementation of all Israeli commitments in the framework of the ceasefire agreement, including the reopening of Gaza Strip crossings for the passage of goods; and the reopening of Rafah crossing. (*Haaretz*)

20

A Palestinian was shot dead by Israeli soldiers who said that they saw him light a firebomb near the settlement of "Yitzhar." He was later identified by his parents, who said that he was 14 years old. (*AP, BBC*)

Palestinian officials in the Gaza Strip said that the Rafah crossing with Egypt would be opened for two days to let students, pilgrims and patients leave. An Egyptian official said that some 3,000 Gazans had registered to leave this time. (*BBC*)

A Palestinian woman died during an Israeli arrest raid in Abu Dis near East Jerusalem. Medical sources said that Mariam Ayyad, who was in her 60s, suffered a broken skull and possible internal bleeding. Relatives said that the woman tried to block soldiers who were trying to arrest students in her building. A soldier pushed her causing her to fall down the stairs. (*AP*)

Fawzi Barhoom, Hamas spokesman in the Gaza Strip, said, "Hamas pushes for a national coalition Government that can defend the Palestinian people and their rights." His remarks were regarded to mean that Hamas rejected the proposed idea of forming a Government of technocrats that excluded members of the largest Palestinian groups – Hamas and Fatah. (*Xinhua*)

21

Jordan's King Abdullah II spoke by telephone with PA President Abbas, who was preparing to travel to the US for talks with President Bush. The discussion tackled "ongoing efforts aimed at advancing the peace process," according to a Royal Court statement. "Abbas kept the monarch informed about the issues he was going to take up with President Bush at the White House on Thursday [25 September]," the statement added, referring to the core issues of Jerusalem, settlements, refugees and borders. (*DPA*)

Kayed Al-Ghoul, leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, said that he expected Egypt to succeed in launching a national Palestinian dialogue in the second half of October. Palestinians factions, meeting with the Egyptian mediators in Cairo, were now expecting to get the action plan of the dialogue and its date, according to Mr. Al-Ghoul. (*Xinhua*)

The PLO issued a report detailing Israeli Road Map violations since the Annapolis Conference of November 2007. During this period, the Israeli Ministry of Housing and Construction approved the construction of 4,486 houses in settlements, 92 per cent of which would be built in East Jerusalem with the rest in the West Bank. The Ministry had also invited tenders for the building 2,178 houses, the report stated. (*Xinhua*)

22

A mentally disabled 10-year-old Palestinian boy was wounded by Israeli gunfire near Bethlehem, according to Palestinian sources. He was near the "Kfar Etzion" settlement. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Nineteen Israeli soldiers were injured by a Palestinian driver from East Jerusalem who rammed his car into them on a west Jerusalem street and was then shot and killed, Israeli police said. The family of the 19-year-old driver said that he did not have a license and was involved in a car accident. Israeli Defense Minister Barak called for expedited demolition of the houses of "terrorists." (*AFP, Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency, Wafa*)

Israeli military said that a Palestinian woman threw acid in the face of an Israeli soldier guarding a West Bank checkpoint. A Palestinian doctor said soldiers shot and wounded three bystanders in the confusion that ensued. Sources identified the woman as 19-year-old Sanabil Break, a student at An-Najah University in Nablus. Army sources said that she was responsible for a similar earlier incident. (*AP, Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces detained two Palestinian brothers in Ni'lin in the West Bank, Hussein Nafi and Saddam Nafi. A number of warrants were handed to young men of the village, summoning them to Israeli intelligence offices for interrogation. The soldiers fired incendiary bombs and tear gas canisters at the Ar-Rafati mosque in the village. Meanwhile, Israeli forces took into custody two Palestinians in the West Bank village of Far'un. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A Fatah delegation, headed by Nabil Sha'ath, would be meeting with Director of Egyptian Intelligence Omar Suleiman in Cairo. The meeting was one of the latest in a string of bilateral meetings Egypt held with different Palestinian factions in preparation for a comprehensive meeting with all the factions in the second half of October. Palestinian Ambassador in Cairo Nabil Anr said, "The coming two months are very important for the track of the national Palestinian dialogue." He added that the dialogue would be held in Cairo "and will make its way to the Arab League and later to the Arab countries." Fatah official Hussam Khader ruled out any breakthrough: "The dialogue should be directly between Fatah and Islamic Hamas movement," he said. He added that some of the Palestinian factions which would participate in the dialogue "have no (effective) presence in the Palestinian street." (*Ma'an News Agency, Xinhua*)

PA President Abbas said Government changes in Israel and the United States were delaying the search for a two-State peace settlement. He made his remarks during a visit to Dublin, where he met with Irish Foreign Minister Michael Martin. He called the political transitions in Washington, D.C. and Tel Aviv "a difficult time" for peacemaking. (*AP*)

Ministers and senior officials of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) members and other major donors, including US Secretary of State Rice, PA Prime Minister Fayyad and Quartet Representative Blair met at UN Headquarters. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon [opened](#) the meeting chaired by Norway's Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Store. The Chair's [summary](#) stated: "As a result of the Paris Conference, the international community has contributed US\$ 1.36 billion in budgetary support this year... Although considerable external financial support has been mobilized, weak economic growth has taken place ... While acknowledging Israel's security concerns, the AHLC expressed concerns that access and movement restrictions continue to constrain Palestinian economic development.... The Palestinian Government has been able to pay salaries without interruptions and reimburse the bulk of its arrears. There is, however, still a budget gap of US\$ 320 million in 2008." (*UN News Centre, www.regjeringen.no*)

UNRWA warned that a funding shortfall meant it may soon have to stop distributing food to more than 3,000 refugee families displaced by violence at the Nahr el-Bared camp in Lebanon in 2007, and also to halt rental subsidies for about 27,000 refugees by the end of next month. (*UN News Centre*)

Saudi Arabia formally called for an urgent ministerial meeting of the Security Council to discuss Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. (*AFP*)

23

At least five Palestinians were killed and four others were wounded when Egyptian forces blew up two smuggling tunnels beneath the Egyptian-Gaza border, medical workers and residents said. (*Haaretz*)

Chief Palestinian Negotiator Ahmed Qureia received an assurance from Prime Minister designate of Israel Tzipi Livni that peace talks would not stall while she tried to

form a new coalition Government. Following their meeting, Mr. Qureia warned that violence could erupt if the talks collapsed saying, "The Palestinians will continue to negotiate. But, if the talks reached a dead end ... Resistance in all its forms is a legitimate right". In a statement issued by her office, Ms. Livni urged the Palestinians not to resort to violence which would "not achieve for the Palestinians any national objective." (Reuters)

Chief Palestinian Negotiator Ahmed Qureia told Fatah leaders in Ramallah that he was pessimistic about reaching a final accord on all permanent status issues with Israel by the end of 2008. (Xinhua)

Abdallah Abu Samhadana, a member of the Fatah delegation in Cairo, said that his delegation had received full authorization from PA President Abbas to end the crisis with Hamas. The delegation, which is headed by senior Fatah leader Nabil Sha'ath, was scheduled to meet later in the day with Egypt's Intelligence Chief Omer Suleiman. (Xinhua)

Greta Berlin, a spokesperson for the Free Gaza Movement, said that 20 to 22 peace activists, including Mairead Corrigan-Maguire, a Nobel Peace Prize winner from Ireland, planned to take doctors and medical supplies to Gaza from Cyprus by boat. (Reuters)

24

Three East Jerusalem residents were charged with organizing two attacks in which two Israeli border policemen were killed. The group was allegedly responsible for the killing of a border policeman in January 2008 at the Shu'fat refugee camp in East Jerusalem and for another shooting attack in July at the Lion's Gate to the Old City. (Haaretz)

IDF troops positioned near the village of Singil, north of Ramallah, were able to stop a convoy of Palestinian vehicles as it attempted to run them over after bursting through a West Bank roadblock. (Haaretz)

Likud chairman and opposition leader MK Benjamin Netanyahu told *Army Radio* he would not join in a national unity coalition led by Tzipi Livni that would "relinquish the Golan Heights and divide Jerusalem." Mr. Netanyahu criticized Ms. Livni for pledging to continue negotiations for a final settlement with the Palestinian Authority saying, "Today, there is no partner. There is a partner to talks but not to deeds. There is no Palestinian alive today who will kill a terrorist operative." Mr. Netanyahu said, "Jerusalem is ours. We did not spill blood so that Hamas can settle in Jerusalem." (Haaretz)

A report published by a coalition of 21 aid agencies and human rights organizations, including Oxfam International, Save the Children, CARE International, Christian Aid, World Vision Jerusalem and Medico International, accused the Quartet of having "lost its grip" on the Middle East peace process. The report called on the Quartet to take "decisive action" and to "radically revise its existing approach" in order to avoid a further deterioration of the situation. The group also criticized Quartet Representative Tony Blair for "not making sufficient progress in improving the lives of Palestinians." "Today's study shows that the Quartet has fundamentally failed to improve the humanitarian situation on the ground," said David Mephram, policy director of the Save the Children charity in the United Kingdom. (DPA)

Official sources at PA President Abbas' office in Ramallah said that Israel had released senior Fatah leader Ahmed Hillis from the Ashkelon prison, who was escorted to Ramallah. (Xinhua)

US President George W. Bush addressed the UN General Assembly at its sixty-third session [saying](#), "We must stand united in our support of other young democracies, from the people of Lebanon struggling to maintain their hard-won independence, to the people of the Palestinian Territories, who deserve a free and peaceful State of their own." (www.whitehouse.gov)

The Swiss Federal Administrative Tribunal ruled that the refugee status conferred by UNRWA did not entitle the Palestinians seeking asylum in Switzerland to "any differentiated treatment". The Tribunal said that Switzerland only recognized the special refugee status accorded by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. (AFP)

25

Israeli forces seized a Palestinian teenager at the Dheisheh refugee camp in Bethlehem and detained two young men and a minor in Ni'lin, west of Ramallah. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli forces beat and detained an 18-year-old Palestinian at a checkpoint south of Tulkarm. (Ma'an News Agency)

PA President Abbas [met](#) with US President Bush in Washington. President Bush said, "We are working hard with you on security matters. We're working hard with you on helping the international community help you get the economy going in the West Bank. And I welcome you back. As you know, I've got four more months left in office and I'm hopeful that the vision that you and I have worked on can come to pass. And my only pledge to you is that I'll continue to work hard to see that it can come to pass." (AFP, Reuters, www.whitehouse.gov)

Top EU officials met with PA Foreign Minister Riyad Malki in an effort to promote a greater role for the EU in moving the peace talks forward. "This meeting, which took place at crucial time in the peace process, and on the eve of the meeting of the Quartet, provided an opportunity to discuss the European Union's enhanced role in the peace process deepening relations between the European Union and the Palestinian Authority," the EU said in a statement. (AP)

Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso said in an address to the General Assembly that Japan was helping to bring lasting peace to the Middle East. He cited the reconciliation initiative pairing up Israeli and Palestinian high school students, sharing the tragedy of having lost at least one relative to violence. In another scheme, Japan was providing assistance in introducing Israeli irrigation technology to Palestinians in the West Bank. "Here, Japan desires to act as a catalyst, serving as a mediator between the two sides," he said, adding that his country hoped to boost trust, the "scarcest resource of all in the Middle East." (UN News Centre)

A survey conducted by the Nablus-based An-Najah University Centre for Opinion Polls and Survey Studies showed that 66.8 per cent of the Palestinians living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip rejected any kind of union with Jordan, the so-called "Jordan option". The Centre's Director, Hussein Ahmad, said, "There is a sense that discussions of the 'Jordan option' may threaten current negotiations and prevent Palestinians from receiving their full rights." (The Jordan Times)

Israel's Ramon Committee, which was negotiating the release of soldier Gilad Shalit, submitted to the Israeli Prime Minister the names of 450 Palestinian prisoners Israel would free in exchange for the soldier. The list included half of the prisoners Hamas wanted released. Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum told members of the Israeli press, "We insist that all the veteran prisoners and all those sentenced to life terms be freed as part of the exchange deal," adding that the list of names was "non-negotiable." (Ma'an News Agency, Ynetnews)

Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit, after a meeting with Arab Foreign Ministers, told reporters at the UN: "There will be an Arab request for a Security Council meeting to discuss the issue of settlement as soon as possible, hopefully this week ... even though there is an objection from one country." Farhan Haq, associate spokesperson for the Secretary-General, later confirmed: "The meeting will take place tomorrow at the ministerial level." (AFP, Haaretz, Reuters, Xinhua)

Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem opened an office in Washington to inform US policy-makers and the American Jewish community about the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. (Haaretz)

26

Israeli forces arrested three Palestinians in Nablus and Jenin. (Ma'an News Agency)

PA President Abbas said in his address to the General Assembly: "I am certain that the history of the conflict in our region has not before witnessed the gathering of as many countries that came together at the Annapolis Conference or the consensus that arose there demanding not only vigorous action to accelerate and advance negotiations towards the achievement of a final peace agreement, but also explicitly emphasizing the need for the removal of all the obstacles that have continuously impeded the negotiating process and cast doubt on its credibility, usefulness and ability to actually resolve all aspects of the conflict. The main obstacle I refer to is that of the Israeli settlement campaign and its continuation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in East Jerusalem." (www.un.org)

Around 300 Palestinians protested in the West Bank against an Israeli plan to reopen a toxic waste dump near important underground springs outside the village of Deir Sharaf. Israel had dumped waste from Israeli towns and West Bank settlements at the site until it was closed in 2005 amid protests from Palestinian residents. Officials said Israeli work crews had returned to the area in recent weeks, raising fears that the site may soon reopen. (AFP)

The Security Council [met](#) to consider the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, at the request of Saudi Arabia, which called for an urgent

meeting at the ministerial level to address the issue of Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Saudi Foreign Minister Saud Al-Faisal told Security Council members, which included 10 foreign ministers, that continued Israeli settlement activity threatened the Annapolis process, and Israel's intransigence and lack of good faith compounded the already difficult Middle East problem. Secretary-General of the League of Arab States Amr Moussa said that if, in the coming weeks, efforts to rescue the peace process did not succeed, Arab States would come to the Security Council again for action. Calling for an end to the construction of settlements, PA President Abbas said that Israel had been building settlements since 1967, despite 10 Council resolutions condemning and prohibiting such activity, and the requirements of Phase I of the Road Map, which called for an end to the settlement policy. The Permanent Representative of Israel to the UN, Gabriela Shalev, denied that settlements were the principal obstacle to peace, and said that Israel remained committed to a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East and to a two-State solution and was prepared, if the conditions were ripe, to make painful concessions in the pursuit of peace. (UN press release SC/9457)

The Quartet on Middle East peace issued a [statement](#) in which it underlined its commitment to the irreversibility of the negotiations; to the creation of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza, living in peace and security alongside Israel; and to an end to the conflict. The Quartet expressed its desire "to see the continuation of the solid negotiating structure, involving substantive discussions on all issues, including core issues without exception" and "expressed deep concern about increasing settlement activity, which has a damaging impact on the negotiating environment and is an impediment to economic recovery". The Quartet called on all Palestinians to commit themselves to non-violence and recognition of Israel, and on Israel to freeze all settlement activity, including natural growth, and to dismantle outposts erected since March 2001. It called on all parties to avoid actions that undermine confidence and could prejudice the outcome of the negotiations, condemning the recent rise in settler violence against Palestinian civilians and urging the enforcement of the rule of law without discrimination and exception. The Quartet emphasized the need for a renewed focus on improvements in the situation on the ground and stated that visible and tangible progress must accompany the negotiations. (UN press release SG/2143)

27

A Palestinian shepherd was found dead with gunshot wounds south of Nablus. An Israeli police spokesman said that the body was taken to an Israeli forensics centre for an autopsy and that the police were investigating the incident. Palestinians blamed the attack on local Israeli settlers, who denied involvement and said that they were cooperating with the investigation. (Haaretz, Wafa)

A settler was injured when two Israeli cars came under fire by Palestinians near Salfit in the northern West Bank, near the settlement of "Ale Zahav". The driver of one of the cars was taken to hospital. The same day, two young settlers were attacked outside the Ibrahimi Mosque (Tomb of the Patriarchs) in the Old City of Hebron. (Ma'an News Agency)

28

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak urged cabinet ministers to adopt a tougher stance on punishing West Bank settlers over violent acts against Palestinians. He cited the unruly behaviour of settlers who he said tended to take the law into their own hands, adding that the offenders have rarely been brought to court or tried for their actions. Mr. Barak also stressed that settler attacks on Israel Police officers and Israel Defense Forces soldiers stationed near settlements presented a danger to Israeli public service and that the Government must create an environment in which legal authorities work together to put offenders behind bars. (Haaretz)

The Israeli Navy fired shots at fishermen from Rafah and sunk their boat. The same day, two Palestinians were injured when clashes broke out between Israeli forces and Palestinian youth in the West Bank village of Ni'lin after dozens of Israeli military jeeps were used to close the streets and prevented worshippers from entering mosques for evening prayers. Two persons were taken to hospital. (Ma'an News Agency)

Outgoing Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert offered the Palestinians sovereignty over the Jordan Valley in exchange for Israel retaining three main settlement blocks in the West Bank: "Ariel", "Ma'aleh Adumim" and the "Gush Etzion". (Haaretz)

Israeli Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu stated that he would resume building in existing West Bank settlements if elected prime minister. He referred to construction in Jerusalem when he was prime minister, saying that "in Jerusalem, which is now being treated like a settlement, I built 'Har Homa' (Jabal Abu Ghneim), which protects Jerusalem from the South, and in addition, I also built the 'Ma'aleh Hazeitim' neighbourhood." Mr. Netanyahu stated that there was currently no chance of a peace deal with the Palestinian Authority and therefore, the only option was an economic arrangement. In recent closed conversations, he had stated that he would not evacuate settlements in any peace deal. (The Jerusalem Post)

An Israeli court extended the detention of Ahmad Sa'adat, the Secretary-General of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. He had been due for release on 25 October. (Ma'an News Agency)

29

Israel Police announced that the Palestinian shepherd whose body had been found on 27 September had not been killed by settlers. They said that the shepherd had picked up an unexploded shell that detonated in his hands; there were no signs that he had been shot. It was also reported that eyewitnesses had said that Israeli settlers had harassed the shepherd earlier on 27 September. (Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency, Ynetnews)

Militants from the Gaza Strip fired a Qassam rocket, which did not reach Israeli territory. (Haaretz)

Israeli Border Guard officers patrolling in the Old City of Jerusalem arrested a 19-year-old Palestinian carrying a knife. Two suicide notes indicating that he planned to be a "shahid" (martyr) were also found. The young man was taken for questioning. (Ynetnews)

Israel boosted the deployment of its security forces across the West Bank and imposed a complete closure on the territory ahead of Rosh Hashanah. Large numbers of border policemen and regular police were positioned in major West Bank cities and along the border of the West Bank with Israel. This means that no Palestinians are allowed to leave the West Bank or Gaza Strip, with the exception of "those in need of humanitarian and medical aid". The army announced that depending on security considerations, the closure would be lifted late on 1 October. (Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency, Wafa, Ynetnews)

Outgoing Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert stated in an interview given to the Israeli daily Yediot Ahronot, "in the end of the day, we will have to withdraw from the most decisive areas of the [Occupied Palestinian] territories. In exchange for the same territories left in our hands, we will have to give compensation in the form of territories within the State of Israel", adding "I think we are very close to an agreement." Mr. Olmert said the land exchange would have to be "more or less one to one". (BBC, Haaretz, The Financial Times, The Jerusalem Post, The New York Times, Reuters, Yediot Aharonot)

The families of prisoners from the Gaza Strip detained in Israeli prisons demonstrated outside the Red Cross office in Gaza. They called on all foundations, human rights organizations and politicians around the world to put pressure on Israel to allow families to visit their imprisoned relatives. Most participants in the demonstration had not seen their imprisoned family members in more than one and a half years. (Ma'an News Agency)

30

PA President Abbas said that the Palestinian Authority would be "exerting great efforts for the success of the [intra-Palestinian] dialogue that Egypt is holding", his spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeineh said. Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh said that Hamas was ready for a unity agreement at the end of the Egyptian-sponsored talks in Cairo, but that it would "make no concessions." (Ma'an News Agency)

PA President Abbas said that his meeting with US President Bush the previous week "was mainly frank," adding that "we said exactly what we had and what was needed." He added that "the visit was successful by all measures." (DPA)

A report published by the Israeli Environmental Protection Ministry said that West Bank water reservoirs were seriously contaminated by untreated wastewater and industrial pollutants, with the Israeli settlements a significant contributor. (Ma'an News Agency, www.sviva.gov.il)