

Division for Palestinian Rights
**Chronological Review of Events Relating to the
 Question of Palestine**
 Monthly media monitoring review
August 2009

Monthly highlights

- Israel evicts dozens of Palestinians from Sheikh Jarrah district in East Jerusalem ([2 August](#))
- Sixth Fatah Congress opens in Bethlehem, elects leadership. ([4](#), [8](#), [9](#), and [13 August](#))
- UN High Commissioner for Human Rights says there was evidence of gross human rights violations by Israeli forces during operation Cast Lead. ([14 August](#))
- UNRWA launches US\$181 million Gaza Ramadan Appeal. ([17 August](#))
- PA Prime Minister Fayyad unveils plans to create a de facto State in two years. ([25 August](#))

1

Israeli soldiers burned Palestinian farm land near the Erez crossing in the northern Gaza Strip. (IMEMC)

A group of Israeli settlers from the “Dabbouya” outpost near Hebron attacked and injured a 32-year-old Palestinian from Hebron. (IMEMC)

2

Israeli soldiers raided the West Bank village of Sa’ir near Hebron and seized a 37-year-old Palestinian. (Ma’an News Agency)

Israeli police evicted two Palestinian families in the Arab neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah in East Jerusalem and allowed Israeli settlers to move into their homes. Police arrived before dawn and cordoned off part of the neighbourhood before forcibly removing more than 50 people, said Chris Gunness, spokesman for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), adding that UN staff later had seen vehicles bringing settlers to move into the homes. The families had lived in the homes for more than 50 years, according to Mr. Gunness. (AP)

United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Robert Serry issued the following statement:

“I deplore today’s totally unacceptable actions by Israel, in which Israeli security forces evicted Palestinian refugee families registered with UNRWA from their homes in the Arab neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah in East Jerusalem to allow settlers to take possession of these properties. These actions are contrary to the provisions of the Geneva Conventions related to occupied territory. They also contravene the united calls of the international community, including the Quartet’s, which in its recent statement urged the Government of Israel to refrain from provocative actions in East Jerusalem, including house demolitions and evictions. These actions heighten tensions and undermine international efforts to create conditions for fruitful negotiations to achieve peace. The United Nations rejects Israel’s claims that this is a matter for municipal authorities and domestic courts. I call on Israel to adhere to international law and its Roadmap obligations and to cease and reverse such provocative and unacceptable actions in East Jerusalem.” (www.unsco.org)

Diplomats from the United States Embassy in Israel sent a protest letter to the Israeli Foreign Ministry, stressing that the eviction of Palestinian families in East Jerusalem went against the spirit of the Road Map. They added that a high-level protest would be communicated to Israel the next day. The British Government said the Israeli action was “incompatible with the Israeli professed desire for peace.” (BBC, Haaretz)

The Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, condemned “the escalating attacks by Israeli authorities against the holy city of Al-Quds, particularly the growing settlement movement and the confiscation by Israeli settlers of Palestinian property in Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan neighbourhoods.” (www.oic-oci.org)

3

Israeli forces seized overnight 14 Palestinians in the West Bank. (Ma’an News Agency)

A Palestinian man was killed and two were injured when a smuggling tunnel between Egypt and the Gaza Strip collapsed. (Ma’an News Agency)

Israeli troops arrested a 45-year-old man from Beit Khalil after stopping him at a checkpoint west of Hebron. (Ma’an News Agency)

The following statement was issued by the EU Presidency held by Sweden:

“The Presidency of the European Union reiterates its serious concern about the continued and unacceptable evictions in East Jerusalem, notably the evictions by Israeli authorities of two families from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood on Sunday, 2 August 2009.

“The Presidency recalls that house demolitions, evictions and settlement activities in East Jerusalem are illegal under international law. In addition, the actions taken by the Israeli Government contravene repeated calls by the international community, including the Quartet, to refrain from any provocative actions in East Jerusalem. These actions confirm a worrying trend that runs counter to the creation of an atmosphere conducive to achieving a viable and credible solution to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.” (www.se2009.eu)

Twenty-one buses carried passengers from Egypt across the Rafah border crossing into the Gaza Strip while 12 buses left Gaza for Egypt, carrying 171 medical patients among others. Egypt had decided to open the Rafah border crossing three days a week. The crossing would also be open for a fourth day on 6 August to allow foreign passport holders accompanying children under 16 to cross. (Ma’an News Agency)

The Israeli military bulldozed farmland south of Nablus owned by Palestinians from the villages of Bureen and Irak Bureen. The head of the Bureen village council, Ali Eid, said the Israeli military was expanding the “Barkha” and “Yitshar” settlement located nearby. (IMEMC)

During a [joint press conference](#) with Jordanian Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said, “The eviction of families and demolition of homes in East Jerusalem is not in keeping with Israeli obligations, and I urge the Government of Israel and municipal officials to refrain from such provocative

actions.” Also, US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Jeffrey Feltman summoned the Israeli Ambassador to the US, Michael Oren, to tell him that the United States viewed the eviction of the Palestinian families as a “provocative” and “unacceptable” act that violated Israel’s obligations under the Road Map. Mr. Oren responded by saying that the buildings in question had been Jewish-owned since before Israel’s founding, and that a court had ordered the families’ eviction because they had violated the terms of their leases. (*Haaretz*, www.state.gov) Turkey’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued the following statement:

“We are concerned about the eviction by the Israeli Police of Palestinian families from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah district of East Jerusalem on August 2, 2009 and the allocation of the mentioned homes to settlers.

“These practices are contrary to Israel’s responsibilities under international law and to fundamental human rights. They also harm the efforts to create the conducive environment for the resumption of the peace talks aimed at resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

“We deem Israel’s adherence to its commitments under international law and its avoidance of steps that would undermine confidence between the parties, as well as those that would alter the status of East Jerusalem vital for the success of the peace efforts, and call upon Israel to halt such practices immediately.” (*www.mfa.gov.tr*)

Malta’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued the following statement:

“Malta’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterates its serious concern about the continued and unacceptable evictions in East Jerusalem, notably the evictions by Israeli authorities of two families from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood on Sunday, 2 August 2009.

“Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Tonio Borg recalled that house demolitions, evictions and settlement activities in East Jerusalem are illegal under international law. Indeed obstacles to the peace process are being created by the stubborn continuance of the building of settlements or expansion of existing settlements in the occupied territories and the demolition of homes and eviction of families from their residences.

These actions are in breach of the Annapolis process undertakings and of the Quartet appeals to avoid provocative actions or measures by all stakeholders in the region. (*www.foreign.gov.mt*)

Israel moved to defend itself against widespread international condemnation over its eviction of dozens of Palestinians from a neighbourhood in East Jerusalem, following which two Jewish families moved into their homes. Government spokesman Mark Regev said that the criticism was simply not fair. He described the eviction as a legal dispute between two private parties over who had title to the property, adding that the Israeli court system was independent and professional. (*CNN*)

The British Consulate in Jerusalem said in a statement that “Israel’s claim that the imposition of extremist Jewish settlers into this ancient Arab neighbourhood is a matter for the courts or the municipality is entirely unacceptable”, adding that “their actions were incompatible with Israel’s desire for peace”. It urged Israel not to allow extremists to set the agenda. (*www.timesonline.co.uk*)

Seven settlers were taken into custody by Israeli forces for disturbing the peace in the vicinity of the West Bank settlement of “Havat Gilad”, south of Nablus. (*Ma’an News Agency*)

It was reported by Palestinian sources that three Palestinian detainees had been wounded when fire broke out in an Israeli detention facility in the Negev. (*IMEMC*)

4

Two Palestinian boys were injured when ordnance left by the Israeli army during the Gaza war exploded in the Al-Bureij refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip. (*Ma’an News Agency*)

The Israeli army arrested 13 Palestinians during pre-dawn raids. Five persons were arrested in the area of Qalqilya, four from the Bethlehem area, two from the area of Hebron and two in the vicinity of Jericho. (*IMEMC*, *Ma’an News Agency*)

Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak said during a Knesset Defence and Foreign Affairs Committee meeting: “In the coming weeks, the Americans will complete their meetings with the various parties in the region and formulate their position. ... After that they will present a plan for regional peace. In my opinion, Israel should enthusiastically join the initiative. ... I hope that in the coming months we will see negotiations launched on all fronts as a result of a regional peace initiative by President Obama, with the Palestinian issue at its core.” (*Ynetnews*)

The Sixth Congress of the Fatah party opened in Bethlehem, the first such event held since 1989 and on Palestinian soil. Some 2,000 delegates and hundreds of guests attend the congress. The delegates were expected to vote for two of Fatah’s main bodies, the Central Committee and the Revolutionary Council. In a series of interviews, scores of Fatah members from around the world said they vehemently opposed any attempt to soften their faction’s stance towards Israel. Almost all said that they opposed recognizing Israel as a Jewish State or relinquishing the right of return for Palestinian refugees. PA President Mahmoud Abbas said, “We open the session here in Bethlehem, the city where Jesus was born and the closest city to Jerusalem”. He said that Palestinians must persist with peace negotiations with Israel “as long as there is a tiny bit of hope”, adding that the Palestinian side was committed to the Road Map but accused Israel of failing to uphold its obligation under the document and of denying all its commitments. Mr. Abbas said: “While we insist on our choice for peace and negotiations based on international resolutions, we reserve our right to legitimate resistance guaranteed by international law”. Earlier in the day, senior Fatah official Jibril Rajoub said that the movement had not relinquished the option of armed struggle against Israel, which remained a tool at the Palestinians’ disposal. Congress spokesman Nabil Amr said that resistance was a legal matter that must remain aligned with international law. “Political activity is one way of resistance; we are not talking about armed resistance”. The draft document proposes to keep the option of “armed struggle” if peace talks with Israel fail. Officials said that a draft of Fatah’s programme called for new forms of resistance such as civil disobedience against settlement expansion and the West Bank wall. Another senior Fatah leader said that Palestinians have “the right to use all means in the fight to end the occupation until we establish the State.” He added that the charter “will remain as is – it won’t be subject to discussion”. (*BBC*, *DPA*, *The Financial Times*, *Haaretz*, *The Jerusalem Post*, *Ma’an News Agency*, *Reuters*, *Ynetnews*)

The Israeli defence establishment was closely monitoring the Sixth Fatah Congress, saying that its decisions will testify to the Palestinian side’s readiness in terms of continuing the negotiations with Israel, in light of reports that Fatah planned to update its platform with a clause stating that it would not recognize Israel as a Jewish State. Speaking in the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, Defence Minister Ehud Barak noted that Israel would insist on keeping the settlement blocks as part of any solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as a solution to the refugee issue outside the boundaries of Israel. Asked about PA President Abbas’ reference to “resistance”, the Prime Minister’s spokesman, Mark Regev, said that “Israel seeks historic reconciliation with our Palestinian neighbours – we want peace and the best way to achieve that is around the negotiating table”. Former Public Security Minister, Shin Bet chief and current Knesset member Avi Dichter said that a [Fatah] decision leaving open the armed struggle option would “throw them and us decades backwards”. He even warned against a third intifada following the decisions made at the Fatah congress. Information and Diaspora Minister Yuli Edelstein referred to the Fatah congress as “a declaration of war”, adding that “we must not act as if we haven’t heard. We must emerge from the circle of illusions that these are moderates who want peace. They explicitly say that they support continuing armed struggle”. He added, inter alia, that “this is Fatah we are talking about, those who the international community is allegedly pushing us to negotiate with. If anyone should talk about settlements endangering peace, the most violent and extreme settlement is the Palestinian State, which will be established and run by the ‘moderate’ speaking today at the Fatah conference”. Transportation Minister Yisrael Katz said that Fatah’s draft “political plan” was “a declaration of war on the State of Israel”, adding that “the refusal to acknowledge Israel as a Jewish State, the demand for a withdrawal to the 1967 lines and for the full right of return for Palestinian refugees – this meant wiping Israel out of existence”. (*The Jerusalem Post*, *Reuters*, *Ynetnews*)

Jordan’s King Abdullah II delivered a speech in which he reassured Jordanians about the Kingdom’s position on the Palestinian issue, especially with regard to the refugees’ right of return. He said no external power could impose any stand on Jordan, highlighting the urgency of a unified and solid internal front against rumours about compromises that Jordan was said to have offered the US and Israel regarding the refugees issue. He said Jordan’s commitment to the right of return and compensation was “constant, unchangeable and nonnegotiable”. (*The Jordan Times*)

Israeli bulldozers accompanied by military vehicles invaded the Al-Tuwani village near Hebron in order to remove electricity poles. According to the Christian Peacemaker Teams, the poles were part of an infrastructure project promised by Quartet Representative Tony Blair during his visit to the village in March. (*Ma’an News Agency*)

Israel decided to open the Kerem Shalom and Nahal Oz border crossings into Gaza in order to allow delivery of food and fuel. Israel also planned to allow 58 to 68 trucks to deliver goods at the Kerem Shalom crossing. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

The Israeli authorities decided to place the Palestinian village of Beit Iksa on the Israeli side of the separation wall, to be considered as part of Jerusalem. *(IMEMC)*
Israel released two Hamas leaders from a prison camp in the Negev desert after holding them for 19 months without trial. Both men had previously served five years in Israeli jails. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

5

One Palestinian was killed and seven others injured by an electric shock inside a smuggling tunnel between the Gaza Strip and Egypt. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

Eight Palestinians were injured when they were assaulted by Israeli forces who delivered demolition orders in the Al-Bustan neighbourhood of East Jerusalem. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

It was reported today by the Christian Peacemakers Teams that Israeli soldiers with a bulldozer placed three earth mounds halting all vehicular access to a cluster of villages in the South Hebron Hills. The village of Kallet Adbea is now enclosed between two earth mounds. The closure which affects at least 700 Palestinians has closed off traffic to the nearby towns of Yatta and At-Tuwani, impacting health services, schools, markets and social services. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

UNRWA spokesman Chris Gunness denied allegations by IDF sources that three ambulances that had been transferred to the Agency some two weeks ago were seized by Hamas. *(The Jerusalem Post)*

6

Israeli naval forces arrested two Palestinian fishermen off the shore of the southern Gaza Strip. *(Xinhua)*

A recommendation was adopted by the Fatah congress in Bethlehem, calling for an open ended investigation into the circumstances of the death of former PA President Yasser Arafat. The recommendation said Israel was behind the "assassination" of the late President. The recommendation was put forward by Nasser al-Kidwa, Mr. Arafat's nephew and chairman of the Arafat Institute. *(DPA)*

Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit asked the UN Secretary-General and the Quartet to pressure Israel into stopping the eviction of Palestinian families from their homes in East Jerusalem. He reiterated that the Israeli measures were illegal and expressed Egypt's concerns about Israel's attempts to change the facts on the ground. *(Xinhua)*

Japan's new Middle East Peace Envoy, Yutaka Imura, met with Israel's President Shimon Peres and affirmed that Japan would continue to push for peace in the Middle East. Mr. Imura was on a two-week trip to the region which includes visits to Egypt, the PA, Jordan and Syria. *(The Jerusalem Post)*

The Israeli Government was considering a request from France's President Nicolas Sarkozy to free 24 year-old Salah Hamouri, a French-Palestinian convicted in 2005 of plotting to assassinate a prominent Israeli rabbi. Pro-Palestinian groups in France had been waging a public campaign on Mr. Hamouri's behalf, and President Sarkozy asked for his release in June 2008 during a visit to Israel. Israeli Interior Minister Eli Yishai, of Shas, said he would fight any attempt to free Mr. Hamouri. *(AP)*

Eran Efrati, a former commander in Israel's Army who served in the West Bank said that allegations that Israeli soldiers often mistreat Palestinian minors, suspected of throwing stones, were true. He said: "I never arrested anyone younger than nine or 10 [years old], but 14, 13, 11 for me, they're still kids. But they're arrested like adults". *(BBC)*

A statement by UNRWA spokesperson Chris Gunness warned of the humanitarian impact of more Jerusalem evictions. He said the evictions violated the rights of the refugees and international law. He called on the Israeli authorities to refrain from evicting other refugees in the Sheikh Jarrah district and to reinstate the evicted families as the United Nations Special Co-ordinator had demanded. *(www.unrwa.org)*

A [report](#) published by Human Rights Watch under the title "Rockets from Gaza; Harm to Civilians from Palestinian Armed Groups' Rocket Attacks", said that while Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups had sought to justify the attacks as appropriate reprisals for Israeli military operations, international humanitarian law (the "laws of war") did not support these justifications. The report discussed the impact of rocket attacks on civilian deaths and injuries in Israel and in Gaza as well as on the displacement and destruction of property. The report found that the absence of Israeli military forces in the areas struck by the rockets indicated that many of these attacks were deliberately intended to strike Israeli civilians and civilian structures. Individuals who authorize or carry out such attacks were committing war crimes, the report said. *(www.hrw.org)*

One of the three generators of the sole Gaza power station was shut down due to the decrease in the amount of fuel allowed into Gaza by Israel. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

Fatah delegates meeting during its Sixth Congress in Bethlehem resolved not to renew peace negotiations with Israel until all Palestinian prisoners were released from Israeli jails, all settlement-building was frozen and the Gaza blockade was lifted. *(The Jerusalem Post)*

7

Israeli troops fired tear gas and water contaminated with animal waste and chemicals which causes vomiting on Bil'in villagers and their international and Israeli supporters during the weekly protest against the separation wall in the West Bank. The protesters, some of whom were treated for tear gas inhalation, were also demanding the release of two members of the local committee against the wall. *(IMEMC)*

A photographer was lightly wounded when some 200 Palestinian and Israeli peace activists clashed with Israeli soldiers and settlers outside the "Bracha" settlement south of Nablus. The clashes began when settlers fired in the air. Israeli soldiers subsequently dispersed the Palestinian and Israeli protesters by firing tear gas and rubber-coated bullets. *(AFP)*

Operating hours for the Allenby Bridge, the only crossing point that Palestinians could use to go in and out of the West Bank, had been extended. It would now be open from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. except on the weekend in Israel during a two-month trial period. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

Israeli settlers launched a series of actions in a bid to take over more West Bank land from Palestinians. In Hebron, they began planting Palestinian-owned land, under military guard. Settlers from the "Kiryat Arba" settlement moved onto the land of Muhammad Mustafa Jaber in the Al-Beqa'a area outside Hebron. His family was prevented by Israeli soldiers from reaching his land. In a separate incident the previous day, dozens of Israeli military vehicles closed the village of Kfil Haris, north of Salfit, and escorted a group of settlers through the areas. The troops set up checkpoints throughout the village to ensure that locals stayed indoors. *(IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency)*

A group of Israeli settlers had launched a campaign to be nominated for the UN-Habitat Prize in "human settlement", the Habitat Scroll of Honour, awarded annually to acknowledge outstanding contributions in various fields such as shelter provision, highlighting the plight of the homeless, leadership in post conflict reconstruction and improving human settlements such as cities and towns. The director of the Shomron Liaison Office was quoted as saying that by voting "now you can show your appreciation for the dedicated pioneers of the Jewish communities in the Shomron" (a Hebrew word meaning the northern West Bank). However, he ran into a number of problems in the application process which requires that the projects have a "positive impact". *(Ma'an News Agency)*

An Israeli military court sentenced 33-year-old Khalid Hamad from Nablus to 40 years in prison for alleged involvement in an attack on the Israeli settlement of "Ariel". He had been in administrative detention since 2002. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

The Palestinian Solidarity Alliance and the Media Review Network joined two South African organizations which have called for some 70 South Africans who hold dual Israeli-South African citizenship to be prosecuted for involvement in war crimes committed by the IDF during Operation Cast Lead in Gaza in December 2008 and January 2009. They called for the immediate arrest of IDF Lt.-Col. David Benjamin who was at a conference in South Africa. *(The Jerusalem Post)*

8

Israeli settlers reportedly accompanied by about 20 soldiers planted trees in the Beqa'a Valley near Hebron on land belonging to a Palestinian family, the Christian Peacemakers Team said in a statement. Tree planting was a sensitive issue to Palestinian communities because under Israeli law, green hills were defined as nature preserves, and therefore were State land, the Teams said. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

At Fatah's Sixth Congress in Bethlehem, PA President Abbas was re-elected as Chairman of the Fatah Central Committee. He said that four of the Central Committee's members would be nominated at a later stage, in addition to 18 members to be elected. *(Wafa)*

Uri Davis, a Jewish member of Fatah, was nominated for membership of the party's Revolutionary Council. Mr. Davis said that one of Fatah's weakest attributes had been its failure to establish ties with international parties, movements and human rights organizations, and promised to step up efforts, if elected. Mr. Davis was recruited to Fatah in the 1980s by PLO leader and co-founder Khalil Al-Wazir. *(Haaretz)*

According to *Israel Radio*, Fatah had adopted a position paper in which it said that the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of a Palestinian State was a red line that no Palestinian leader was permitted to negotiate. "Fatah will continue to sacrifice victims until Jerusalem will be returned, clean of settlements and settlers," the paper stated. (*Haaretz*)

9

Two mortar shells fired by Gaza gunmen near the Erez Crossing landed just yards away from ambulances that were transferring a Palestinian heart patient to Israel for treatment. No one was injured in the attack. Earlier in the day, a Qassam rocket struck an open field near Sedot Negev. Other sources reported that two Palestinian militant groups shot 12 mortars near the Erez border crossing, six of which exploded as a medical transport was underway. (*DPA, The Jerusalem Post*)

On the sixth day of the Fatah Congress, the party voted to endorse a platform that called for a Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, alongside Israel, while reserving the movement's right to take up arms against Israel. At the same time, it encouraged Palestinians to use more peaceful means to pressure Israel, like demonstrations and supporting a boycott of Israel abroad. "At this stage, we are focusing on popular struggle, but the armed struggle is a right reserved to us in international law," said senior Fatah member Nabil Sha'ath. Israel's Defence Minister Ehud Barak described Fatah's adopted platform as not very promising. But he added that there was no other way but to sit down and strike a deal, calling on PA President Abbas to enter negotiations. (*Haaretz*)

More than 2,000 delegates at the Sixth Fatah Congress cast ballots to elect members of the Central Committee and the Revolutionary Council. A Fatah official in Gaza said delegates banned by Hamas from leaving the enclave were voting by telephone. The conference delegates each picked 80 candidates for the Revolutionary Council and 18 names for the movement's Central Committee. According to the conference website, 650 were nominated for the Revolutionary Council and 104 for the Central Committee. Additional members would be appointed to the two committees by the elected members themselves. (*Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged that he would never evict settlers from occupied Palestinian land as Israel did in 2005 in the Gaza Strip, calling it a "mistake." Mr. Netanyahu spoke ahead of a special Cabinet session marking four years since the evacuation of the Gaza settlements and four small settlements in the West Bank. He said that "the unilateral evacuation brought neither peace nor security." (*Haaretz*)

A poll showed that two-thirds of Israeli Jews supported the Government's refusal to freeze settlement building in East Jerusalem. (*AFP*)

Egyptian sources said that senior Hamas representatives would be arriving in Cairo in the coming days for renewed talks on Gilad Shalit's release. (*Haaretz*)

At Kelowna in the Canadian province of British Columbia, the United Church held its general meeting where 105 resolutions were to be debated. Four of those resolutions called on the Church "to advocate a comprehensive boycott of Israeli academic and cultural institutions," and another urged the church to "support the international campaign of boycott ... divestment and sanctions until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination." The Canadian Jewish Congress called the four proposals anti-Semitic and said it would lobby for their rejection. (*The Canadian Press*)

10

Israeli military jets bombed a smuggling tunnel between the Gaza Strip and Egypt. No casualties were reported in the attack. (*DPA*)

The Israeli army shelled and damaged several homes and land east of Gaza City, and in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip. (*IMEMC*)

PA Prime Minister Fayyad would sign an agreement with EU envoy Christian Berger for a donation of €39 million from the European Union. Mr. Fayyad also said that Saudi Arabia would deliver \$200 million in aid to the PA. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Israeli authorities would open all three commercial crossings into the Gaza Strip, said Ra'ed Fattouh, a crossings official. 62 to 72 trucks of foreign humanitarian aid and consumer goods would be allowed in at the Kerem Shalom crossing, while cooking gas and industrial grade diesel for Gaza's sole power plant would be allowed through the Nahal Oz terminal. Goods would also be shipped through the Karni crossing, Mr. Fattouh said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Canadian parliamentarians from three opposition parties, including Richard Nadeau, Borys Wrzesnewsky and Libby Davies, visited the West Bank village of Bil'in as part of a week-long trip to Jordan and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. A news release from the delegation said, "[The MPs] were concerned about the current humanitarian situation in Gaza and the West Bank and hope their visit will provide firsthand knowledge and understanding to bring back to Parliament and Canadians." (*Ma'an News Agency*)

According to Jawad Siyam, member of the local defence committee in the Wadi Hilweh section of the Silwan district, in East Jerusalem, a section of a main road collapsed in Silwan as a result of underground Israeli excavation towards the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem's Old City. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli security forces evacuated the unauthorized West Bank outpost of "Maoz Esther", a cluster of structures dismantled a number of times already over the last year. Settlers had returned to the outpost, despite repeated evacuations. A group of settlers entered the Abu Snehin neighbourhood in Hebron and smashed the windows of four Palestinian vehicles and seven houses, following the evacuation. (*Haaretz, Ynetnews*)

During a tour of the "E-1" corridor, Israel's Interior Minister Eli Yishai said that Israel must go ahead with plans to expand a settlement enclave in the corridor between the "Ma'aleh Adumim" settlement and Jerusalem, despite US objection. He expressed hope that Israel would succeed in convincing the US to approve construction. (*Haaretz*)

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) published a [report](http://www.ochaopt.org) entitled "Five Years after the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion, a Summary of the Humanitarian Impact of the Barrier." (www.ochaopt.org)

UNRWA spokesperson Christopher Gunness provided photographic evidence that recent Israeli media reports of ambulances stolen by Hamas were false. The photograph clearly showed the Deputy Director of the Gaza office, Christer Nordal, standing in front of the three ambulances in the UNRWA compound in Gaza. (*UNRWA press release*)

11

Israeli forces arrested eight Palestinians during overnight raids in the West Bank. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A new Palestinian group calling itself "Sunna Group - Supporters of Prophet Muhammad's Teachings" claimed responsibility for firing two mortar shells at Israeli army vehicles near a military watchtower east of the Al-Bureij refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip. The shells landed in the desert, causing no injuries or damage. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces stormed the town of Beit Dajan near Nablus and ransacked a Palestinian-owned home, using its roof as a watchtower. In a separate incident, Israeli forces raided the village of Burin south of Nablus and confiscated a Palestinian-owned vehicle. In a third incident, Israeli forces raided Barta'a near Jenin and arrested a 19-year-old. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

An Israeli military court sentenced an Israeli soldier from the Givati Brigade to seven and a half months in prison for stealing a credit card from a Palestinian home during the military offensive in Gaza and subsequently using it in Israel. (*IMEMC*)

A group of settlers from the "Shilo" settlement attacked and injured a 45-year-old Palestinian from Awarta village near Nablus. (*IMEMC*)

A 50-year-old Palestinian was released by Israel after spending 25 years in prison. (*IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency*)

12

The Israeli army arrested four Palestinians in the villages of Barta'a Al Sharkiya, Arraba and Zaboba near Jenin. (*IMEMC*)

Responding to the statements made by Israel's Foreign Minister on 10 August that the new Fatah movement's platform articulated at its sixth congress had "buried any chance" of an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement, senior Fatah leader Tawfik Tirawi said that the Israeli Government was continuing with the expansion of settlements and did not have any real agenda for peace with the Palestinians. He said that Israel must understand that the Palestinians were determined to achieve their rights to statehood and independence, adding that the movement "will not negotiate with Israel for the sake of negotiating and that [Israel] should stop this 'no peace partner' nonsense". He asked whether someone building the settlements can be a partner and said that "Israel has to freeze settlement expansion and [building] the separation fence before we can even talk about holding negotiations". (*Haaretz, IMEMC, Ynetnews*)

Almost seven months after Israel's military offensive in the Gaza Strip, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) began removing some 600,000 tonnes of rubble containing asbestos and other hazardous materials. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), about 10 per cent of the rubble in Rafah and Khan Yunis as well as in the Zeitoun area of Gaza City contained asbestos. Factories that were using lead or other heavy metals could also present a health hazard. In addition, the UN Mine Action Team was removing unexploded ordnance in the Gaza Strip. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel decided to allow 69 to 79 trucks to deliver goods and humanitarian aid into Gaza through the Kerem Shalom crossing. Cooking gas and industrial grade diesel fuel for the Gaza power plant would be allowed through the Nahal Oz terminal while goods will also be shipped through the Karni crossing. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

On 15 August the Rafah crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt will be open for some 2,000 Gazan pilgrims who had registered to travel to Mecca. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Israeli municipality handed over a number of demolition orders to Palestinian families in East Jerusalem. Israeli police forces attacked and searched homes in Surbaber, Esawiyeh and inside the Old City before handing out the demolition orders. The municipality claimed that the homes had been built without permits. (IMEMC)

Israeli forces raided a construction site in the village of Al-Walaja near Bethlehem, confiscating construction material and equipment. The owner's nephew claimed that the Israeli authorities had stopped the construction because a settler from the nearby "Har Gilo" settlement had filed a petition against the building stating that it ruined the view from his house. The hearing on the matter before an Israeli court had been postponed until September. (Ma'an News Agency)

It was reported that 22 Israeli settler families had failed in their legal campaign to evict Palestinian families from 22 dunums of land in the Semiramis neighbourhood of Ramallah. The settlers claimed to have the deeds to the land on which several Palestinian homes had been built. (Ma'an News Agency)

The Israeli group Peace Now published a [report](#) showing that work was being carried out at a very fast pace to expand the "Kochav Yaakov" settlement near Ramallah. Some 15 trailers had been set up and connected to the water and sewage infrastructures and a children's playground set up. According to information obtained from the Israeli Civil Administration's aerial photographs, Peace Now said that the expansion was being carried out without an authorized building plan and on privately-owned Palestinian land belonging to the residents of Akab village. The group called on Defence Minister Ehud Barak to halt the construction and threatened to petition the High Court of Justice. The Civil Administration confirmed that the construction was illegal. (AFP, IMEMC, Ynetnews)

13

Israeli forces detained eight Palestinians, including a 24-year-old woman, throughout the West Bank. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli troops seized a Palestinian in Hebron and beat his brother so badly that the man was taken to a hospital, witnesses said. Israeli forces reported detaining seven Palestinians from across the West Bank. (Ma'an News Agency)

Speaking at the conclusion of the Fatah congress, PA President Abbas said that negotiations with Israel would only resume "on the basis of commitments made by both sides ... particularly a halt to all forms of settlement activity without exception in Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied territories". "Our people are committed to the peace option but reserve the right to use legitimate resistance, guaranteed under international law, against occupation and to achieve its goals which are liberty, independence and the creation of its State," he said. (AFP)

"I think the largest thing impeding the negotiations at this point is simply the unwillingness of Abbas to sit down [with the Israelis]," US House Democratic Majority Leader Steny Hoyer told reporters in Jerusalem. "I don't think settlements are nearly the big issue that confronts the Palestinians and the Israelis in reaching an agreement," he added. Mr. Hoyer also reiterated that in his view, settlements built in East Jerusalem were not as objectionable as those in the rest of the West Bank. "I personally perceive Jerusalem as a unified city," he said. His delegation of 29 congressional Democrats had met several senior Israeli officials, including Prime Minister Netanyahu, as well as PA Prime Minister Fayyad. (AFP, Ma'an News Agency)

Israel's Consul-General in Boston Nadav Tamir was censured by the Foreign Ministry over a memo he had written which warned that Prime Minister Netanyahu's conflict with the US Administration over settlement construction was causing Israel strategic damage. (Haaretz)

Hamas was prepared to deal "positively" with US President Obama's Middle East peace plan, Yousef Rizka, a top political aide to Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, said. "The plan should endorse Palestinian statehood with Jerusalem as its capital," Mr. Rizka was quoted as saying. He said Hamas accepted a two-State solution "but only in exchange for a long-term truce" with Israel. "This is a firm position that we cannot give up," he added. (The Jerusalem Post)

Settlers from the "Bnei Adam" outpost agreed to evacuate voluntarily their three trailers, after Israel's High Court of Justice had ruled that the outpost would be evacuated within five days. (Haaretz)

Former US Republican presidential candidate Mike Huckabee will attend a formal dinner on 16 July at the Shepherd Hotel in East Jerusalem. The Obama Administration had objected to Israeli plans for the construction of a settlement at the site, located in the heart of a Palestinian neighbourhood. Mr Huckabee also plans to visit other settlements. (Haaretz)

Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak recently approved a plan to increase the number of West Bank construction inspectors by fifty per cent, *Army Radio* reported. Dozens of new employees would soon be hired to work for the Civil Administration's inspection department, focusing mainly on settlements. (The Jerusalem Post)

Senior Egyptian sources said a Hamas delegation that was negotiating the prisoner exchange would soon leave Gaza for Cairo to continue with the talks. The sources declined to say who was in the delegation, but indicated that the Israeli special envoy for the talks, Haggai Hadas, was also expected in Cairo. (Haaretz)

An Israeli Military Court sentenced Muhammad Mahmoud Barakah, affiliated with the military wing of Islamic Jihad, to 25 years in prison. He was arrested in 2007 after Israeli Special Forces had tried to assassinate him at the Tulkarm refugee camp. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israel should seriously probe seven incidents during the Gaza war in which its soldiers killed 11 Palestinian civilians who were waving white flags, Human Rights Watch said. The 11 deaths included five women and four children. The human rights group published a [report](#) based on a field investigation; it includes interviews with at least three witnesses for each incident. The group charged that the Israeli soldiers who opened fire either "failed to take all feasible precautions to distinguish between civilians and combatants," or, at worst, deliberately shot at civilians. (BBC, DPA, www.hrw.org)

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OCHA issued a new [report](#) entitled "Locked In: The Humanitarian Impact of Two Years of Blockade on the Gaza Strip." "Following the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip in June 2007, Israel has imposed an unprecedented blockade on all border crossings in and out of the Gaza Strip. The blockade has 'locked in' 1.5 million people in what is one of the most densely populated areas on earth, triggering a protracted human dignity crisis with negative humanitarian consequences," OCHA said in the report. (www.ochaopt.org)

Israeli settlers threw home-made bombs at Palestinian cars near Nablus. Property damage was reported, but there were no injuries. (IMEMC)

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay said in her periodic report under Human Rights Council resolution S-9/1: "Significant prima facie evidence indicates that serious violations of international humanitarian law as well as gross human rights violations occurred during the military operations of 27 December 2008 to 18 January 2009, which were compounded by the blockade that the population of Gaza endured in the months prior to Operation Cast Lead and which continues," Ms. Pillay said. She noted that rights violations throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory included arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment, extrajudicial executions, forced eviction and home demolitions, settlement expansion and related violence and restrictions on freedom of movement and expression. "While these violations are of deep concern in their own right, the nearly total impunity that persists for such violations (regardless of the responsible duty bearer) is of grave concern, and constitutes a root cause for their persistence," she said. (Reuters)

At the end of a ten-day field mission to Egypt, Jordan and Syria, the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories expressed "particular concern for an increasing number of incidents of violence by Jewish settlers against Palestinian population in the West Bank in the presence of Israeli army and police." The Committee would report to the upcoming General Assembly "violations of the international humanitarian law during the operation Cast Lead, in particular the targeting of civilian population and wanton destruction of property and religious and cultural objects." At the General Assembly, the Committee would be noting "continuous and in some cases worsening violations of economic and cultural rights, in particular the right to education and health, further restrictions of movement and attacks on and destruction of Palestinian farmlands and orchards." (www.unhchr.ch)

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Israel's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva stated that the [report](#) of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on the "Human Rights Situation in Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territories" (A/HRC/12/37 of 10 August 2009) was "written by Palestinians in Ramallah" and "screened by Palestinian lawyers in Geneva in order to satisfy Palestinian diplomats on the Human Rights Council". (The Jerusalem Post)

The envoy of the Israel's Prime Minister for negotiations with the United States Administration, Yitzhak Molcho, would leave for meetings with White House officials and the staff of Special Envoy George Mitchell in an attempt to negotiate a possible future settlement freeze prior to the meeting between Mr. Mitchell and Prime Minister Netanyahu in London on 26 August. (*Haaretz*)

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Two firebombs were thrown at the convoy of four Israeli ministers touring settlements in the West Bank, without causing injuries or damage. (*Haaretz*)

Israeli soldiers imposed a curfew and raided the village of Wadi Shajna near Hebron, seizing four young Palestinian men. The Israeli army said it confiscated two guns and ammunition clips from their houses. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces demolished two water wells in the village of Suba. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

PA President Abbas said that negotiation was the only path to statehood. He said at the first PA Cabinet meeting after the sixth congress of the Fatah party that "we are peace seekers" and that "the main and the only path is the path of peace and negotiations. We don't have any other path and we do not wish to use any other path". He said that if negotiations with Israel were to resume, they would have to pick up from the point they had reached with the previous Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, and must address all of the so-called final status issues, including Jerusalem, settlement, refugees, borders, security, prisoners and water. (*Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency, Reuters*)

Visiting Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak held talks with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton ahead of a White House meeting with President Obama the next day.

Mr. Mubarak put the onus on Israel to break the deadlock in peace talks with its Arab neighbours. He also said in an interview with *CBS* that the time was over for interim deals between Israel and the Palestinians and that they should negotiate a final peace accord. Mr. Mubarak said that he believed the Government of Prime Minister Netanyahu was prepared to enter negotiations for a final peace. (*AFP, www.state.gov*)

Russian Federation President Dmitri Medvedev met with Israel's President Shimon Peres in Sochi. At the outset of the talks, Mr. Medvedev said, "We can touch on both Russian-Israeli ties and difficult issues related to the Middle East settlement and other regional problems," adding, "There are more difficulties than we wish, but we still need to discuss them." (*Haaretz*)

Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak said that Arab States would be willing to recognize and normalize relations with Israel only after a just and comprehensive Middle East peace was achieved, but not before. In an interview prior to his meeting with US President Obama, he said that the Arab experience with stalled peace talks in the wake of the 1991 Madrid peace conference "did not encourage" taking steps towards normalization with Israel. The spokesman for Egypt's Foreign Ministry said that President Mubarak would tell President Obama that from the Arab perspective, the best way to build confidence was to press Israel to freeze settlements, implement an economic plan to improve life in the West Bank, ease pressure on Gaza and agree to negotiate with all issues on the table, including the status of Jerusalem and refugees. The Egyptian Foreign Minister had made it clear previously that the issue was not merely a West Bank settlement freeze but also settlement construction in Jerusalem. It was expected that Mr. Mubarak would propose to Mr. Obama that he quickly make public his comprehensive peace initiative without waiting for Israel's decision on settlements. (*AFP, BBC, Haaretz, The Jerusalem Post, Ma'an News Agency, Reuters, Ynetnews*)

Israel's Tourism Minister Stas Misezhnikov sent a letter to Prime Minister Netanyahu expressing concern that the Interior Ministry's immigration policies were damaging to tourism and to Israel's image. The new policy forces arriving visitors to choose between a visa for Israel and one for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, potentially preventing them from travelling to both. The new restrictions would also create obstacles for foreigners working in the West Bank and for Palestinians with dual citizenship who wished to visit relatives in Israel and the OPT. Other critics of the measure said that they were a violation of international law and of the Oslo Accords. (*AFP, Haaretz, IMEMC, The Jerusalem Post, Ynetnews*)

Israeli authorities handed official notices to 17 Palestinian families in the village of Salem in the Nablus area of the West Bank, informing them that their homes would be demolished. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli sources said that the authorities had approved a transfer of 30 million shekels in cash to banks in the Gaza Strip. No confirmation was received from Palestinian sources. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In an attempt to "restore a minimum standard of dignity" to Gaza's refugees, UNRWA launched a \$181 million Gaza Ramadan Appeal to provide food assistance, job creation opportunities, and cash assistance for the poorest of the poor to help them repair their houses with the limited building supplies available despite the blockade, and to help them with rent and other vital necessities. (*www.unrwa.org, Ma'an News Agency*)

A Palestinian man, 44-year-old Umar Al Sha'er, died of kidney failure because he was not able to leave the Gaza Strip for treatment. His death brings the number of patients from Gaza who died as a result of the Israeli blockade to 344. (*IMEMC*)

Israeli authorities decided to open all border terminals with the Gaza Strip for commercial shipments. The Kami crossing would operate for trucks carrying wheat and animal feed while 88 to 98 trucks of merchandise, including 300 calves, would transit through Kerem Shalom. Nahal Oz would be open for fuel and cooking gas deliveries. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

It was reported that the American Friends of Ateret Cohanim, a non-profit organization that sent millions of shekels worth of donations to Israel every year for clearly political purposes, including the buying of Arab properties in East Jerusalem, was registered in the United States as an organization that funded educational institutions in Israel. The US tax code prohibits non-profit organizations from engaging in any political activity. (*Haaretz*)

Settlers took over a Palestinian-owned house in the Silwan neighbourhood of East Jerusalem, south of the Old City. (*IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency*)

Prime Minister Netanyahu came under fire of the Kadima party when the Israeli Ministers of the Interior, Strategic Affairs, Information, and Science and Technology toured West Bank settlement outposts during the first such visit since the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005. The Strategic Affairs Minister also advocated the re-building of "Homesh", one of the four West Bank settlements Israel had withdrawn from in 2005. According to the Interior Minister Eli Yishai, the tour was not one to illegal outposts but "to legal settlements built by the Government of Israel", adding that he would fight against the 2005 Sasson Report, which concluded that State bodies secretly diverted funds to build illegal West Bank outposts. After the publication of the Sasson Report, the IDF Civil Administration in the West Bank limited the movements of house trailers around the territories. In order to circumvent the restrictions, trailer parts were being moved to the settlements and put together on site. Labour Member of the Knesset Ophir Pines-Paz said that the remarks of the Ministers were irresponsible and put Israel on a collision course with the United States. (*Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency, Ynetnews*)

The reception for former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee at the Shepherd Hotel in East Jerusalem turned into a venue for protests both for and against Israel's settlement policy in the area. Peace Now and Im Tirtzu launched a protest and counter-protest to coincide with Mr. Huckabee's appearance at the East Jerusalem landmark in which hundreds of right-wing Israeli settlers also took part. While the protests were mostly peaceful, an isolated fight broke out between the two sides resulting in the arrest of one person, with no injuries. (*The Jerusalem Post, Ma'an News Agency*)

The Israel Prison Service extended the detention, reportedly without legal basis, of a paralyzed Palestinian detainee for an additional six months after he had been in prison for 18 months. Lu'ay Sati Al-Ashqar, aged 32, was believed to be one of the leaders of the Islamic Jihad. (*IMEMC*)

Twenty-one Palestinians from the Gaza Strip arrested during Operation Cast Lead in December 2008 and January 2009, were still in Israeli prisons. The IDF had arrested several hundred persons in Gaza during the operation. Hundreds were transferred for interrogation to detention facilities in Israel before being released.

One former prisoner said that IDF soldiers had shot between the legs of persons they were going to arrest, had not given them food or water and had allowed them to use the toilet only once. One former detainee said that he had been beaten by soldiers who shouted abusive language. The IDF had dug out a crater half an acre in size and two to three metres deep, surrounded by mounds of sand up to three metres high where prisoners were kept. The soldiers enclosed them with barbed wire, with dogs placed on the other side. Some prisoners said that they had spent three days in the pit without food, water or access to a toilet. (*Haaretz*)

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Israeli forces arrested 26-year-old Nisrin Abu Zeina during a raid of Tulkarm. She had been released from Israeli prison in 2007 after serving five and a half years. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Gen. Mohammed Ibrahim, an aide to Egypt's Intelligence Chief Omar Suleiman, held talks in Ramallah with Fatah and Hamas officials ahead of the 25 August meeting between the two factions. Earlier Gen. Ibrahim met with PA President Abbas in Amman. (*WPA, Ma'an News Agency*)

US President Obama said, in a joint appearance with Egypt's President Mubarak at the White House: "If all sides are willing to move off of the rut that we're in currently, then I think there is an extraordinary opportunity to make real progress. But we're not there yet... Ultimately there's going to have to be some courageous leadership, not only from the Palestinians and the Israelis but also from the other Arab States, to support this effort." "The Israeli Government has taken discussions with us very seriously," Mr. Obama said, adding that he

was "encouraged by some of the things I'm seeing on the ground." He added that he hoped to see "not just movement from the Israelis, but also from the Palestinians around issues of incitement and security, from Arab States that show their willingness to engage Israel." Mr. Mubarak said: "If negotiations start, this will lead to the Arab States to support the peace process and to move it forward, because I can tell you that the Arab people are fed up with the length (of time) that this issue has taken." Mr. Obama had promised President Mubarak that he would present a rough draft of his Middle East peace plan in September, Suleiman Awad, a spokesman of President Mubarak, said. (*Haaretz, The Washington Post*)

PA Foreign Minister Riad Malki met with British Foreign Office Minister for the Middle East Ivan Lewis in Ramallah. Mr. Malki updated Mr. Lewis on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially the latest developments in the Palestinian national dialogue in Cairo. He emphasized the necessity for the international community to exert pressure on Israel to implement the Road Map, and to accept the Arab Peace Initiative. Mr. Lewis confirmed that Britain opposed Israeli settlements including in East Jerusalem. He welcomed the PA's progress in the fields of security, economy, and development across the West Bank. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel's Housing and Construction Minister Ariel Atias told *Israel Radio* that Prime Minister Netanyahu had refrained from initiating new settlement construction projects, hoping to reach a common ground with Washington. Israeli Government officials said on condition of anonymity that Mr. Netanyahu had quietly stopped approving new building projects in the West Bank while publicly still refusing US demands for an official freeze. They said that the decision had been made jointly by Mr. Netanyahu, Defence Minister Ehud Barak and Mr. Atias. (*Haaretz*)

Sweden's largest daily newspaper, *Aftonbladet* quoted Palestinian sources as saying that young men from the West Bank and Gaza Strip had been seized by the IDF and their bodies later returned to the families with missing organs. The report made a link to an alleged crime syndicate in New Jersey, the members of which were facing charges of conspiring to broker the sale of human organs for transplant. (*Haaretz*)

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Israeli soldiers arrested 12 Palestinians in West Bank raids. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli tanks and bulldozers entered the east of Gaza City, destroying farmlands and firing at homes. A Palestinian woman and her child received moderate wounds. (*IMEMC*)

Israeli troops demolished five Palestinian-owned shops in Qalqilya. (*IMEMC*)

Hamas freed some 50 Fatah prisoners, calling it a gesture for Ramadan. (*Reuters*)

US President Obama is planning to hold a tripartite meeting in September during the UN General Assembly with PA President Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu in an attempt to revive peace negotiations, *Ma'ariv* reported quoting ranking Israeli officials. Israeli President Shimon Peres told reporters that he welcomed the future three-way summit. (*Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency*)

Muhammad Shtayyeh, a member of Fatah Central Committee, said that the three appointed members of the Central Committee would be a woman, a Christian and a Gazan. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Sweden's Embassy in Tel Aviv distanced itself from a report in a Swedish daily accusing Israel of plundering the organs of dead Palestinians, saying the article "was shocking and appalling to us Swedes as it is to Israeli citizens." (*DPA*)

"Israel needs to act with responsibility on the issue of settlers and especially developments in East Jerusalem," Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu told a news conference with visiting Jordanian counterpart Nasser Judeh. "If there is genuine will for peace, it is time to openly display it," he added. Mr. Judeh, for his part, said: "We agreed that unilateral moves in East Jerusalem will harm the peace process because such moves are not only confidence-shattering but also illegal." (*DPA*)

Saeb Erakat, Head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO, said that the reports of an unofficial Israeli freeze on construction in West Bank settlements were a "new deceiving Israeli manoeuvre." Mr. Erakat told reporters that Israel's new position was not enough. (*DPA*)

Israel would revive a 2008 plan for 450 housing units in the "Pisgat Ze'ev" settlement in East Jerusalem. Construction could start within six months after authorities reversed a decision to reject bids for the project because of pricing disagreements, *TheMarker*, a supplement to *Haaretz* reported. (*AFP*)

Israel would confiscate 115 dunums of land from the northern West Bank town of Ya'bad west of Jenin for military purposes, officials told the PA. The land is located near the Israeli settlement of "Shaqed". (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Jerusalem municipality plans to seize more Palestinian homes and real estate in East Jerusalem, Palestinian and Israeli sources said. Hatim Abdulqader, former PA Jerusalem Affairs Minister, said that the "occupation municipality is taking legal procedures against Palestinian owners as a first step to evict them for the benefit of Jewish occupiers." He told *Arab News* that the "municipality is targeting homes in East Jerusalem neighbourhoods of Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan." (www.arabnews.com)

Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Oscar Fernandez-Taranco [briefed](#) the Security Council on "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question." He said that continued Israeli settlement activity in East Jerusalem and the West Bank was a matter of "grave concern" and urged the Government of Israel to heed the Quartet's call to freeze all settlement activity. Israeli actions in support of settlers in the heart of East Jerusalem had been a matter of particular concern, he said, reiterating the United Nations call on Israel to cease and reverse provocative actions, such as demolitions and evictions in East Jerusalem. He also outlined ongoing consultations regarding the United Nations proposal to start early recovery reconstruction of schools, homes and health clinics in Gaza, expressing hope for a clear answer from the Israeli authorities in the near future. It was unacceptable that no early recovery or reconstruction activities for the Gaza civilian population had been allowed some seven months after "Operation Cast Lead," he said. (*UN News Centre*)

The United Nations premiered a film narrated by former Pink Floyd front man Roger Waters on the plight of Palestinians living in the shadow of Israel's separation wall. The 15-minute film entitled "Walled Horizons" was made in honour of the fifth anniversary of the ICJ advisory opinion. "It fills me with horror, the thought of living in a giant prison," Mr. Waters said. (*AFP*)

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Israeli ground forces entered the outskirts of the coastal city of Deir Al-Balah in the Gaza Strip, clashing with local forces. One Palestinian was injured. (*Ma'an News Agency, Wafa*)

Israeli forces arrested eight Palestinians in the West Bank. (*Ma'an News Agency, Wafa*)

Adnan Ad-Damer, spokesman for the PA Security Services, denied a *Haaretz* report that Israel provided protection for PA President Abbas or Prime Minister Fayyad "whenever they are in Area C." (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In a telephone call, US President Obama and Jordan's King Abdullah II [agreed](#) on the need to launch Israeli-Palestinian negotiations as soon as possible. They also agreed that Israel, the Palestinians, and Arab States should take steps simultaneously to create a context in which these negotiations could succeed. (www.whitehouse.gov)

PA President Abbas met with Jordan's King Abdullah II in Amman, where the two leaders discussed peace efforts and the importance of stopping settlement activities by Israel. (*Al-Ayyam*)

Hamas' Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal met in Damascus with Gen. Muhammad Ibrahim, top aide to Egyptian Intelligence Chief Omar Suleiman, who was working to smooth relations between Hamas and Fatah. The meeting aimed at developing a deal for the release of prisoners held by both parties. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Former commander of PA security forces in Gaza, Muhammad Dahlan said that he would have no responsibilities related to Gaza in his new role in the Fatah Central Committee. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Nir Barkat, the Israeli Mayor of Jerusalem announced that he would personally fire the traditional holy month of Ramadan cannon at 7:20 p.m. in the ancient cemetery on Salah Ad-Din Street in East Jerusalem on 23 August, marking the day's end of fasting. Ekrima Sabri, the Orator of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Chief of the Islamic Supreme Committee, said Mayor Barkat was attempting to provide political cover for his administration's evictions of Palestinian residents and destruction of Palestinian houses in Silwan. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel's Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman said that construction in the settlements had in effect been frozen. He said the situation from Israel's standpoint could not continue for any length of time. He said Israel was waiting for another round of talks with senior US Administration officials. (*Israel Radio*)

According to German Foreign Ministry spokesman Andreas Peschke the German Government had said ahead of a visit next week by Israel's Prime Minister

Netanyahu that urgent action was needed on Israeli settlements in the West Bank in order to move towards peace in the Middle East. (*Haaretz*)

Israeli forces raided the village of Bil'in, threw sound bombs at international activists and seized the Vice President of the Village Council and member of the Popular Committee against the Wall, 48-year-old Muhammad Ibrahim Abu Rahmeh. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

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Hamas spokesperson Fawzi Barhoum said no national elections would be held without a unity agreement between Hamas and Fatah and the release of political prisoners from the West Bank jails. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Residents of an unauthorized outpost of "Bnei Adam" in the West Bank were expected to evacuate their caravans voluntarily, after a settlement council leader threatened to quit supplying them with gas for their generator. The decision was taken following the advice of leading rabbis of the national religious movement and the High Court of Justice ruling that the outpost would be evacuated within five days. (*Haaretz*)

Outside the homes of evicted East Jerusalem Palestinians, member of the International Women's Commission (IWC) and European Parliament Vice-President Luisa Morgantini said that the international community must "suspend all military aid to Israel and to suspend investment in settlements in the West Bank," adding, "It's not enough to call for a stop to the settlements. We need the international community to take concrete action." Visiting members of the Commission included the former Foreign Minister of Iceland Ingibjorg Solrun Gisladottir, Israeli peace advocates, and PA Deputy Minister for Women's Affairs, Salwa Hdeib. IWC delegate Maha Abu Dayyeh, director of the Ramallah-based Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling, said that the Commission led high-level lobbying efforts adding, "The aim is to end the occupation, not just to deal with one house here and one house there." (*Ma'an News Agency*)

23

Israeli troops arrested 13 Palestinians in overnight operations in Jenin, Qalqilya, Bethlehem and Jericho. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Egypt's *MENA* news agency reported that reconciliation talks between Palestinian factions had been postponed for another month. The talks were now set to take place in late September after Eid Al-Fitr, the agency said, quoting an unnamed Egyptian official. (*AFP*)

A security official said the PA planned to release 200 Hamas detainees as a reconciliation gesture for Ramadan. (*AFP*)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said at a Cabinet meeting, according to a senior official: "There is an assessment that we can [resume negotiations] by the end of September, depending on understandings between us, the Americans and the Palestinians... This is more or less the direction and the time-frame we would like to achieve." (*AFP*)

Haaretz reported that a plan for the construction of a new settlement, "Ma'aleh David," in the middle of the Arab neighbourhood of Ras al-Amud in East Jerusalem had been filed for approval at the Jerusalem Municipality. The plan called for the construction of 104 housing units. The new settlement was planned to be connected to an existing settlement, "Ma'aleh Zeitim," and together would be occupied by some 200 families, the newspaper said. (*Haaretz*)

Peace Now said in a [report](#) that there was no sign of a slowdown in the construction of homes for Israeli settlers in the West Bank despite Israel's announcement that it had stopped approving new building. There were existing permits for the construction of up to 40,000 housing units, and construction had begun on around 600 new housing units in 2009, Peace Now said in the report. (*AP*)

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The Popular Resistance Committees said their fighters had engaged in a 15-minute skirmish with Israeli troops who had advanced into the Al-Tahliyah area in the northern Gaza Strip. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces detained a 25-year-old Palestinian in the town of Burqin, south-west of Jenin. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Three Palestinians on the Gaza side of the border were shot by Israeli soldiers, one of them fatally. Two projectiles were reported to be fired from the Gaza Strip and an Israeli soldier was lightly wounded, according to officials. (*AP*)

The Kuwait Red Crescent Society had extended financial assistance through UNRWA to several bakeries in the Gaza Strip to distribute free bread to some 8,000 Palestinian families throughout the month of Ramadan and Eid Al-Fitr. ([unrwa.org](#), *Wafa*)

Haaretz reported that the IDF was setting up a separate military court for Palestinian youths in the West Bank. Until now, adults and minors had been tried by the same legal authorities. (*Haaretz*)

Israeli prison authorities said they would not allow visits to Palestinians in two jails where demonstrations were planned by Israelis opposed to family visits for Palestinians as long as Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit is denied visits by the International Red Cross. (*AFP*)

25

An Israeli air strike on a smuggling tunnel between the Gaza Strip and Egypt killed three Palestinians and wounded seven, a Palestinian health official said. (*AP*)

PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad unveiled his Government's plans to create a de facto State in two years. "The Palestinian Government is determined to build State institutions without waiting for the outcome of peace talks with the Israelis", Mr. Fayyad said at a news conference in Ramallah. "The Palestinian Government is struggling determinedly against a hostile occupation regime... in order to establish a de facto State apparatus within the next two years," he said. Among the priorities listed were reducing the economy's dependence on Israel and foreign aid, trimming the size of the government, increasing the use of technology and implementing a performance-based system in the public sector. The plan includes the construction of an airport, rail links with neighbouring countries, and an oil refinery. "We have decided to be proactive, to expedite the end of the occupation by working very hard to build positive facts on the ground, consistent with having our State emerge as a fact that cannot be ignored," Mr. Fayyad told *The Times* in an interview. Israeli Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz criticised the plan. "There is no place for either unilateral actions or threats," he said. "It is clear that a Palestinian State, no matter what its form, will not see the light of day if Israel's security concerns are not taken into account." (*AFP, DPA, Ma'an News Agency*)

PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad appealed to European leaders to urge Israel to stop building settlements, as Prime Minister Netanyahu began a European tour with a meeting with Britain's Prime Minister Gordon Brown. "We're dealing with issues that do not exceed doing what is minimal in order for the process to begin to make sense," Mr. Fayyad said in a *BBC* interview. "All we're discussing is to stop settlement activity, to prevent a bad situation from getting worse." (*DPA*)

Following a meeting with UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu rejected any settlement construction freeze in East Jerusalem and reiterated his demand that the Palestinians recognize Israel as a Jewish State. He said that Israel was acting on boosting the Palestinian economy and that it had removed nearly 150 roadblocks as a positive step towards peace. Mr. Brown had told him that Israel should freeze all settlement activities, especially since settlements were major obstacles to the two-State solution. Mr. Netanyahu entered the building where the meeting was to be held through the back door since his convoy was met by pro-Palestinian protesters. (*BBC, DPA, Haaretz, IMEMC, The Jerusalem Post, Reuters, [www.ft.com](#), [www.timesonline.co.uk](#), Ynetnews*)

King Abdullah II of Jordan flew to Saudi Arabia for talks with King Abdullah, to discuss the prospects of resuming peace negotiations between the Palestinians and Israel under US auspices, officials said. (*DPA*)

A Hamas delegation led by Mahmoud Al-Zahhar left the Gaza Strip on their way to Cairo for a new round of talks with Egyptian security officials regarding Palestinian national unity. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli soldiers broke into the Radio Bethlehem 2000 station in Beit Jala and confiscated all broadcasting equipment, putting the station off the air. Established in 1996, Bethlehem 2000 is among the most popular radio stations in the West Bank, broadcasting a mix of news, music and talk shows. (*AFP, IMEMC*)

Palestinian crossings official Raed Fattouh said that the Kerem Shalom crossing would open for 81 to 91 trucks carrying goods including food into Gaza. The Nahal Oz terminal would also be open for fuel, including cooking gas, he said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reiterated that the "united Jerusalem was the eternal capital of the Jews" and that Israel would not accept to jeopardize its sovereignty over the city. He added that Jerusalem was the sovereign capital of the State of Israel. "We have been building in Jerusalem for 3,000 years," he said. (*BBC, IMEMC, Ynetnews, [www.ft.com](#)*)

"[Israeli Defence Minister Barak] has declared a number of times that the evacuation of illegal outposts is our obligation as a democratic State," his office said in a statement. "This is a process which will be implemented in weeks, not years." (*Haaretz*)

Senior Hamas official, Ayman Taha, told *Reuters*: "There is nothing new [in the Israeli-Palestinian prisoner swap talks] except the German intervention, which caused things to move. But things have not yet reached a breakthrough." (*Reuters*)

The United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry, [welcomed](#) the announcement by PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad of plans to build up Palestinian State institutions and added that he looked forward to studying closely the blueprint that Mr. Fayyad had unveiled. Mr. Serry said that the plans built on the significant efforts of self-empowerment that the PA had embarked on over the last two years and that it challenged all other players to step up to their responsibilities and move forward quickly and decisively in the coming two years. He said that "the agenda must be turned into reality by intensified actions of enablement by Israel on the ground and continued donor support, and the creation at the earliest opportunity of an internationally recognized Palestinian State living side-by-side with Israel in peace and security". (*Ma'an News Agency, www.un.org*)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu launched a scathing attack against the human rights organization "Breaking the Silence" comprising Israeli army veterans who had collected testimonies from IDF soldiers about abuses in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and in particular in the Gaza Strip, during "Operation Cast Lead." In a briefing to reporters accompanying him on his trip to Europe, the Prime Minister said that he expected all European Governments to cease aid to groups of this kind.

It was reported that the Foreign Ministry was lobbying the Governments of the Netherlands, Spain and the UK to stop funding the group, alleging that it was tantamount to interference in the country's internal affairs. Mr. Netanyahu also urged British Prime Minister Gordon Brown to support legislation that would prevent legal action against IDF officers and demanded that Mr. Brown publicly and clearly repudiate attempts to impose an academic boycott against Israel.

Mr. Brown was reported to be non-committal on both issues. (*euobserver.com, Haaretz, Ynetnews*)

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A Palestinian was critically injured in Hebron when Israeli troops shot him on Shuhada Street, in the "H2" area of the Old City, which is under Israeli military control.

He was left wounded for half an hour before an Israeli ambulance arrived to take him away. The IDF announced that he had tried to attack with a knife a group of soldiers stationed at a checkpoint near an Israeli settlement. (*IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency, Ynetnews*)

The Israeli army arrested seven Palestinians in Hebron, Ramallah, Jenin, and Bethlehem. (*IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency*)

It was reported that the US Administration was considering a proposal made by Israeli President Shimon Peres for the establishment of a Palestinian State with temporary borders, without indicating what they would be. The proposal had been rejected by PA President Abbas. The plan also included guarantees and a timetable for a permanent peace agreement that would include permanent borders and address other core issues. Mr. Peres presented the plan to US Special Envoy George Mitchell, to senior Palestinian officials and to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. (*Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency*)

It was reported that Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and US Special Envoy Mitchell failed to reach an agreement on the issue of settlements during their meeting in London. The two agreed, however, on the need to begin meaningful diplomatic negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians with the aim of reaching a regional peace agreement. Israeli sources reported that Israel and the United States had managed to close several gaps in the positions of the two countries regarding the settlements. The Prime Minister's special envoy, Yitzhak Molcho and Defence Ministry Chief of Staff Mike Herzog would hold a subsequent round of talks with Mr. Mitchell in Washington the following week to discuss again the US demand that Israel implement a settlement freeze. *The Guardian* had reported that President Obama was close to breaking the stalemate between Israel and the Palestinians by getting Israel to agree to a partial settlement freeze in exchange for a tougher US stand against Iran's nuclear programme. (*AP, BBC, Haaretz, IMEMC, Reuters, www.ft.com, www.timesonline.co.uk, Ynetnews*)

Palestinian sources said that PA President Abbas was open to a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu at the United Nations in September, while not dropping the conditions of a settlement freeze. The meeting would be a chance to talk but would not amount to negotiations. Speaking before the Palestinian National Congress, Mr. Abbas reiterated that there would be no talks amid construction in settlements and that if negotiations were renewed, they would not begin from the starting point. Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations Gabriela Shalev said that "there was a possibility" that a three-way meeting be held between Messrs. Abbas, Netanyahu and US President Obama. (*AP, Haaretz, IMEMC, The Jerusalem Post, Ynetnews*)

Israel's ambassador to the United Nations Gabriela Shalev said that relations between Israel and the US had shifted since Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Obama took office, with Israel having a Government that was leaning toward the Right, and a US Government very different from the Bush Administration. She added that Israel was willing to recognize the two-State solution, adding that "while we recognize the Arab State, they must recognize our rights – the Jewish nation – to live in our State. It means both should recognize each other". (*The Jerusalem Post*)

According to figures presented by the Customs Administration of the Israel Tax Authority to Palestinian businessmen at a conference at the Allenby Bridge border terminal, Israeli-Palestinian trade had been growing and had reached NIS 20 billion in 2008. This included NIS 14.6 billion of Israeli-Palestinian trade and NIS 4.6 billion in Palestinian imports and exports through Israeli ports. Israeli-Palestinian trade continued to grow in the first half of 2009. The Tax Authority said that the Allenby terminal handled 1.5 million people and NIS 500 million worth of cargo per year, a figure that has been growing steadily for years. (*<http://www.globes.co.il>*)

Palestinian sources announced that 85 Palestinian patients had returned to the Gaza Strip through the Rafah border crossing with Egypt. Hundreds of Palestinians still waited at the border to cross into Gaza. (*IMEMC*)

Israeli authorities decided to open three commercial crossing points into the Gaza Strip. Some 88 to 99 trucks carrying commercial goods and humanitarian aid would travel through the Kerem Shalom crossing. Wheat and animal feed would transit through Kami while limited quantities of cooking gas and industrial diesel fuel for the Gaza power plant would be allowed in through Nahal Oz. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Two Palestinian families in the Old City of Jerusalem were forced to demolish their own houses after being threatened with heavy fines by the Israeli authorities.

(*Ma'an News Agency*)

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A 25-year-old Palestinian man was killed when the Israeli navy shelled a boat fishing just off the coast of the northern Gaza Strip. One other fisherman was injured in the attack. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Jihad Jibril Brigades, the armed wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command, said they had launched mortar shells at an Israeli military installation at Nahal Oz, near Gaza. No casualties were reported by either side. Meanwhile the Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades, the military wing of the PFLP, reported firing a rocket-propelled grenade at an Israeli tank in the area. An Israeli spokesperson said the army was unaware of the incident. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

After meeting with Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu in Berlin, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said progress on the freezing of Israeli settlement building was of crucial importance for the resumption of the Middle East peace process and time was pressing. Mr. Netanyahu said that he was open to talks with the Palestinians, hoping that in a month or two negotiations would be re-launched, but there was no agreement on a temporary stop to construction. (*Haaretz*)

According to both Israeli officials and Western diplomats, the Obama Administration had agreed to Israel's proposal to remove East Jerusalem from negotiations on a settlement freeze. They said the US would not endorse new construction there, but would not pressure Israel to publicly announce a freeze. During a meeting with Mr. Mitchell, Prime Minister Netanyahu had reportedly presented a proposal, suggesting a temporary freeze, reportedly for nine months, on construction in the West Bank while excluding some 2,500 housing units where construction has already started. The US was expected to respond to Mr. Netanyahu's proposal at a meeting in Washington next week between Mr. Mitchell and two Israeli envoys, Attorney Yitzhak Molcho, and Defence Minister Ehud Barak's Chief of Staff, Brig. Gen. Mike Herzog. (*Haaretz*)

US State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley told reporters: "We put forward our ideas, publicly and privately, about what it will take for negotiations to be restarted, but ultimately it'll be up to the parties themselves, with our help, to determine whether that threshold has been met... this is not a process by which the United States will impose conditions on Israel, on the Palestinian Authority, on other countries." (*www.state.gov*)

In Ramallah, PA President Abbas announced the names of the new members of the PLO Executive Committee, elected on 11 August, as follows: Mahmoud Abbas, Saeb Erakat, Farouk Kaddoumi, Ahmed Qureia, Tayseer Khalid, Abdul Raheem Mallouh, Ali Is'haq, Abu Isma'il, Hanna A'mira, Saleh Ra'afat, Yasser Abed Rabbo, Asa'ad Abdul Rahman, Riyad Al-Khudari, Ghassan Al-Shaka'a, Muhammad Zuhdi Al-Nashashibi, Zakariya Al-Agha, Hanan Ashrawi and Ahmad Majdalani. (*AFP, IMEMC, Wafa*)

PA Education Minister Lamis Al-Alami signed two agreements with the German Development Bank KfW worth a total of €6 million, for school maintenance and construction. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Elders, a group comprising among other former Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, former US President Jimmy Carter, South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu and former Irish President Mary Robinson, visited the West Bank village of Bil'in and met with local anti-wall protest organizers to express support for their work. The previous day, they visited the Qalandiya refugee camp near Ramallah. In a statement, The Elders said they recognized that people had been disappointed by the failure to secure a lasting agreement in the past and added that an important priority was to highlight the situation in Gaza. (www.theelders.org, *The New York Times*, *Ma'an News Agency*)

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Three Palestinians were killed and another injured after a tunnel collapsed in southern Gaza. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Five Palestinians were detained en route to Friday prayers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told reporters in Vienna: "While we believe that the Arab Peace Initiative provides the cornerstone of this Middle East [process], at the same time we also value the bilateral negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian authorities. It would be crucially important that the Palestinian people should be united among themselves, and should be able to carry on these negotiations. And again, there have been increasingly positive developments of the situation, which have been initiated by the new US Administration... now taking the lead to address this issue." (*UN News Centre*)

Archbishop Desmond Tutu told *Haaretz*, "In South Africa, they tried to get security from the barrel of a gun. They never got it. They got security when the human rights of all were recognized and respected." He said that in the case of apartheid, sanctions had made a difference, in particular because they "gave hope to our people that the world cared". (*Haaretz*)

Outgoing US Consul General in Jerusalem Jake Wallis announced an \$81 million US donation to UNRWA. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Egypt's Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit told reporters that East Jerusalem must be included in a freeze of Israeli settlement activity before Middle East peace talks could restart, adding that the city is Arab "and it will continue to be so." (*Haaretz*)

Plans to move an additional 750 settlers into Arab areas of East Jerusalem had been advanced throughout the first half of 2009, through both private and Governmental channels, according to a report released by the Ir Amim NGO. The document also details plans for the creation of a continuous block of settlements that encircle the Old City, along with the placement of settlers inside the Muslim and Christian quarters, and the Silwan and Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhoods. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

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The South African Government supported the efforts to find a lasting solution to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, President Jacob Zuma said. "We believe that finding solution in the Middle East is more possible now than in any other time. We will continue to offer whatever assistance we can towards the resolution of this matter, including sharing our experience in ending apartheid through negotiation," the President told a conference of Jewish leaders. (*Xinhua*)

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Two bombs went off near a mosque and inside Gaza's main security compound. No injuries were reported. Officials said they had defused two more bombs in Gaza City. There were no immediate claims of responsibility. (*AP*)

Militants in the Gaza Strip fired at least four mortar shells at the western Negev. Also, an IDF unit came under fire patrolling Gaza's northern border. No casualties were reported in any of the incidents. (*Haaretz*)

Egyptian security forces said that they had foiled an attempt to smuggle 700 kg of explosives into the Gaza Strip through a tunnel. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

An Israeli military court sentenced former PA official Fouad Shobaki to 20 years in prison. He was accused of arranging a clandestine weapons shipment on the ship "Karin-A" in 2002. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli jets bombed a northern Gaza Strip building. No casualties were reported. Israel claimed the building housed the entrance to a tunnel intended for infiltration by militants into Israeli territory. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

PA President Abbas said that if there were no freeze in settlement activity, there would be no meeting between him and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu. (*Wafa*)

Hamas condemned the UN over the alleged plan to teach Palestinian children in the Gaza Strip about the Holocaust, which it described as "a lie invented by the Zionists" in an open letter to John Ging, Director of UNRWA Operations in Gaza. A spokesman for UNRWA, Adnan Abu Hasna, said that the Holocaust was not on its current curriculum but would not comment on Hamas' statement that it was about to change. (*Haaretz*)

PA Minister of Prisoners' Affairs Issa Qaraqe thanked Spain for allowing a Palestinian prisoner into the country for medical treatment. Israel had agreed to release the prisoner, Al-Antir, to Spain on the condition that he would be prohibited from returning home for three years, the Ministry said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu played down media reports of progress towards a prisoner exchange deal with Hamas: "We are not facing a breakthrough tomorrow or the day after," Mr. Netanyahu told his Cabinet. Separately, the Saudi newspaper *Al-Medina* reported that Israeli negotiator Haggai Hadas had arrived in Cairo where he was scheduled to meet with Egyptian Intelligence Chief Omar Suleiman and a German mediator. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

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The Israeli navy attacked Palestinian fishing boats off the shore of the northern Gaza Strip. One boat caught fire. (*IMEMC*)

The Israeli army arrested seven Palestinians during an overnight raid in the village of Beit Ummar near Hebron. (*IMEMC*)

Two rockets fired from the Gaza Strip landed near the Erez border crossing, Israeli officials said. There were no reports of casualties or damage. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

PA President Abbas' aide, Nabil Sha'ath, said that only a full settlement freeze without exceptions or "loopholes" and an Israeli commitment to establishing a Palestinian State would be enough to bring Mr. Abbas back to the negotiating table. He told foreign correspondents in Ramallah the reaffirmed position of the Fatah Central Committee was that a halt to settlements must be implemented throughout the West Bank and East Jerusalem and not be limited by "artificial" timeframes. (*Haaretz*)

EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana said that Europe supported PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad's vision of an independent Palestinian State that could be established within two years. Speaking at a news conference after an hour-long meeting with Mr. Fayyad in Ramallah, Mr. Solana said, "We support the Fayyad plan. It is very good and it shows the fact that the Palestinian Government is functioning." Earlier, after meeting with Israeli leaders, he said he expected the reopening of bilateral Israeli-Palestinian negotiations to come by the beginning of the UN General Assembly. He said that an agreement on an Israeli settlement freeze had "not been finalized." (*AFP, DPA*)

Israel's Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman was quoted by his office as telling Javier Solana and Quartet Representative Blair that "a positive dynamic must be created between both sides, without committing to target dates for an overall arrangement." He also said that "if the unilateral initiative presented by [PA Prime Minister] Salam Fayyad is promoted, Israel will respond." (*AFP*)

The PA would be allocating one million shekels for Palestinian prisoners in Israel during the Ramadan holiday, according to a decision taken at the PA Cabinet meeting. (*Ma'an News Agency*)