

Division for Palestinian Rights

Chronological Review of Events Relating to the Question of Palestine

Monthly media monitoring review
February 2011

Monthly highlights

- Prime Minister Netanyahu agrees in principles for newly-discovered gas in Israel to power new power plant to be built in Gaza ([4 February](#))
- Quartet meets in Munich and issues statement ([5 February](#))
- PA sets local council elections for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip ([8 February](#))
- PLO Executive Committee schedules presidential and legislative elections ([12 February](#))
- PA Cabinet resigns; PA President reappoints Prime Minister to form new Cabinet ([14 February](#))
- PLO dissolves Negotiations Support Unit ([14 February](#))
- US vetoes Security Council resolution condemning Israeli settlements ([18 February](#))
- UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process briefs Security Council on the situation in the Middle East ([24 February](#))

1

Palestinian sources said that Israeli navy ships bombarded a facility of Saraya Al-Quds, the military wing of the Islamic Jihad, west of Khan Yunis.

The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) said that it was unfamiliar with the incident. (*Ynetnews*)

In a letter sent to Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas through the Palestinian Ambassador in Brazil, Suriname's President, Desiré Bouterse, expressed his country's support for Palestinian national rights and the establishment of a State based on the 1967 borders.

(*Ma'an News Agency*)

In an interview with the Qatari daily *Al Ray*, Turkey's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ahmet Davutoğlu, said that Israel's decision not to halt settlement activities and its continuous violation of international law clearly indicated that Israel had blocked the way for peace negotiations.

Recalling the Gaza aid flotilla incident earlier in the year, he said that Turkey would restore its relations with Israel to their former level only after an apology and compensation from Israel. (*Bahrain News Agency*)

The Israeli military authorities informed landowners in Beit Ummar, north of Hebron, that more than 600 dunums of their land would be seized.

The land would be used to build an educational institute for settlers. (*Wafa*)

The Israeli authorities partially opened the Karni and Kerem Shalom crossings into Gaza to allow the entry of food supplies and construction materials for delivery to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). (*Ma'an News*)

Agency)

The PA announced that it would hold local council elections and set dates the following week. The announcement did not mention presidential or parliamentary elections but, according to Nimr Hamad, an aide to President Abbas, the Palestinian schism had prevented these elections from taking place. Prime Minister Salam Fayyad hoped to hold the election in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but Hamas said that Mr. Fayyad had no right to call for elections. Hamas Spokesman Fawzi Barhoum said that elections were supposed to come after reconciliation had been reached, as part of that reconciliation. (AP)

PA Prime Minister Fayyad signed an agreement with the Finnish Government to co-fund the Ministry of Higher Education valued at €9 million. The representative of Finland to the PA, Pia Rantala-Engberg, stressed her country's commitment to supporting the Palestinian cause and assisting the Palestinians in building the institutions and infrastructure of their independent State. (Wafa)

In a [statement](#), UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Maxwell Gaylard, condemned the continuing demolition of water cisterns in the West Bank by Israel. "It is difficult to understand the reasoning behind the destruction of basic rain water collection systems, some of them very old, which serve marginalized rural and herder Palestinian communities where water is already scarce and where drought is an ever-present threat," Mr. Gaylard said, adding that such deliberate demolitions in occupied territory were in contravention of Israel's obligations under international law. (www.ochaopt.org)

2

The Israeli Air Force struck a tunnel in the southern Gaza Strip. Medical officials said that no injuries had been reported. The IDF said that the site had been targeted in response to recent rocket fire. (Ma'an News Agency, www.idf.il)

A senior Palestinian official had quoted PA President Abbas as saying, during a meeting of the Fatah Revolutionary Council held in Ramallah: "We will call for presidential and legislative elections soon, and I won't run for another presidential term". (Xinhua)

PA Minister of Local Governance, Khaled Al-Qawasmi, confirmed that the PA would make a decision on the date of municipal elections at the coming session of the Central Elections Commission. He added that the elections would likely be held in May. (Ma'an News Agency)

Hamas said in a statement that it would not participate in the municipal elections announced by the PA until a unity deal with Fatah was signed and confidence between the factions was restored. It added that it would not recognize the results of any elections held without its participation, saying, "The atmosphere in the West Bank does not allow fair elections under Salam Fayyad's Government". (Ma'an News Agency)

PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad met with French Prime Minister François Fillon in Paris. Mr Fillon stressed that the upcoming donors' conference, to be held in Paris in June 2011, should have a "real political dimension and it should be within the dynamics which will lead to the creation of a future Palestinian State". Mr. Fillon said that the objective was the creation of a Palestinian State by the end of the year and underscored the need for the immediate relaunching of the peace process. (Ma'an News Agency)

In a statement, Palestinian Legislative Committee member Hanan Ashrawi appealed for "a qualitative shift in the way the Quartet does business".

She said, "It is far too late for the Quartet to simply issue statements without enactment or intervention, and to repeat the mantra of a return to bilateral negotiations." (Dawn.com)

French Foreign Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie hosted international peace-brokers' talks in Paris with PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton, Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre and Gary Grappo Quartet Representative Tony Blair's Deputy. After the meeting, a statement was issued announcing, "At the request of the PA, a new international donors' conference for the Palestinian State will be held in Paris in June 2011". The participants called on the international community to continue its efforts beyond what had been initially pledged in Paris in 2007, and transfer their budgetary assistance as soon as possible. (Ma'an News Agency)

PA Prime Minister Fayyad began a three-day visit to France and was scheduled to meet with President Nicolas Sarkozy and Prime Minister François Fillon. (Wafa)

Israeli forces arrested 12 Palestinians during raids in the West Bank including Hebron and the Jenin refugee camp. (Wafa)

Health officials in the Gaza Strip warned that the current shortage of medicines in Gaza would result in serious health impacts on patients in need of treatment. According to a statement by health officials, 170 types of medicine and 140 other medical items were out of stock in Gaza.

(IMEMC)

3

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

According to a report by the Department of International Relations of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the Israeli army had killed 15 Palestinians in January. The report also stated that the Israeli authorities had approved 304 housing units in settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. (Wafa)

4

Gaza militants fired a Qassam rocket into the Western Negev that exploded in the Sdot Negev regional council area. No injuries or damages were reported. According to an IDF spokesman's office, over 200 Grad missiles, Qassam rockets and mortar shells had been fired from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory in 2010. (Haaretz)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and Quartet Representative Tony Blair announced a series of gestures that Israel would make to the Palestinians.

"In respect of East Jerusalem, the Government of Israel has agreed to encourage the implementation of all projects that abide by municipal regulations that will improve infrastructure there for Palestinians, including in particular housing, starting with two projects in East Jerusalem," Mr. Blair announced. "On the West Bank, there will be an extension of Palestinian Authority security presence in Area B – with seven towns approved in principle; an agreement to fast-track the construction or reconstruction of schools and health clinics in Area C on the basis of plans submitted by the Palestinian Authority," Mr. Blair said. The measures would allow more items for export from Gaza and entry of a limited amount of construction materials. Mr. Blair also announced an agreement to establish mobile desalination plants to meet Gaza's needs for clean water and approval in principle for a larger permanent desalination plant. Mr. Netanyahu agreed to the PA request to renew discussions on the development of an offshore natural gas field opposite Gaza's shores, and agreed in principle for the gas from that field to power a new power plant to be built in Gaza. Mr. Blair added, "Obviously, agreement to all this is not the same as implementation." (Haaretz)

Mahmoud Al-Khazendar, President of the Gaza Petroleum and Gas Station Owners Association, said that gas stations had completely run out of fuel and warned that the Gaza Strip could face a fuel crisis due to the closure of the tunnels between Gaza and Egypt. (Ma'an News Agency)

A police force deployed in Jerusalem had restricted entry to Friday prayers at Al-Haram Al-Sharif to worshippers above the age of 50 in order to avoid protests in reaction to the situation in Egypt. (Ynetnews.com)

5

The Quartet met in Munich and issued a [statement](#) reaffirming that negotiations should lead to an outcome that would end the occupation that began in 1967, and would resolve all permanent status issues in order to end the conflict and achieve a two-State solution. It also reiterated the Quartet's support for concluding the negotiations by September 2011. (www.consilium.europa.eu)

The Head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO, Saeb Erakat, said that Prime Minister Netanyahu's latest package of incentives was "deception and we don't need such gestures". The PA described it as "nonsense and unacceptable". (The Jerusalem Post)

6

The IDF shot sound-bombs at Beit Ummar, north of Hebron, which hit local activist Ahmad Ikhlail in the head while 16-year-old Ala Ibrahim Abed Al-Hamid Abu Maria sustained fractures to her arm. According to the spokesman for the Beit Ummar Popular Resistance Committee, Miss Abu Maria's teenage cousins had also been arrested. An Israeli military spokesman said that three persons had been detained for throwing rocks. (Ma'an News Agency)

Three Palestinians were shot and injured by Israeli soldiers while they collected rocks in the northern Gaza Strip, 500 to 700 metres from the border with Israel. (IMEMC)

PA President Abbas met with Jordan's King Abdullah II in Ramallah. Both leaders expressed support for the Quartet statement, saying that a

peace deal could be reached by September while insisting that a two-State solution was the way forward. (Wafa)

In Ramallah, PA Prime Minister Fayyad told visiting British Shadow Foreign Affairs Minister Stephen Twigg that the proclamation of a Palestinian State in September was the key to Middle East stability. Mr. Twigg on his part commended Palestinian efforts to rebuild their institutions, pointing out the need to provide all the conditions necessary to establish a viable and independent State for the Palestinians, with East Jerusalem as its capital. (Wafa)

Israel's President Shimon Peres urged Prime Minister Netanyahu to move quickly towards a solution in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process in light of the crisis that had affected Egypt over the previous two weeks. At the eleventh annual Israeli security conference held in Herzliya, Mr. Peres said, "We must do this as soon as possible because the conflict is being exploited to the detriment of all sides," adding, "the peace process is now crucial for our neighbours, and not just us [...]" A true compromise, as painful as it may be, is preferable to the dangers that would be created in its absence". (Haaretz)

In his address to the security conference in Herzliya, Britain's Secretary of State for Defence, Liam Fox, said: "Progress towards a two-State solution – a secure and universally recognized Israel alongside a viable and contiguous Palestinian State – is important for defusing the malign political influence of Iran in the region". (Reuters)

British Foreign Office Minister for the Middle East and North Africa Alistair Burt welcomed the new economic plans for the West Bank and Gaza that had been announced on 4 February by Prime Minister Netanyahu and Quartet Representative Tony Blair and urged full implementation of the plan. (www.fco.gov.uk)

EU Representative to Palestine Christian Berger announced an EU contribution of €20 million to enable the PA to pay the January 2011 salaries and pensions of almost 85,000 public service providers and pensioners. The Government of the Netherlands also made a contribution of €5.1 million to cover part of the January salaries of almost 19,000 members of the Palestinian Civil Police and the Civil Defence. Both contributions were channelled through PEGASE, the European mechanism for support to Palestinians. (Wafa)

Thirteen Palestinian and Israeli human rights organizations addressed an open letter to UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay to coincide with her first official visit to the Occupied Palestinian Territory. They called upon her to demand without further delay the implementation of the Goldstone report, including referral to the General Assembly. They requested that she expedite the establishment of an escrow fund for Palestinian victims of "Operation Cast Lead" and condemn Israel's persistent violations of international law that prevented the Palestinian people from exercising their universally recognized right to self-determination. (www.alhaq.org , Ma'an News Agency)

7

Israeli gunboats stationed off the Gaza shore opened heavy fire at Palestinian fishermen, forcing them to leave the sea. No casualties were reported. (The Palestine Telegraph)

Israeli soldiers shot a Palestinian man in the leg in the northern Gaza Strip as he collected gravel. (Wafa)

In an effort to stem the flow of illegal Palestinians into Israel, the Israeli army would move a key roadblock near the settlement of "Beitar Illit" to the Green Line later during the month. (The Jerusalem Post)

During a visit to Israel, Dutch Foreign Minister Uri Rosenthal urged Israel to increase the number of items to be exported from the Gaza Strip. He also spoke with Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman and Defense Minister Ehud Barak and expressed his country's desire to see a two-State solution. He also said that settlements in the West Bank stood in the way of the peace process. (IMEMC)

The PA Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities presented a formal nomination for the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem to be added to UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites. "This step is part and parcel of our plan to end the Israeli occupation and establish a State," said Khoulood Deibes, PA Minister of Tourism and Antiquities. (Reuters)

The Jerusalem Municipal Committee for Planning and Building was expected to approve the construction of two buildings that would include 13 apartments for settlers in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem. Following the plan's approval, a number of Palestinian families

living on the site would have to be evicted. The committee was also expected to approve a new access road south of "Har Homa" which would enable its expansion. (*Haaretz*)

Unrest in Egypt could impact the delivery of humanitarian supplies to the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt.

This could have an immediate impact on the livelihoods of 1.5 million Palestinians living in the area, according to UN agencies and officials from Hamas. (*IRIN*)

Israeli soldiers detained four Palestinians, including three children, in Hebron. (*IMEMC*)

During a visit to East Jerusalem accompanied by PA Prime Minister Fayyad, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay called the continued settlement expansion in East Jerusalem and the West Bank "inhuman" and said, "We know citizens suffer and face threats, and as UN Commissioner for Human Rights, I will play my role to reduce their suffering." Ms. Pillay was expected to meet with Israeli President Shimon Peres, PA President Abbas and the President of the Supreme Court of Israel during her five-day visit to Israel and the OPT. (*Ma'an News Agency, www.ohchr.org*)

8

An 18-year-old Palestinian was hospitalized after being hit four times with rubber-coated bullets shot by Israeli forces in Hebron. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Four mortar shells fired from the Gaza Strip hit southern Israel, damaging a car and a house. There were no reports of injuries. (*Ynetnews*)

The Palestinian Authority set local council elections for 9 July in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Government Spokesman Ghassan Khatib said. Hamas promptly rejected the move. Mr. Khatib said that if Hamas did not allow for vote preparations in Gaza, the balloting would be held only in the West Bank. Hamas Spokesman Fawzi Barhoum said that the West Bank Government had "no right to call this election" and Hamas would not participate in any vote, even in the West Bank, until the two Governments were reconciled. (*AP*)

The recent recognition by some countries of Palestinian statehood "does not do any good whatsoever", Dutch Foreign Minister Uri Rosenthal told *The Jerusalem Post*. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Indonesia's Ministry of Health signed a memorandum of understanding with the Islamic Development Bank in Jakarta to build a cardiac centre at the Al-Shifa Hospital in the northern Gaza Strip. (*www.kompas.com*)

Japan's representative to the PA, Naofumi Hashimoto, and a representative of the Japanese NGO Campaign for the Children of Palestine signed a \$2.1 million project agreement to promote the agricultural sector in Gaza. (*Wafa*)

Accompanied by Hebron Governor Kamel Hamid, Spanish Foreign Minister Trinidad Jimenez visited the area surrounding the Tomb of the Patriarchs as well as a residential area recently abandoned by Palestinians that was undergoing an EU-funded restoration project with plans for the return of its original residents. Dozens of Jewish settlers disrupted her visit to the Old City, hurling insults at her. The Israeli army intervened to allow Ms. Jimenez to continue the tour. (*DPA, Haaretz*)

Israeli soldiers arrested seven Palestinians during raids in the Jenin area. (*IMEMC*)

The Russian Federation had proposed that the Security Council make its first visit to the Middle East in more than three decades to help restart stalled peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians. In addition to Israel and the OPT, the Council should aim to visit Egypt, Lebanon and Syria, Russian Federation Permanent Representative to the UN Vitaly Churkin said. (*Reuters*)

9

Ten Palestinians were injured in Israeli air strikes that started after midnight and culminated in a series of explosions running from the northern end of the Gaza Strip to the south. One strike targeted a medicine warehouse east of Gaza City. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

PA Foreign Minister Riad Malki told his Dutch counterpart, Uri Rosenthal, that the Netherlands must play a serious role in peacemaking. Mr. Malki asked Mr. Rosenthal to press the issue of a settlement construction freeze in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Middle East peace process could become a casualty of the current unrest sweeping the region unless "bold leadership" was shown by all sides

to push it forward, British Foreign Secretary William Hague said. Mr. Hague, who was currently visiting a number of countries in the region, said that the peace process could "lose further momentum" if international focus shifted to countries like Tunisia and Egypt. *(BBC, Haaretz)*

On a proposal by the Russian Federation for the Security Council to visit the Middle East, US Permanent Representative to the UN, Susan Rice said: "A number of delegations, including our own, asked a series of important questions, such as what is this meant to achieve, why now, why this itinerary, and would it in fact have the stated intention of contributing to promoting greater peace and stability in the region at this quite fragile time."

British Ambassador Mark Lyall Grant said that he was in favour of such a visit "in principle" but echoed Ms. Rice by saying that there were questions about the timing and purpose of the visit. *(Reuters)*

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Defence Secretary Robert Gates and National Security Advisor Tom Donilon met with Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak at the White House, where they emphasized US commitment to Israel's security and expressed their expectations that Israel would move forward in negotiations with the Palestinians. *(The Jerusalem Post)*

Spanish Foreign Minister Trinidad Jiménez met with PA President Abbas in Ramallah. Mr. Abbas asked the European Union and Spain, in particular, to play a larger role in the peace process. Ms. Jiménez assured him of her country's continuing political and economic support to the PA, and praised PA efforts to build and improve its institutions in preparation for a declaration of statehood. They also discussed training Palestinian diplomats in Madrid and providing scholarships to Palestinian students in Spanish universities. *(Wafa)*

The PA and Germany signed a €6.5 million agreement to finance the Palestinian education sector. Four countries – Finland, Germany, Ireland and Norway – had signed the Joint Financing Arrangements for the Education Sector, for an overall amount of about \$92 million. *(Wafa)*

A WHO report found some responses to the unavailability of medications in the Gaza Strip were causing "serious health risks". According to the report, doctors prescribed alternative medications that had sometimes been less effective or had worse side effects. In other cases, patients had to approach NGOs for medications unavailable in clinics. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

Two Palestinians were arrested by Israeli police on suspicion of attacking a group of settlers some two weeks before. The attack was linked to a dispute over a pasture in South Mount Hebron. *(Ynetnews)*

The Israeli Civil Administration demolished multiple structures in the "Mizpe Avichai" outpost near Hebron. *(The Jerusalem Post)*

The IDF closed its "Mitkanim" outpost in Hebron to settlers. *(Haaretz)*

Israeli military bulldozers demolished barns and tents in the village of Khirbet Tana, east of Nablus, marking the fourth time in a week that dwellings in the area, which had been set up by the Red Cross, were forcibly taken down. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

Diplomats at the UN had been harshly critical of Israel's ongoing failure to appoint a Permanent Representative, saying that it had essentially forfeited the arena to the Palestinians. While Israel was represented by an Acting Ambassador, Meron Reuben, he lacked the authority of a Permanent Representative. *(Haaretz)*

10

The IDF advised the PA that it would remove the Hawara checkpoint near Nablus the following week, thus enabling the movement of Palestinians between Nablus and Ramallah. Raya Yaron of Machsom Watch, a group of Israeli women monitoring IDF checkpoints, welcomed the measure as a victory for her organization. The chairman of the settlers' "Samaria regional council", Gershon Mesika, called the measure irresponsible. *(Haaretz)*

In a [speech](#) at the eleventh [Herziya Conference](#) in Israel, NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said: "The lack of a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to undermine the stability of the region. NATO is not involved in the Middle East peace process and is not seeking a role in it. The three conditions for any possible NATO involvement are well known: if a comprehensive peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians was reached; if both parties requested that NATO should help them with the implementation of that agreement; and if the United Nations endorsed NATO's possible involvement. Of course, at the moment, those three "ifs" are far from being met. The lead for the Middle East peace process rests with the parties themselves, with the Quartet and with the UN. But NATO-Allies attach the utmost importance to reaching a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, to

achieve a two-state solution in which Israel and Palestine live side by side in peace and security.” (www.nato.int)

US Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg told the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee that the US would use the tools that it had to block a Security Council resolution condemning Israeli settlements. He said, "We have made very clear that we do not think the Security Council is the right place to engage on these issues." Mr. Steinberg also said that Washington was pursuing a vigorous diplomatic campaign to stop countries from recognizing an independent Palestinian State. (*AFP*)

Nablus Governor Jebrin Al-Bakri had been informed by PA liaison officials that the Israeli military would begin the immediate removal of the Huwwara and Beit Furik checkpoints. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In Paris, PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, French Minister for Foreign and European Affairs Michèle Alliot-Marie and General Director of the French Development Agency Dov Zerah signed a €10 million [agreement](#) to finance a project to upgrade water distribution networks in Bethlehem. (www.consulfrance-jerusalem.org)

UNRWA Spokesman Chris Gunnes[told](#) reporters that the rate of unemployment in the Gaza Strip had reached 44.5 per cent by the end of 2010. (www.unrwa.org)

The Kerem Shalom crossing was opened for about 180 to 190 truckloads of goods. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The town of Balata in Nablus was closed down overnight by Israeli forces to escort three members of the Knesset to Joseph's Tomb. At least 1,000 Israelis, including settlers, were present for the visit, which began at 11 p.m. and lasted until sunrise. Residents had been told not to leave their homes for that period. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces removed a 15-year-old Palestinian boy from his home in the village of Beit Ummar, north of Hebron and detained him overnight.

Israeli forces also raided two villages near Jenin and arrested four Palestinians. (*Ma'an News Agency, WAFA*)

According to a Palestinian survey, about 850 Palestinian women had been incarcerated by Israeli forces since the beginning of the intifada. (*KUNA*)

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Israeli Defense Minister Barak discussed efforts to move the Middle East peace process forward. The Secretary-General emphasized that it was vital to break the current stalemate and progress towards resolving all final status issues. In that regard, he urged the Government of Israel's full engagement with the Quartet. The Secretary-General took positive note of the announcement by Israel of additional measures for Gaza and the West Bank, including transfer of security in Area B and measures in Area C. He also urged the Defense Minister to facilitate the full implementation of the announced measures and take further steps to ease the suffering in Gaza. Mr. Barak said after the meeting: "Despite all the turbulence around us, we [Israel and the Palestinians] should look for opportunities within those difficulties, rather than to spiral into a sense of too heavy uncertainty that paralyses us from acting towards a better and more stable region." (*AFP, www.un.org*)

II

A 24-year-old Palestinian resident in East Jerusalem, Hussam al-Rweidi, died of his wounds after being stabbed during a fight by a group of Israelis earlier in the day in West Jerusalem. (*WAFA*)

A group of Israelis accompanied by Palestinian protestors tried to break through an IDF barrier in Hebron's Gross Square. Security forces dispersed the crowd and detained two women for questioning. (*Ynetnews*)

In East Jerusalem, Israeli forces raided the homes of Fatah officials, detaining three of them, Fatah official Dmitri Delyani said. The detainees, Nedal Abu Gharbiyeh, Abed As-Salam Al-Hadra and Khaled Al-Gharably, were secretaries for different neighbourhoods of the city. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Hamas Spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said, "We called upon the new Egyptian leadership to take an immediate decision to lift the blockade of Gaza and open the Rafah crossing permanently to allow people's free movement and in order for the reconstruction process of Gaza to begin".

(Haaretz)

Israeli forces intensified security procedures in the Old Town in Jerusalem and prevented Palestinian youths from entering the Al-Aqsa Mosque to perform Friday prayer, eyewitnesses said. *(KUNA)*

Turkey released its report on Israel's attack on a Gaza aid flotilla earlier in the year that killed eight Turkish nationals and a Turkish-American, saying that Israel blatantly violated international law. The inquiry found that Israeli soldiers had shot five victims at close range and that two of them had been killed even before soldiers had boarded the Turkish ship. *(Haaretz)*

At the conclusion of her first visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay told a press conference in Jerusalem that the settlement of Israelis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory "should be stopped altogether". She went on to describe how she saw for herself the "intensely negative impact the fragmentation of the West Bank by the separation wall, settlements and checkpoints was having on human rights, peace, development and the Palestinians' right to self-determination". Ms. Pillay also urged "the militants in Gaza to halt firing rockets immediately". *(www.ohchr.org)*

12

Two Palestinians were injured in the northern Gaza Strip when Israeli soldiers stationed near the border opened fire on a group of Palestinians collecting gravel. *(Wafa)*

The IDF denied that there had been plans to remove the Hawara and Beit Furik checkpoints near Nablus as reported in the Palestinian media. *(Ynetnews)*

During its meeting, the PLO Executive Committee decided to hold presidential and legislative elections no later than September, according to a statement read out by its Secretary-General, Yasser Abed Rabbo. He also said that Head of the PLO Negotiations Affairs Department Saeb Erakat had tendered his resignation to PA President Abbas and the Executive Committee, which would review it before making its final decision.

(Wafa)

Hamas Spokesman Fawzi Barhoum said, "Hamas will not take part in this election. We will not give it legitimacy. And we will not recognize the results." *(Reuters)*

Israeli forces arrested two 14-year-old Palestinian boys in Bil'in, west of Ramallah, and a 16-year-old boy in Beit Ummar near Hebron. Israeli forces also arrested two Palestinians in Madama village near Nablus. *(MEMC, Wafa)*

PA Minister of Prisoners Affairs Issa Qaraqi said that there were currently 320 Palestinian children in Israeli prisons "being subjected to all forms of torture". He added that in 2010, Israel had imprisoned 1,000 children and imposed house arrests and large fines on a number of minors.

(Wafa)

13

A group of heavily armed Israeli settlers stormed the village of Beit Ummar in the southern West Bank, harassing villagers but causing no injuries.

(MEMC)

Israeli forces arrested three Palestinians during raids in Ramallah and Hebron. *(Wafa)*

14

Israeli forces raided the Jenin refugee camp, firing live bullets and sound bombs. No arrests were reported. *(Wafa)*

A Qassam rocket that was fired from the Gaza Strip exploded in an open area in Israel's western Negev region. There were no reports of injuries or damage. *(Ynetnews)*

An army spokeswoman said that Israeli forces had detained 18 Palestinians from across the West Bank. PA police reported that Israeli soldiers had detained two Palestinians from Beituniya village near Ramallah, three from Ya'bod village near Jenin, two from Azzun village in Qalqilya, two from Haris village in Salfit, and one from Bethlehem. Popular Resistance Committees' Spokesman Muhammed Awad said that the IDF had entered Beit Ummar, north of Hebron, and detained two, including one teenager. An Israeli military spokeswoman said that forces had detained seven Palestinians from the Hebron district, three near Bethlehem, five in the Qalqilya district and three from Jenin.

(Ma'an News Agency)

PA Prime Minister Fayyad tendered his Government's resignation after a cabinet meeting in Ramallah. Following the resignation, President Abbas asked Mr. Fayyad to appoint a new cabinet, which would focus its work on "mobilizing the energy of Palestinians to support national institutions, with the aim of quickly establishing a Palestinian State by September". The formation of a new cabinet was expected to take two weeks and would include 19 ministerial positions, down from the current 21. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

An official said that the PLO had decided to wind up its Negotiations Support Unit after information had been leaked about the concessions it was prepared to make to Israel. The decision by the PLO Executive Committee would take effect the following month. (*AFP*)

Israeli authorities informed Palestinian liaison officers in Gaza City that two crossing terminals would be opened for an expected total of 320 truckloads of goods. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli army bulldozers razed agricultural land in Deir al-Hatab, east of Nablus, reportedly to establish a settlement. (*Wafa*)

A plan to construct 56 housing units in the "Ramot" settlement in East Jerusalem was expected to be approved later in the day by the Jerusalem municipality's Local Planning and Construction Committee. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Israeli "Halanish" settlers uprooted newly planted olive seedlings in the Nabi Saleh village near Ramallah, according to witnesses. Palestinian youths gathered at the entrance of the village as the settlers began marching toward them but Israeli soldiers intervened turning the settlers back.

A group of settlers also uprooted more than 250 olive seedlings in the Safaa area of Beit Ummar village north of Hebron. The seedlings had been planted near the "Kerem Atsor" settlement. (*Wafa*)

Israeli forces arrested two Palestinians in the Hebron area. (*Wafa*)

A conference that opened in Sderot called "Gaza-Sderot" brought a number of Palestinian residents of the Gaza Strip to the nearby southern Israeli town, where they stayed the night. The delegation was meant to include 30 people, but only 15 succeeded in gaining entry into Israel after fervent security measures. Though only a few residents protested against the conference, Sderot Mayor David Buskila refused to participate because of the Palestinian guests. The conference was also attended by UNRWA Spokesperson Chris Gunness, who gave a talk about conditions in Gaza. (*Ynetnews*)

15

Israeli military patrols operating inside the Gaza Strip opened fire on a farming area in the Al-Fukhkhari village, east of Khan Yunis. An Israeli military spokeswoman said that she was not aware of gunfire or military activity in the area. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In a briefing to the British Parliament on developments in the Middle East and North Africa, British Foreign Secretary William Hague said, "Talks need to take place on the basis of clear parameters," adding that, "In our view, the entire international community, including the United States, should now support the 1967 borders as the basis for resumed negotiations. The result should be two States, with Jerusalem as the future capital of both, and a fair settlement for refugees". He warned that Governments may "draw the wrong conclusion from instability in the Middle East and pull back from efforts to restart the peace process between Israelis and Palestinians". (*The Palestine Telegraph*)

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton told reporters in Jerusalem that the international community still sought to achieve a peace deal and a Palestinian State by September, despite the region's political turmoil and the resignation of the Palestinian Cabinet and Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat. Ms. Ashton flew in for a one-day visit aimed at galvanizing both sides into restarting peace talks, which had hit an impasse the previous year and looked unlikely to resume. (*www.eubusiness.com*)

In Ramallah, PA President Abbas met with EU High Representative Ashton, who was briefed on the latest developments in the stalled peace process. Mr. Abbas highlighted the need for the EU to play a bigger political role. (*Wafa*)

Following an upgrading of his position, the head of the Palestinian diplomatic representation in Athens presented his credentials to Greek President Karolos Papoulias rather than to the Foreign Ministry, as had been previously customary. During the ceremony, Mr. Papoulias referred to the close relations between Greeks and Palestinians, noting that Athens backed the creation of an independent Palestinian State. (*Athens News Agency*)

PLO Executive Committee member Saleh Raafat said that the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, Riyad Mansour, would push forward with a draft resolution calling upon the Security Council to condemn settlement construction. He said that despite US pressure,

Palestinians were prepared to bypass the Security Council and turn to the General Assembly under the "Uniting For Peace" procedure. In a separate statement, PLO member Hanan Ashrawi confirmed that the resolution had been officially presented and placed on the agenda of the Security Council. Ms. Ashrawi also said, "Israeli exceptionalism and impunity have been sanctioned by the United States at the expense of Palestinian rights and the achievement of a just peace. The draft resolution is consistent with the mandate of the United Nations Security Council and international law. A veto by the United States would be seen globally as a direct affront to the international community and the requirements of peace." She added that announced plans further reinforced the urgency of the resolution. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Saeb Erakat, the long-time Chief PA negotiator who resigned on 12 February after a massive leak of documents from his office, said that he did not leave because of the substance of the leaks but because they happened on his watch. (*The Washington Post*)

Israeli officials informed Palestinian Gaza crossings liaison officer Raed Fattouh that crossing terminals into Gaza would be sealed for technical work and reopened the following day. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Jerusalem Municipality was to construct an IDF army base that would house military colleges on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem. Based on the first draft document obtained by *Haaretz*, the base would be built on disputed territory beyond the pre-1967 war green line. The Municipality as well as the Ministry of Defense disputed the report, stating that it would be built within the green line. (*Haaretz*)

Wa'el Mahmud Ayed, 17, was shot in his abdomen by residents of the "Kida" settlement as he ploughed his land near Jalud village near Nablus, said Ghassan Daghlis, the PA official in charge of monitoring settlement activity in the northern West Bank. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel's National Labour Court upheld a lower court's ruling that a "Gush Katif" employer, who fired his Palestinian workers because of the Gaza disengagement in 2005, did not owe them severance. The decision came in response to an appeal filed by 17 Gazans who lost their workplace as a result of the pullout. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The Knesset Constitution, Law and Justice Committee approved a bill that called for heavy fines to be imposed on Israeli citizens who initiate or incite boycotts against Israel. (*Haaretz*)

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Two Palestinians, aged 21 and 14, were injured in an explosion in eastern Gaza, officials said. Both were identified as employees of a local cement factory. Medics blamed the explosion on ordnance that had been left near an exclusion zone maintained by the IDF. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli military officials informed Gaza authorities that three Palestinians had been shot dead in the northern Gaza Strip. A Palestinian medical official told *AFP* that no weapons had been found near the bodies. The Israeli military released a statement saying the it had "thwart[ed a] terror attempt". (*AFP, Ma'an News Agency*)

PA Prime Minister Fayyad said that he was optimistic following political changes in Egypt, Tunisia and the Sudan, estimating that they would have a positive effect on the prospect of an independent Palestinian State. He added that the world now faced a moral dilemma by supporting the establishment of a South Sudanese State but not recognizing the Palestinian people's right for an independent State. (*Ynetnews*)

In a joint press conference with EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Ashton, Jordanian Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh urged intensified international efforts to realize progress in resuming Palestinian-Israeli peace talks. Ms. Ashton stressed the EU's commitment to pushing peacemaking efforts forward. (*Xinhua*)

Fatah lawmaker Majed Abu Shamaleh said that PA President Abbas should call together all parliamentary blocs for a dialogue session that would resolve internal Palestinian division and pave the way to fair elections. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Hamas had cracked down on merchants in the Gaza Strip, issuing new regulations that banned the importation of goods from Israel without prior permission from Hamas. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The Jerusalem District Court rejected an appeal by police regarding the Court's decision to release without condition protesters belonging to the Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity Movement who had been arrested for holding demonstrations in front of City Hall. The four protesters were arrested on 14 February for demonstrating against the approval of 16 new Jewish homes in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood. The District Court's judge criticized the police for their behaviour towards the protesters. (*Ynetnews*)

Israel's Shin Bet security service had retracted its earlier claim that left-wing protests in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah were a

security risk, Intelligence Minister Dan Meridor wrote in a letter to a human rights lawyer. (*Haaretz*)

Undercover Israeli forces broke into the home of East Jerusalem legislator Ahmad Attoun and detained his brother and a cousin, Mr. Attoun said.

He and other elected legislators and officials were being threatened with deportation from Jerusalem. (*IMEMC*)

A Turkish diplomatic official said that Turkey would insist on an apology from Israel for its raid on a Gaza-bound Turkish aid ship as a condition for mending ties regardless of the findings of a UN investigation. (*Reuters*)

At least 10 people from the village of Al Araqueeb in the Negev were injured when they tried to resist an Israeli demolition of their village for the nineteenth time. (*Gulf News*)

The Knesset's Law Committee approved a bill to be submitted to the wider Knesset for a first reading which would force any owner of an illegally built building to cover the cost of demolition. (*Wafa*)

The Palestinians were to seek a Security Council vote on 18 February on a resolution condemning Israeli settlements, according to Palestine's Permanent Observer to the UN, Riyad Mansour, who made the announcement after the move had been approved by the Arab Group, which rejected a proposal by the US. Diplomats said that the US had proposed a weaker [presidential] statement and promised to include language sought by the Palestinians in the next Quartet statement and to support a Council visit to the Middle East. (*AP*)

Israel's Education Minister, Gideon Sa'ar, said that the Government planned to send schoolchildren on field trips to Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi (the Tomb of the Patriarchs) in Hebron, to acquaint them with their heritage. Palestinian Spokesman Ghassan Khatib called the plan "another provocative step that will generate more tension". (*AP*)

Descendants of those buried in Mamilla cemetery filed a petition with UNESCO for immediate action to protect the ancient Islamic cemetery in West Jerusalem. (*Wafa*)

Israel was to appoint its new Permanent Representative to the UN, Ron Prosor, after half a year spent with a temporary representative. Mr. Prosor, who had been serving as Ambassador in London, would send his credentials to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. (*Haaretz*)

The Israeli NGO Yesh Din released [areport](http://www.yesh-din.org) saying that 91 per cent of cases in which Palestinians complained of violent acts against them by Israelis had been closed without indictments. (*Ynetnews*, www.yesh-din.org)

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Medics said that Israeli forces had fired on two workers, injuring both in the legs, as they collected stone aggregates east of Gaza City. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces detained 10 Palestinians from across the West Bank for "security questioning", a military official told *Ma'an News Agency*. The Israeli military erected many checkpoints in Hebron, in the southern West Bank, and searched houses. (*IMEMC*, *Ma'an News Agency*)

Medics said that a woman and a child were injured in an explosion in central Gaza. The source of the explosion was not clear. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Officials said that Palestinian students would be allowed to enter Egypt if they were enrolled for the spring semester. Palestinians had been banned from entering Egypt since 7 February. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Hamas warned Gaza residents not to reply to text messages from Israel seeking information about captured IDF soldier Gilad Shalit's location. (*Ynetnews*)

PA President Abbas told reporters that presidential and legislative elections must be held simultaneously in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, adding that "without that we cannot hold elections". (*Ma'an News Agency*, *Reuters*)

"The blockade going on Gaza is not a legitimate one and all international organizations and all leaders are urging Israel that these embargos and blockades should be lifted," Turkish President Abdullah Gül told *Press TV*. World leaders "from President Obama to European leaders – not only the Muslim leaders' side – [are] calling on Israel to do this," he emphasized. (*Press TV*)

Israeli soldiers demolished a mosque in Khirbit Yirza, near the West Bank city of Tubas, and removed 10 tents used by farmers and shepherds in the area. (*IMEMC*)

"The Armenian Quarter is an undividable part of East Jerusalem, which is the capital of the independent Palestinian State," PA President Abbas said during a meeting with Christian leaders in Ramallah. He said that the PA would further support all projects that "preserve the Christian presence in Palestine". (*Xinhua*)

Israeli authorities issued land confiscation orders in a village near Hebron, the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Society said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)
A source close to PA Prime Minister Fayyad said that members of the now-defunct Parliament were preferred candidates for appointments to ministerial positions in a new cabinet. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The US and the PA appeared to be on a collision course regarding PA insistence – over US objections – on bringing a resolution condemning Israeli settlements to the UN Security Council for a vote on 18 February. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that Security Council resolutions were "not the right vehicle" for forging ahead towards a two-State solution. (*AFP*)

In an attempt to avoid a US veto in the Security Council, Council President Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti of Brazil suggested to the Palestinian delegation a "strong, improved" draft presidential statement instead, diplomats said. The "compromise" Brazilian draft text, according to the diplomats, "urges" Israel to stop settlement activities, without saying they were illegal, and calls on both Israelis and Palestinians to resume negotiations without preconditions. (*KUNA*)

"The Elders have written to the US Administration urging Washington to join the global consensus and permit a draft resolution calling for an end to Israeli settlement activity to be put to a vote at the United Nations Security Council," the Elders said in a statement. (*theelders.org*)

About 1,000 young Palestinians converged on central Ramallah to call for unity between Fatah and Hamas. They held up banners reading: "The people want an end to division". (*AFP*)

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The Jerusalem Municipality's Local Planning and Construction Committee would discuss a plan the following week for the addition of 60 acres to the East Jerusalem settlement of "Har Homa." (*Ynetnews*)

Efforts were ongoing to conclude a prisoner swap for captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, informed Hamas sources said. Sources said that a German mediator was still involved in the deal. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces arrested a 21-year-old Palestinian from a village near Hebron. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel's Supreme Court had ruled that Jews cannot be given property that belonged to them in Hebron before 1948 and that they were also not entitled to be given any compensation for it. (*Haaretz*)

The Palestinian leadership was scheduled to meet as President Abbas came under increasing pressure to withdraw the proposed Security Council resolution on settlements. Mr. Abbas called a meeting of the leadership of Fatah and the PLO after a 50-minute telephone conversation the previous day with US President Obama. (*DPA*)

PA President Abbas turned down a US proposal aimed at luring the Palestinians into dropping support for a Security Council resolution against Israeli settlements. According to sources from Mr. Abbas' office, the message was passed on in a telephone call between the Palestinian leader and US Secretary of State Clinton. (*AFP*)

Palestinian officials were calling efforts by the Obama Administration to head off the Security Council vote as evidence that American policy was "biased" and "seriously wrong". "This is a moment of truth because very clearly the Americans so far have placed their strategic alliance with Israel and the legal cover for Israeli violations above their own interests," said veteran Palestinian legislator and PLO Executive Committee Member Hanan Ashrawi. "The Americans have very clearly demonstrated to Palestinians, to Arab public opinion and to world public opinion that they are biased to the point of destruction," Ms. Ashrawi said. (*CNN*)

The US vetoed a Security Council resolution condemning Israeli settlements, saying that while it agreed that the settlements were illegitimate, the resolution harmed chances for peace talks. The other 14 members of the Council voted for the resolution, co-sponsored by over 120 Member States. (*UN News Centre*)

Prime Minister Netanyahu issued a statement saying that "Israel deeply appreciates the decision by President Obama to veto the Security Council Resolution ... [which] makes it clear that the only path to ... peace will come through direct negotiations and not through the decisions of international bodies." (www.mfa.gov.il)

Gulf Cooperation Council Secretary-General, Abdulrahman Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, strongly denounced the US veto on the Arab-Palestinian resolution condemning settlements. (*KUNA*)

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

Action in the Council is a decision for Member States to make. The Secretary-General's position on settlements is well known. Now, we must focus efforts on overcoming the current impasse and creating a conducive environment for progress towards resolving all final status issues. The international community agrees on the urgent need for a negotiated settlement that will end the occupation that started in 1967 and establish an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State, living side by side in peace and security with Israel. We must do all we can to help the parties move forward. (*UN News Centre*)

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Palestinian medical sources reported that a child and the mayor of Beit Ummar were wounded by Israeli fire during the weekly non-violent protest against the separation wall and settlements. (*IMEMC*)

Yasser Abed Rabbo, Secretary-General of the Executive Committee of the PLO, said: "Our decision today is to go to the General Assembly of the United Nations to adopt a resolution condemning settlements and asserting their illegality before returning to the Security Council to present a proposed condemnation of settlements". (*AFP*)

"The veto, which contradicts the American public stance rejecting settlement policy, will lead to more damage of the United States' credibility on the Arab side as a mediator in peace efforts", the Egyptian Foreign Ministry said. (*AFP*)

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton said in a [statement](#): "I note with regret that it was not possible to reach consensus on the resolution on settlements ... I will be in contact with all the parties in the next days to encourage the resumption of negotiations in line with the commitments made recently by the Quartet". (www.consilium.europa.eu)

"[The veto] should push the PA to adopt a strategy of unity ... and take a national decision to end all forms of negotiations with the (Israeli) occupation", Hamas Spokesman Fawzi Barhoum said. He said that Washington had again shown itself to be "completely biased towards the occupation and this confirms the failure of betting on a peace settlement". (*AFP*)

"We do not seek to boycott the American Administration and it is not in our interest to boycott anyone", PA President Abbas told *Wafa*. He later told US Special Envoy George Mitchell in a telephone call that he remained committed to the peace process. (*Wafa*)

UK Foreign Secretary William Hague said: "We must not be diverted by events in the wider region. ... I call on both parties to return as soon as possible to direct negotiations towards a two-State solution, on the basis of clear parameters". (*AFP*)

Israeli settlers threw stones at Palestinians in Hebron and Yatta wounding at least one, eyewitnesses reported. (*IMEMC*)

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Fatah Spokesman Azzam al-Ahmad said in Ramallah: "We are ready to meet the Hamas leadership so that the Egyptian [reconciliation] document can be signed." (*AFP*)

PA Prime Minister Fayyad appealed to Hamas to join him in a unity Government, offering to allow Hamas to retain security control of the Gaza Strip until elections. "If we agree on the concept that rules out violence to achieve our national goals, we are now ready to form a national unity Government that rules in both the West Bank and Gaza", he said. (*AP*)

PA Prime Minister Fayyad said that the US veto was a clear obstruction of Palestinian efforts to end Israel's occupation. He denounced what he said was an ongoing policy of double standards in Washington. Public Works Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh said: "I don't think that the American threats to cut aid to the Palestinian Authority will be beneficial to American or Israeli interests". (*AP*, *Ma'an News Agency*)

Jordan "regretted" the US veto, Prime Minister Marouf Bakhit told Parliament. Jordan's Lower House condemned the veto. (*The Jordan*

Times, Xinhua)

World Bank Managing Director Sri Mulyani Indrawati and Middle East and North Africa Region Vice-President Shamshad Akhtar visited the West Bank and Gaza, noting successes in PA service delivery. They met with Palestinian leaders, including Prime Minister Fayyad and toured projects supported by the World Bank. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Three human rights groups, Adalah, Al-Mezan and Physicians for Human Rights-Israel, accused Israeli security services of pressuring Gaza patients travelling to Israel or the West Bank for treatment to provide information or collaborate. (*Wafa*)

Around 3,000 Palestinians gathered in Ramallah to protest the US veto, many of them members of Fatah. (*AFP*)

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"The only real way towards reconciliation is to stop the arrests, free the detainees and allow the [Hammas] charities to start helping the Palestinian people again", Hamas Spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri told *AFP*. "The formation of a national unity Government can only be achieved in the

context of an all-encompassing national solution and not a partial one", he said. Senior Hamas leader Ismail Radwan said: "Hammas is involved in talks with the national factions to build a vision of national reconciliation on a new basis of preserving the national constants". (*AFP*)

"Going to any negotiations [with Israel] at this phase would be tantamount to self-deception", PA negotiator Nabil Sha'ath said. He continued:

"At this stage, the Palestinians should resort to a popular struggle against Israeli occupation". He added that the Palestinians should also continue their efforts in the international arena and focus on ending the Fatah-Hamas dispute and building State institutions. "The revolution in the Arab world will help us achieve national unity", he said. He warned that holding presidential and legislative elections in the West Bank alone would only solidify the split with the Gaza Strip. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

"The Council [of Ministers] expressed regret on behalf of the Kingdom over America's use of its veto right against the Palestinian-Arab resolution condemning Israeli settlements on Palestinian lands", said a Saudi Cabinet statement. (*SPA*)

Settlers destroyed 270 olive trees near Nablus according to PA official Ghassan Daghas. (*IMEMC*)

Jerusalem District Planning and Building Committee removed from its agenda the discussion regarding the building in "Har Homa" of nine new public buildings and 50 residential units, as well as the construction of an access road that passes through Hebron. Expanding "Armon Hanatziv" with an additional 150 residential units had also been postponed. (*Haaretz*)

UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Maxwell Gaylard [condemned](#) further demolitions in Khirbet Tana. (www.ochaopt.org)

Eighty-one Palestinian NGOs issued a statement calling upon rival Palestinian factions to "take practical steps toward ending the disagreement".

(*Ma'an News Agency*)

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Israeli military officials said that six Palestinians were detained in the West Bank, with Palestinian security sources identifying one as the son of a Hamas lawmaker. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli President Shimon Peres said that the anti-Government protests sweeping the Arab world were an "opportunity for peace" in the Middle East. "Now is precisely the time to resume the talks between us and the Palestinians. I say to our Palestinian neighbours: 'Let's return immediately to the negotiating table'". Addressing Spain's Congress of Delegates, he added that Israel respected the efforts of the Palestinian leadership to build the infrastructure for an independent State. (*AFP, The Jerusalem Post*)

Addressing the press following the EU-Israel Association Council [meeting](#) in Brussels, Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman said that there could be no progress in the peace process unless there were direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. He said "we are ready for direct negotiations at any time or place in the world" and also called on the EU to do more to "bring the Palestinians to the table". Mr. Liberman said that the events over the previous few days and weeks in the Arab world had clearly demonstrated that "the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not the main reason for the problems in the Middle East... poverty, despair and inefficient Governments are the main reason for instability in the

region". (*ec.europa.eu, Agence Europe*)

Israeli Foreign Minister Liberman deemed his talks with the EU a success but the EU closing statement included quite a few criticisms of Israel. The EU particularly castigated Israel over initiatives Mr. Liberman was personally championing such as a proposal to have leftist groups investigated by a Knesset committee. (*Haaretz*)

Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman accused the Palestinians of "violating the Oslo Accords" during a meeting of the EU-Israel Association Council. "Anyone who really wants to boost ties between Israel and the Palestinians must first condemn the Palestinians, and clarify that their attempts to unilaterally create facts on the ground won't be successful", he said. Hungarian Foreign Minister János Martonyi, whose country held the EU Presidency, said that "time is pressing" and that the Israeli-Palestinian talks "remain the core issue". (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Following the EU-Israel Association Council [meeting](#) in Brussels, the EU Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy, Stefan Füle, said that the EU sought to "expand trilateral cooperation" between the EU, Israel and the Palestinians in energy, transport and the environment. (*ec.europa.eu, Agence Europe*)

Unemployment stood at 37.4 per cent in Gaza, compared with 16.9 per cent in the West Bank, PCBS reported. (www.pcbs.gov.ps)

The Goods Coordination Committee in Gaza said that it was holding UNRWA responsible for a worrying shortage of wheat. UNRWA Spokesman Adnan Abu responded that UNRWA was doing all it could, explaining that the bulk goods crossing, through which the wheat was transported, was opened only twice a week. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The PA requested Israel to allow the evacuation of Palestinians in Libya to the West Bank, an official said. Many of the Palestinians trapped in Libya were refugees without Palestinian identity cards to enable them to return home. The Israeli Government was studying the Palestinian request, *Israel Radio* said. (*Xinhua*)

Crossings official Raed Fattouh said that he had been informed that 210 to 220 truckloads of commercial goods and humanitarian aid had been approved for transport into Gaza by Israeli officials via Kerem Shalom, including 22 truckloads of iron bars and cement for UNRWA projects and equipment for a telecommunication company. Israel would allow the export of two truckloads of flowers to European countries. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

"The [Rafah] crossing will reopen from Tuesday for 300 passengers a day," said Hamas official Ghazi Hamad in Gaza. (*AFP*)

Israel's High Court of Justice was set to debate the State's request that the village council of Burin seal a mosque that had allegedly been illegally constructed. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Israeli troops destroyed 12 tents and 2 wells, including 1 well from the Roman era, near Hebron, Palestinian witnesses said. The destruction happened in the village of Susiya, which was adjacent to an Israeli settlement of the same name. (*AFP*)

Lebanese Caretaker Labour Minister Butros Harb approved a decision to organize Palestine refugees' work in a manner that could lead to the granting of work permits. (*The Daily Star*)

The Hamas member in charge of the Gilad Shalit portfolio, Osama al-Mezini, expected a breakthrough in the prisoner exchange negotiations, saying that Israel had been somewhat responsive to carrying out a deal. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

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

According to a [statement](#) released by Amnesty International, the US veto effectively gave Israel a "green light" to expand illegal settlements. The organization condemned the US veto, reaffirmed that Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories were illegal and demanded that Israel cease all settlement activities. (www.amnesty.org)

An Irish journalist attempted a citizen's arrest of Israeli Foreign Minister Liberman outside the EU-Israel Association Council meeting in Brussels for the crime of apartheid. The journalist was restrained by security guards and escorted from the building. (*The Guardian*)

An Israeli tank wounded 11 Palestinians, 2 critically, when it opened fire on a group of militants east of Gaza City, an emergency services spokesman said. In a separate incident, another two Palestinians were moderately injured by Israeli gunfire as they collected gravel north of Beit Lahia. One of those wounded died shortly after the attack. *(AFP)*

Three mortar shells were fired towards a kibbutz in the Negev. The shells landed in open fields within the kibbutz and did not cause injuries or damage. *(Ynetnews)*

Four Israeli youths were arrested for stabbing a young Arab man to death in Jerusalem, Israeli police revealed, after a gag order on the case was lifted. They had encountered two Arab boys while in the city's center and allegedly attacked them unprovoked. *(Haaretz)*

In Khan Yunis, an 11-year-old girl was killed and four members of her family were wounded in an explosion caused by an accidental detonation of a bomb being made by a militant. *(DPA)*

One of two Grad rockets fired from the Gaza Strip exploded in Beersheba, 20 miles from Gaza, damaging property but causing no casualties. No Palestinian group took responsibility for the attack. Israel Prime Minister Netanyahu said that his country would not tolerate rocket attacks against its citizens and warned Hamas not to test his resolve. He said that he had instructed the military to respond. *(AP)*

The Israeli Air Force said that it had attacked an Islamic Jihad cell east of Gaza City, reportedly wounding three gunmen. It then attacked military targets throughout the Gaza Strip, causing heavy damage to buildings. Palestinians reported that the IAF had attacked a large number of targets, including Gaza City. *(The Jerusalem Post)*

Israeli forces arrested 13 Palestinians throughout the West Bank. *(The Jerusalem Post)*

PLO Chief Representative to the US Maen Rashid Areikat said that a two-State solution was still possible but the longer it took to come to an agreement, the less the solution would satisfy everyone involved. *(The Charleston Gazette)*

PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad said that he was prepared to go to Gaza to discuss with Hamas the establishment of a unity Government, *Israel Radio* reported. *(The Jerusalem Post, Israel Radio)*

In an interview with *The Media Line*, PA Foreign Minister Riad Malki said: "We have to continue working for statehood. We have to continue working for Gaza to come back to the Palestinian family. We have to work for international recognition of Palestinian statehood. We have to work for September". *(Ynetnews, The Media Line)*

The Knesset overwhelmingly voted to reject a bill sponsored by National Union Chairman Ya'acov Katz that would have extended full Israeli civilian authority to the West Bank. Mr. Katz complained that while Israeli [settlers] in the West Bank must pay taxes according to Israeli law, they did not enjoy full rights because they lived under military and not civilian rule. *(The Jerusalem Post)*

The Egyptian authorities opened the Rafah crossing in both directions for the movement of Palestinians. *(Wafa)*

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said that Israel would allow 300 Palestinians in Libya to enter the OPT in the following days. He said that the move was made as a humanitarian gesture because there was "concern for their safety and their very lives". PA President Abbas welcomed Israel's decision as a step in the right direction. *(The Jerusalem Post, Wafa)*

Israeli settlers set fire to two cars in the village of Burin, south of Nablus, residents said, and threw a Molotov cocktail at a home east of the area. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

Residents of the small Bedouin hamlet of Amniyr crowded into a small cave in the rocky hills south of Hebron to sleep, after their tent homes had been destroyed by Israeli demolition crews claiming the hamlet as State land. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

Israeli forces arrested two Palestinians from East Jerusalem after guns and cartridges were found in their homes. *(The Jerusalem Post)*

Palestinian organizations in East Jerusalem were boycotting the US Consulate in protest over the US veto. Hatem Abdel Qader, the senior Fatah official holding the Jerusalem portfolio, said: "We will cut our relationship with all American institutions, including with USAID and we will not take any help or money from them," explaining that the boycott would include political meetings and contact with US officials. *(AFP)*

PA Prime Minister Fayyad had asked his followers on Twitter and Facebook to help put together a Government, asking them to nominate "people you consider credible, [who] have excellent leadership and scientific skills, and can be reliable to hold a ministerial portfolio". *(Ma'an News Agency)*

Renowned Italian writer Umberto Eco said at an Israeli book fair that boycotting scholars for their Governments' policies was akin to racism. It was his response to British writers who called on prominent British novelist Ian McEwan to reject an Israeli literary prize as a way of protesting Israel's treatment of the Palestinians. (AP)

Hamas Spokesman Usama Al-Maziani said that Hamas officials had decided to hold confidential discussions with Israel to revive prisoner swap negotiations. In the wake of the ousting of former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, the official said, Hamas leaders believed that Israel had become "more responsive" to a prisoner swap deal. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israel's Foreign Minister, Avigdor Liberman, instructed Israel's Permanent Mission to the UN to submit a complaint to the Security Council and the General Assembly over the Grad rocket that had hit Beersheba earlier in the evening. "Israel will not remain indifferent to these acts," Mr. Liberman stressed in a statement. Israel's Permanent Representative to the UN, Meron Reuben, urged the Security Council to "firmly condemn" the "clear escalation of terrorist activity emanating from the Gaza Strip". (AP, Ynetnews)

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Hamas officials said that an Israeli aircraft had fired missiles at a vehicle in Rafah, killing one person and wounding several others. The Israeli military confirmed the air strike and said that the targets had been terror operatives. (Haaretz)

Israel's Defense Minister Ehud Barak visited a Beersheba home hit by a rocket the previous day and assured residents that the city would not become part of the "cycle of Qassam rockets". (Haaretz)

During a meeting with PA Foreign Minister Riad Malki, Luxembourg's Foreign Minister, Jean Asselborn, expressed support for the Palestinians' right to establish an independent State based on the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as its capital. (Wafa)

Hamas Spokesman Sami Abu Zuhari said that PA Prime Minister Fayyad was not authorized to form a government and did not represent any political faction because he had been appointed by Fatah. He added that the key to resolving the problem was a comprehensive, national dialogue that would reform the Palestinian political arena in a responsible way. (Ma'an News Agency)

A [joint Russian Federation-EU statement](#) issued during a visit to Brussels by Russian Federation Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that the upheavals in the Arab world should not be used as a pretext for preserving an impasse in the efforts to establish comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. He added that on the contrary, those efforts should be intensified since members of the Quartet would seek "effective decisions" to resume a Palestinian-Israeli dialogue at a mid-March meeting in Paris. (AP)

In Nablus, some 5,000 Palestinians holding banners rallied against the US veto of a Security Council [resolution](#) criticizing Israel's settlement building. "We came here today to say no to the US veto, the veto of shame," said Mahmud Ishtayeh, a local Fatah official. Another 1,500 Palestinians demonstrated in Ramallah and 2,000 in Bethlehem. (AFP, Ma'an News Agency)

The IDF bulldozed 15 dunums of land planted with olive trees west of Deir Estia, in the Salfit region in the northern West Bank, near the "Revava" settlement, according to Nathmi Salman, Mayor of Deir Estia. (Wafa)

Israeli soldiers detained two Palestinian children from Beit Ummar, north of Hebron. (IMEMC)

According to Yousef Mattia, a Palestinian Prisoners' Club lawyer, the Israeli intelligence had permanently banned family visits for political prisoner Ahed Abu Ghulmeh, arrested in 2006 and sentenced to life plus five years. (Wafa)

[Briefing](#) the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry, noted that the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations remained at a standstill. He said that both sides demonstrated low confidence and trust in each other and in international efforts to help them overcome their differences. Mr. Serry said that the Quartet had proposed meetings with the two sides on all core issues blocking a peace settlement, including borders, security arrangements, refugees and Jerusalem. Mr. Serry said that the separate meetings would precede a Quartet meeting in mid-March, "probably in the margins of a meeting

in Paris". "We are at the moment seeking confirmation from both sides that they are willing to meet the Quartet envoys next week in Brussels", he said, and also noted that the Quartet's set-date of September 2011 for implementing the Road Map was a real test that placed its credibility on the line. He called on Israel to heed international calls by freezing all settlement activity. *(UN press release SC/10182, AFP)*

The Knesset was to consider legislation to fine supporters of calls to boycott Israel over its occupation of Palestinian land. A motion had passed during the week requiring Israeli NGOs to report on aid from any "foreign political entities" such as Governments. Yoel Hasson, a Kadima Knesset Member said, "These are dangerous steps for our democracy, and they are tantamount to political persecution". *(Reuters)*

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A young Palestinian man from Silwan, in East Jerusalem, was seriously injured when violent clashes erupted between Silwan residents preparing for a Friday prayer and Israeli forces. A rubber bullet fired by Israeli forces was lodged in the man's spine. *(IMEMC)*

A Qassam rocket fired from northern Gaza landed in an open area in Israel's western Negev region. There were no reports of injuries or damage. *(Ynetnews)*

Palestinian liaison official Raed Fattouh said that Israeli authorities had decided to close crossings into the Gaza Strip until 27 February. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

Israeli settlers set fire to a bulldozer belonging to a Palestinian, punctured the tires of villagers' cars and chopped down 25 trees in Nablus villages. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

26

Israeli planes bombed at least three targets in the Gaza Strip, wounding a seven-month-old girl and a man. The IDF confirmed the attack, saying that the IAF had bombed a smuggling tunnel and "terror targets" in the southern Gaza Strip. *(Haaretz)*

Twenty Palestinians had been injured by rubber bullets fired by Israeli forces during clashes in Silwan. Three paramedics had also been injured. *(IMEMC)*

A Qassam rocket fired by Gaza militants exploded in Israel's western Negev region. No injuries were reported. *(Haaretz)*

A group of Israeli settlers uprooted 150 dunums of farmland near Ramallah while a group from "Yizhar" near Nablus entered the Palestinian village of Burin and torched a vehicle belonging to a local resident. *(IMEMC)*

27

A Palestinian was killed and two others were injured in what local sources said was an Israeli air strike targeting a group of militants east of Gaza City. Israeli forces also fired shells towards a second location in the central Gaza Strip, local officials said. No injuries were reported from the second site. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

At least one Palestinian was injured in what witnesses described as a barrage of artillery fire from an Israeli tank near the Rafah border area in Gaza. An Israeli military spokesperson said that tanks operating as part of "routine activity along the security fence in the southern Gaza Strip" had identified a "group of militants that had been involved in a number of terror attacks against IDF soldiers". She said that the tank had fired a number of shells towards the group and had "identified a hit". *(Ma'an News Agency)*

Jordan's King Abdullah II, Prime Minister Marouf Bakhit and Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh met with the Foreign Ministers of Sweden and Portugal, urging the EU to put pressure on Israel to stop all "unilateral actions" that would hinder progress in peace talks. Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt and Portuguese Foreign Minister Luís Amado were in Jordan to assess the prospects for reviving Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. *(Haaretz)*

An Israeli settler ran down an 11-year-old Palestinian girl in Hebron, moderately injuring her. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

An Israeli inquiry into the 2002 killing of Hamas militant Salah Shehadeh ruled the air strike legal. An Israeli plane had dropped a one-ton bomb on the house of Mr. Shehadeh in Gaza, who was killed along with 14 others, including several children. The Israeli Government report called the strike "legal according to international law", clearing Israeli officials. It blamed faulty intelligence for the civilian deaths. *(AP)*

28

Israeli troops shot and killed a Palestinian worker in Gaza near the northern border. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

In a bid to coax Palestinian and Israelis back to the negotiation table, Quartet Representative Tony Blair met with Israeli Prime Minister

Netanyahu. Officials at Mr. Blair's office in Jerusalem confirmed that Quartet envoys were holding a series of meetings in Brussels and were expected to meet with both Israeli and Palestinian representatives. But reports said that Mr. Netanyahu had not yet approved the participation of his chief negotiator, Yitzhak Molcho. Meanwhile, Chief Palestinian Negotiator Saeb Erakat was in Brussels for a round of talks with Quartet officials, sources in Ramallah said. (*Ahramonline.beta*)

Sweden's Foreign Minister, Carl Bildt, arrived in Israel as part of a four-day visit to Jordan, Israel and Palestine. Mr. Bildt would be holding talks with politicians and meet representatives of civil society in Amman, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Ramallah and Nablus. During his trip, Mr Bildt would also visit northern Israel and the Jordan Valley. In East Jerusalem, Mr. Bildt would be meeting students at Al-Quds University. (*sweden.gov.se, The Jerusalem Post*)

For the second day in a row, Israeli authorities permitted the opening of two Gaza crossings. The transfer of 140 truckloads of goods through the Kerem Shalom terminal was allowed, and the same terminal was to be used to export two truckloads of flowers and strawberries to Europe under a Dutch Government programme to support Gaza farmers. In addition, 135 truckloads of wheat and fodder would be transferred through the Karni crossing. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Notes were exchanged between Naofumi Hashimoto, the Representative of Japan to the Palestinian Authority, and PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad announcing the decision of the Government of Japan to extend a Grant Aid for Environment and Climate Change (Jericho Wastewater Collection, Treatment System and Reuse Project) up to ¥2.65 billion to the PA. (*www.mofa.go.jp*)

Israeli police detained four Palestinian teenagers overnight in Ras Al-Amoud in East Jerusalem. Israeli soldiers also arrested two Palestinians from Hebron. (*IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency*)

Settlers claimed that Israel border police had shot rubber bullets and tear-gas at them during the demolition of three structures at the unauthorized outpost of Gilad Farm. According to the police, eight settlers had been arrested during the clashes that had broken out when they entered the outpost in a pre-dawn raid. Settlers claimed that 12 people had been bruised by rubber bullets. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

An Israeli settler ran down a Palestinian boy with his car outside the Ibrahimi Mosque, driving away and leaving the child in the street, residents of Hebron said. Palestinian medics said that the boy's wounds were moderate. (*Ma'an News Agency*)
