

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

Monthly highlights

- Israel approves construction of an additional 455 housing units in settlements. ([7 September](#))
- UN Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict releases report. ([15 September](#))
- US President Obama hosts trilateral meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu and PA President Abbas in New York. ([22 September](#))
- Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for Assistance to Palestinians welcomes PA statehood plan. ([22 September](#))
- President Obama tells General Assembly it is time to re-launch Israeli-Palestinian negotiations without preconditions. ([23 September](#))
- Quartet meets in New York. ([24 September](#))
- High-level meeting in New York commemorates the sixtieth anniversary on UNRWA. ([24 September](#))
- Clashes erupt between Israeli forces and Palestinians in Al-Haram Al-Sharif. ([27 September](#))

1

An Israeli hospital said that a Palestinian teenager shot by Israeli troops had died of his injuries. PA police said that the 14-year-old boy had been shot while throwing stones at Israeli soldiers. The Israeli military said that he was one of three Palestinians throwing Molotov cocktails the previous night at a guard post near the "Beit El" settlement, north of Ramallah. (*AFP, AP*)

According to a source from the armed wing of Hamas, Israel Defense Forces (IDF) had fired artillery shells at a group of Hamas fighters east of Jabalya, in the northern Gaza Strip, killing 2 gunmen on a "jihad" mission. An Israeli military spokesperson denied the attack. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Orthodox Jewish youths attacked a Palestinian taxi driver in Jerusalem, throwing stones at him and smashing the windows of his car, eyewitnesses reported. The driver was unharmed. (*Haaretz*)

Israeli forces arrested a 52-year-old Palestinian in Hebron, a 13-year-old boy in Quseen village, south-west of Nablus, and another Palestinian in Qalqilya. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Leaving Beirut following meetings with senior Lebanese politicians, including President Michel Sleiman and Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, European Union High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana said that he hoped a regional peace initiative would be ready before the General Assembly meets in September. (*The Daily Star*)

The European Union announced a donation of €13 million for the Job Creation Programme of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in the Gaza Strip. (*UN News Centre*)

Israeli Minister without Portfolio Yossi Peled (Likud) said that he had learned during his European tour with Prime Minister Netanyahu the previous week that no deal had been reached for a West Bank settlement freeze. (*Haaretz*)

The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights strongly [condemned](#) the killing of a 15-year-old Palestinian child the previous day near the al-Jalazoun refugee camp, north of Ramallah by IDF. (www.pchrgaza.org)

2

Israeli forces seized five Palestinians in the West Bank. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Following the meeting of United States Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George Mitchell with Israeli officials Yitzhak Molcho and Mike Herzog a State Department spokesman said that "Senator Mitchell had a good meeting", adding that the parties had "reaffirmed their commitment to comprehensive peace, and concrete steps by all parties toward that goal". (*AFP, Reuters*)

Following three days of talks with Israeli officials, including Prime Minister Netanyahu, Quartet Representative Tony Blair expressed optimism that Israel and the United States would agree on a settlement moratorium, sufficient to pave the way for political negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians. (*The Independent*)

Israel's Minister for Foreign Affairs Avigdor Liberman, at the beginning of his tour of Africa, said that Africa should help moderate Arab positions to solve the Middle East crisis. (*AFP, Haaretz*)

Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero expressed to Palestinian Authority (PA) President Abbas Spain's willingness to help bring about

a tripartite meeting involving Mr. Abbas, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, and US President Obama, set for 24 and 25 September in New York. During their meeting, which included Foreign Minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos, Mr. Abbas said that the coming days would be "key and decisive" if the meeting was to take place. Messrs Abbas and Zapatero believed that it was "fundamental that this meeting takes place as it would jump-start" the Middle East peace negotiations. Mr. Abbas also reiterated that a halt to settlement activity in the West Bank and East Jerusalem was a "sine qua non" for holding such a meeting, the sources said. (AFP, EFE)

European Union High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Solana met with Egyptian President Mubarak to discuss the Middle East peace process. After the meeting, Mr. Solana said, "I do not want to say whether I'm optimistic or pessimistic," adding, "what is important now is to mobilize all our efforts to reach a successful initiative with the United States before the General Assembly session". Earlier, Mr. Solana had met with Amre Moussa, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and with Egypt's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ahmed Aboul Gheit.

(Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA))

PA Minister of National Economy Bassem Khoury met with Israel's Vice Prime Minister and Minister for Regional Development Silvan Shalom in Jerusalem to address issues of mutual concern, including entry permits for businesspeople, the export of milk products from the West Bank to Israel, and medical treatment for Palestinians in Israel. Representatives of the Israeli Foreign, Defense, Industry, Trade and Labour, and the Justice and Finance Ministries had been slated to attend the meeting. According to the Israeli newspaper *Yediot Ahronot*, Mr. Shalom's objective was to advance the concept of "economic peace" between the two parties. The two Ministers, who agreed to meet every four to six weeks and to set up teams to handle day-to-day issues, were also expected to discuss a proposed industrial zone in Jenin, the Christian pilgrimage site Qasr al-Yahud on the Jordan River, and other issues. Minister Khoury reportedly said that the meeting had no political implications. (AP, *The Jerusalem Post*, *Ma'an News Agency*)

Mahmoud Ramahi, a Hamas member of the Palestinian Legislative Council in the West Bank, said that Israel had released him along with nine other Hamas lawmakers. He said that all released prisoners had completed 40-month prison terms and their release did not appear to be a gesture from Israel. Mr. Ramahi said that 23 of Hamas' 74 elected lawmakers remained in Israeli prisons. (AP)

The Israel Antiquities Authority reported that archaeologists had uncovered a 3,700-year-old wall, the oldest example of massive fortifications ever found in Jerusalem. The archaeological site is in the midst of a Palestinian neighbourhood in East Jerusalem. The excavations were funded by "Elad", a settler organization that also buys Palestinian homes and brings Jewish families into the neighbourhood. (AP, *Haaretz*)

3

Hamas fighters said that they had launched four home-made projectiles at Israeli military patrols near the Zeytoun neighbourhood of Gaza City. The armed wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine said that it had attacked the Israeli Kfar Azza area, north of Gaza, with three mortar shells. Israel's *Army Radio* said that five shells had landed in the Negev. (*Haaretz*, *Ma'an News Agency*)

Two Palestinian farmers had been wounded after Israeli soldiers opened fire at them east of Gaza City during a brief incursion into Gaza. Military bulldozers uprooted farmlands near the border with Israel. (IMEMC)

During his visit to France, PA President Abbas expressed the hope that Israel would agree to a settlement freeze in occupied Palestinian land by the end of September, and reaffirmed his readiness for negotiations on the final status if Israel stopped settlement building. Following his meeting with Mr. Abbas, France's Minister for Foreign Affairs Bernard Kouchner said that an agreement on freezing settlements must be reached for peace efforts to succeed. (AFP)

Israeli authorities had opened the Kerem Shalom and Nahal Oz crossings for 103 to 113 trucks carrying commercial merchandise and humanitarian aid into Gaza. Nahal Oz would be opened to deliver limited quantities of cooking gas and industrial diesel for the Gaza power plant. The Karni crossing would remain closed. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

According to reports by Israeli *Channel 2*, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu had accepted a partial freeze of nine months on settlement activity in the West Bank. The freeze was to affect only new construction, not the 2,500 homes already being built, or public buildings and settlements in East Jerusalem. Mr. Netanyahu also intended to approve the additional construction of hundreds of settlement homes before considering a freeze, according to a senior source in the Prime Minister's Office. PA President Abbas said that this was unacceptable as there should be a "freeze on all settlement construction". France also condemned such a decision, with the Foreign Ministry Spokesman Eric Chevalier saying that it was "totally contrary to the spirit of the peace process and Israeli engagements". (AFP, DPA, *Haaretz*, *The Jerusalem Post*)

According to official figures released by the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, Israeli construction of new homes in settlements in the West Bank had dropped in the first half of the year by one third. The data, which excludes East Jerusalem, indicates that there were 672 new housing starts in Israeli settlements in the West Bank in the first half of 2009, down from 1,015 in the same period last year. (AFP, AP, *Haaretz*)

Norwegian Finance Minister Kristin Halvorsen announced that the Norwegian Government had decided to pull all of its investments from Israeli arms firm Elbit as a result of its involvement in the construction of the separation wall in the West Bank. (*Haaretz*)

Maxwell Gaylard, United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, urged Israel to ease its embargo on the Gaza Strip and allow in materials urgently needed to repair water and sanitation services, saying that "deterioration and breakdown of water and sanitation facilities in Gaza is compounding an already severe and protracted denial of human dignity in the Gaza Strip". He also warned that some 13 to 21 million gallons of raw or partially treated waste were being pumped from Gaza into the Mediterranean every day. (UN News Centre, AFP)

Masked settlers from the "Gilad Farm" near Qalqilya attacked a 65-year-old Palestinian man. (IMEMC)

Israeli bulldozers demolished water wells and reservoirs in the Al-Beqa'a area east of Hebron. A spokesperson for Israel's Civil Administration said that the incident was a "routine law enforcement operation" approved by the Ministry of Defence. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The PA is forming a high-level panel to investigate allegations that the Israeli military "stole organs" from Palestinian detainees. The Ministers of Health, Interior, Foreign Affairs and other senior officials are to sit on the commission. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Hamas-affiliated health authorities in Gaza had accused UNRWA of withholding a shipment of medical supplies and equipment for months and demanded that the materials be handed to them as soon as possible. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Dozens of filmmakers, artists, and activists had signed on to a campaign denouncing the Toronto International Film Festival, scheduled to run from 10 to 19 September, for featuring films of Tel Aviv and Israeli culture. They accused the festival of playing into "the Israeli propaganda machine" with its inaugural "City to City" programme, which excluded Palestinian voices from the 10-film programme. (*The Canadian Press*)

4

An Israeli air strike destroyed a tunnel dug by Palestinian militants under the Gaza Strip border with Israel, according to Israeli army. (DPA, *Ma'an News Agency*)

Witnesses in Gaza said that Israeli military vehicles, including three armoured bulldozers, had razed farmland about 100 meters east of Gaza City. Israeli forces also reportedly fired on houses in the area. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

According to PA police and witnesses, Israeli military forces seized five Palestinians in the West Bank. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Palestinians fired a home-made rocket at Israel from the Gaza Strip, without causing any casualties or property damage, the Israeli army said.

Israeli troops fired mortar rounds at the area from which the rocket came. Mu'awiyah Hassanain, the head of Gaza emergency services, said that a 13-year-old Palestinian boy, Ghazi Maher al-Zaanin, had been wounded by Israeli troops amid an exchange of fire across the border in the area, along with his father and three of his brothers. The boy died the following day. (AFP)

Israeli authorities decided to close all three crossing points used to ship goods into the Gaza Strip. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel deployed police heavily in Jerusalem as tens of thousands of Palestinians headed to the city for noon prayers on the second Friday of Ramadan. Men under 50 and women under 45 were banned from entering the city and from praying at the mosque. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

According to a report by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel and Ir Amim, 5,000 Palestinian children in East Jerusalem would not be able to attend classes this year because there were not enough classrooms. The Arab neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem lacked more than 1,000 classrooms. The report points to a widening gap in education between the Arab East and the predominantly Jewish West Jerusalem. (www.aljazeera.net)

White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said in a [statement](#), "We regret the reports of Israel's plans to approve additional settlement construction. Continued settlement activity is inconsistent with Israel's commitment under the road map. As the President has said before, the United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued settlement expansion and we urge that it stop. We are working to create a climate in which negotiations can take place, and such actions make it harder to create such a climate. We do appreciate Israel's stated intent to place limits on settlement activity and will continue to discuss this with the Israelis as these limitations are defined". (*AP*, www.whitehouse.gov)

Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini told reporters, "The announcement made to build new buildings and new settlements exactly at the moment when all the international community is asking Israel for a freeze has been criticized by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs," after the European Union Ministers completed the first day of a two-day meeting in Stockholm ("Gymnich"). British Foreign Secretary David Miliband said, "Our position is absolutely clear and that settlements are illegal and an impediment to peace and that obviously anything in East Jerusalem is particularly difficult".

(*AP*)

A group of Israeli settlers from the "Ramat Yesha'i" outpost attacked a number of Palestinian homes in southern Hebron, causing damage. Also, settlers from the "Neve Yarden" outpost uprooted olive trees belonging to residents of the village of Al Mghayyir near Ramallah. In both incidents, Israeli soldiers did not attempt to stop the settlers. (*MEMEC*)

As a response to accusations by the Simon Wiesenthal Centre that officials of UNRWA had unilaterally decided to eradicate any reference to the Holocaust in the UNRWA school curriculum, the latter responded by a [statement](#) which condemned Holocaust denial and rejected its politicization.

UNRWA furthermore reaffirmed its primary focus on "positive curriculum development in teaching children the human rights values enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights". (www.unrwa.org, www.wiesenthal.com)

5

Israeli troops arrested a Palestinian man in Ramallah. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

6

Israeli forces entered Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip and detained five Palestinian children, according to the Al-Mezan Centre for Human Rights. (*MEMEC*, www.mezan.org)

Ynetnews reported that work on a new settlement of "Maskiyot" in the northern Jordan Valley had begun. The first stage included the completion of 20 housing units for evacuees of the "Shirat Hayam" Gaza settlement. Settler leader David Alhiani said, "In August of 2008, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Defence Minister Ehud Barak approved the community and now we are building 20 units there". (*Ynetnews*)

Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal confirmed that Germany was mediating an Israeli-Palestinian prisoner swap that would include Gilad Shalit but stressed that the bid was in its infancy. Mr. Mashaal made the remarks during a visit to Cairo for talks with officials on the prisoner swap as well as Egyptian efforts to broker reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah. (*AFP*)

7

A mortar shell fired from the Gaza Strip landed in Israel, causing no injuries or damage. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel had approved the building of 455 settler homes in the West Bank, the first such plans approved since Prime Minister Netanyahu took office in March. Some 2,500 additional housing units were under construction in settlements and Israeli officials said that those projects would continue.

The Defence Ministry outlined the following construction plans: 149 homes in the "Har Gilo" settlement; 12 in "Alon Shvut"; 84 in "Modi'in Ili"; 76 in "Pisgat Ze'ev"; 25 in "Kedar"; 20 in "Maskiyot"; and 89 in "Ma'aleh Adumim". (*Reuters*)

Hundreds of Israelis, including ministers and parliamentarians, attended a symbolic groundbreaking ceremony for a new settlement in the "E1" area, "Mevaseret Adumim". "This is our answer to the international community's demand that Israel halt construction in the West Bank," Deputy Education Minister Meir Porush said. (*Ynetnews*)

Israeli settlers uprooted 50 olive trees near the village of Al-Maghayir, north of Ramallah. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

8

Israeli troops detained nine Palestinians during raids in the West Bank. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In a statement, Abu Obeida, the spokesman of the armed wing of Hamas, said that the reply to any Israeli attacks would not be by words but by bullets and shells. The statement was posted following the announcement of two clashes with Israeli troops by armed groups in Gaza, which stated that Israeli forces had invaded the Strip and provoked the violence. No injuries had been reported and Israeli military spokespeople said that they had no reports of attacks. Later in the day, a young man was admitted to a hospital and medics confirmed that he had been shot by Israeli fire.

(*Ma'an News Agency*)

Following talks with Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos, Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit said, "Certain [Arab] countries will be prepared to move closer to Israel if it takes significant steps for the good of the Palestinians, and demonstrates seriousness and willingness for serious contacts". However, he cautioned, "A settlement freeze in the West Bank is not of equal value to normalization, and will not bring this about alone". His comments came after US officials had said that they had succeeded in extracting, in response to Israel's agreement to initiate a construction freeze, "pledges" from a number of Arab States to move towards normalization of relations with Israel. (*Haaretz*)

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) stated in a [report](#) that the economic cost of the Israeli military campaign in the Gaza Strip was estimated at \$4 billion. It also said that the disbursement of the international commitment to Gaza's reconstruction had yet to begin in earnest, "with most donors conditioning the release of funds upon Palestinian political developments," adding that only 39 per cent of the United Nations emergency appeal had been financed. It was also difficult to determine how much of the \$4.5 billion pledged by donors for Gaza in Sharm el-Sheikh in March of 2009 constituted additional financing, as opposed to a restatement of pledges previously made at the 2007 Paris Donor Conference. (*AFP*, www.unctad.org)

Former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert testified before an inquiry committee assembled to investigate the 2005 Gaza Disengagement, and praised

the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip by saying that it "was carried out at the right time". (*Haaretz*)

The Swedish Presidency of the European Union issued the following statement:

The European Union expresses its serious concern over Israel's approval of additional settlement construction. Settlements are illegal under international law and constitute an obstacle to peace. The European Union reiterates its call on Israel to immediately end settlement activities, including in East Jerusalem and including natural growth, and to dismantle all outposts erected since March 2001. (*DPA, Reuters, www.se2009.eu*)

The *Xinhua News Agency* reported that a Norwegian security official had visited the Gaza Strip and met Hamas leaders to talk about the prisoner exchange with Israel. The visit took place last week, sources told *Xinhua*. "The talks focused on the number of Palestinian prisoners that Israel would expel to some European countries, including Norway," the sources said, adding that Israel would free 450 prisoners as soon as Shalit was handed to the Egyptian authorities and another 550 prisoners would be released once the soldier arrived in Israel. (*Xinhua*)

9

Clashes erupted as Israeli bulldozers and armoured vehicles entered 800 meters into Gaza near Beit Hanoun and began destroying agricultural land.

(*Ma'an News Agency*)

Nabil Sha'ath, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, was organizing a visit by a delegation of high-ranking Fatah leaders to the Gaza Strip to hold talks with Hamas officials next week. Mr. Sha'ath said in a statement that the talks would address political, social, health and education issues in preparation for a resumption of unity negotiations after the end of Ramadan. He said that the talks were part of the Egyptian efforts to reunite Hamas and Fatah, and did not constitute a separate track. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos, after meeting with PA officials in Ramallah, said that Spain and the European Union would "continue to exert every effort possible to achieve Palestinian aspirations of statehood". Mr. Moratinos was scheduled to meet with Israeli Foreign Minister Liberman on 11 September, but called off the meeting, explaining that he had been called back to Madrid due to the visit of President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela. (*Haaretz, Ynetnews*)

The Israel Lands Administration had published tenders for the construction of 486 apartments in the settlement of "Pisgat Ze'ev" in East Jerusalem on an overall area of 138 dunums (approximately 34 acres). (*Haaretz*)

In Brussels, European Union External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner said that Israel's continued settlement building on Palestinian land was the main obstacle to the peace process in the Middle East. She said that the international community was looking forward to a quick solution to the issue, adding that the Quartet would meet on the sidelines of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly later in the month.

(*AP*)

In a [press release](#), the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights stated that settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory constituted a war crime. It called upon the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, the European Union and the international community to fulfil their moral and legal responsibilities and obligations. It also called upon the European Union to activate article 2 of the EU-Israeli Association Agreement that required Israel's respect for human rights as a condition for economic cooperation. It called upon the European Union States to boycott Israeli goods, especially those produced in the Israeli settlements. (www.pchrgaza.org, *Wafa*)

The following statement was issued by the spokesperson for United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon:

"The Secretary-General has noted with deep concern the recent decision of the Government of Israel to approve further construction in settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Such actions and all settlement activity are contrary to international law and the road map.

The Secretary-General urges Israel to respond positively to the important efforts under way to create the conditions for effective Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, and reiterates his call on Israel to stop all settlement activity, including natural growth, and dismantle all outposts erected since March 2001 in the Occupied Palestinian Territory". (*UN press release SG/SM/12444*)

Israeli settlers set fire to two cars and threw stones at several houses in the Nablus-area village of Asira Ash-Shamaliyya. No injuries were reported. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Israeli High Court of Justice ruled that the State of Israel should enforce demolition orders against two Palestinian houses near the villages of Sauya and Yatma in the West Bank. The Court also ordered the State to prepare a schedule for demolishing other Palestinian structures with outstanding demolition orders. This is the first time that the Court had ordered the demolition of Palestinian structures in the West Bank.

(*Haaretz, The Jerusalem Post*)

B'Tselem said that many more Palestinian civilians had been killed during Operation Cast Lead than the Israeli army reported. The human rights organization said that a detailed research with careful cross-checking showed that 1,387 Palestinians had died, over half of them civilians and 252 of them children, contradicting an Israeli army report stating that fewer than 300 civilians had died in the fighting. The overall B'Tselem figures broadly tallies with the official Palestinian death toll and the findings of other non-governmental organizations, although the proportion of civilians it identified was lower. (*BBC, www.btselem.org*)

10

Patrolling Israeli forces exchanged gunfire with Palestinian fighters in Gaza. No injuries or damage were immediately reported by either side.

(*Ma'an news Agency*)

According to PA police and witnesses, Israeli forces seized nine Palestinians during raids in the West Bank. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Officials of Fatah and Hamas were considering Egyptian proposals to delay PA presidential and parliamentary elections, scheduled for 25 January 2010. Egypt had reportedly suggested that elections should be held in the first half of 2010 to allow time to secure a power-sharing deal between Fatah and Hamas. The Egyptian proposal also calls for the reinforcement of the PA security forces under Egyptian supervision and the release of prisoners in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. (*AFP, Ma'an News Agency, Reuters*)

The statement released following the 132nd session of the Arab League Council of Foreign Ministers in Cairo urged "countries or organizations that support settlement work to dry-up the financial resources of settlement builders". Arab League Secretary-General Amre Moussa said that "with Israel's continued settlement activity, talk about normalization has been rejected". Mr. Moussa added that Israel would only be "rewarded" when it begins progress on the Arab Peace Initiative. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Jordanian Prime Minister Nader Dahabi condemned Israel's plan to build some 450 housing units in the Occupied Palestinian Territory during a meeting with Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu in Amman. Mr. Dahabi said that the scheme would derail US efforts towards the resumption of peace negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians. (*DPA*)

UNRWA had called on Israel to allow in educational materials for Gaza schools, stressing that the materials can serve as a major weapon in promoting tolerance and peace. Spokesman Christopher Gunness also noted that the agency was still unable to get building materials into Gaza, which meant that 60,000 war-damaged or destroyed structures, including schools, remained in a state of disrepair. (*UN News Centre*)

Hundreds of Gaza school students and children participated in a protest to condemn the Israeli ban imposed on the entry of stationery and school

needs. (*Al Jazeera*)

David Craig, World Bank Country Director for West Bank and Gaza, called on Israel to lift economic restrictions on the Gaza Strip for the rapid competition of the North Gaza wastewater treatment project. (*Xinhua*)

According to the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) and human rights group Binkom, the Jerusalem District Court had found that the \$5 million municipal project in the Silwan neighbourhood of East Jerusalem supported by the settler group "Eldad" was illegal because it lacked construction permits. ACRI said that the planned construction of sidewalks and facade renovations was designed to attract tourists at the expense of open spaces and green areas for residents. (*AFP*)

11

Israeli soldiers detained eight Palestinians, including two children, during raids on West Bank cities. Israeli sources said that one of their military jeeps had been attacked with an explosive device and soldiers had fired shots. No injuries were reported by either side. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

An Israeli settler driving south-west of Bethlehem was slightly injured when her car was pelted with stones. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Jibril Rajoub, member of Fatah Central Committee, said that "President Mahmoud Abbas accepted [the latest national unity proposal by Egypt] after holding consultations with Fatah leaders in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and abroad," adding that he and a group of senior Fatah leaders were planning to visit the Gaza Strip soon for talks with Hamas leaders. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The spokesperson for Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France, Christine Fages, said that the expansion of settlements in East Jerusalem "prejudges a final accord on Jerusalem and complicates American efforts for a resumed peace process". (*AP*)

Bil'in residents and international activists were injured by Israeli sound bomb canisters and suffered tear gas inhalation during a protest against the separation wall. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

12

IDF troops entered the West Bank village of Bil'in from two different directions, raiding two houses in an unsuccessful attempt to arrest two Palestinians. Upon leaving the village, they arrested an activist from the United Kingdom only to release him minutes later. (*Wafa*)

In a *New York Times* Op-Ed, Turki al-Faisal, a former director of Saudi Arabia's intelligence services, [said](#) that Saudi Arabia must refuse to engage Israel until "it ends its illegal occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights as well as Sheba'a Farms in Lebanon". He went on to say, "In order to achieve peace and a lasting two-State solution, Israel must be willing to give as well as take. A first step should be the immediate removal of all Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Only this would show the world that Israel is serious about peace and not just stalling as it adds more illegal settlers to those already occupying Palestinian land". (*The New York Times*)

13

US Special Envoy George Mitchell, who had arrived in Israel the day before, said that efforts were still needed to bridge an Israeli-American dispute over settlement construction in the West Bank, and reports that the dispute had been resolved were "premature". Mr. Mitchell met Israel's President Shimon Peres and Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman. Mr. Peres said that there was "an urgency to resume negotiations [with the Palestinians] before the end of this month". (*Haaretz*)

Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu and Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak met in Cairo. During the talks, Mr. Mubarak called on Israel "to stop all settlement activity, including 'natural growth' of settlements," the President's spokesman, Suleiman Awad, said. They also discussed the issue of Jerusalem, and the borders of a Palestinian State. (*Haaretz*)

A member of the Political Bureau of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), Saleh Zeidan, said that his party would like to see the Egyptian proposal for Palestinian unity developed further. Meanwhile, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) rejected Egypt's suggestion that Palestinian elections be postponed and held on a 25/75 proportional/constituent split. The Palestinian National Initiative (PNI) party said that the Egyptian proposal for Palestinian unity was positive and constructive as it indicated it was in favour of holding presidential and legislative elections simultaneously in all of the Palestinian territories, and did not reject the idea of holding them after 25 January 2010. The PNI also welcomed the Egyptian proposal for restructuring the PA security departments under Egyptian and Arab oversight. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said in a note to the media accompanying a report to be presented to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee [for assistance to Palestinians] High-Level Meeting at the United Nations on 22 September that the West Bank economy remained on course to grow about 7 per cent this year, for the first time since 2005. But achieving the projected figure largely depended on Israel's policy towards the Palestinians, the IMF said. (*Haaretz*)

14

The Israeli army seized three Palestinian civilians in the central Gaza Strip near the border as tanks opened fire at nearby homes. Damage was reported but no injuries. (*IMEMC*)

Israeli troops arrested 12 Palestinians during pre-dawn incursions in Ramallah, Jenin, Nablus and Hebron. (*IMEMC*)

Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu told a Knesset panel that Israel would not freeze all construction in West Bank settlements but could limit its scope to help to restart peace talks with the Palestinians. *Israel Radio* quoted Mr. Netanyahu as saying that any construction restrictions would be in effect only for a limited time, but he gave no time-frame. "Jerusalem is not a settlement and the building [there] will continue as normal," he added.

PA President Abbas had said that he would not return to peace negotiations until Israel froze settlement activity in line with the road map. (*Haaretz, Reuters*)

A United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) [press release](#) stated that a UNEP report had concluded that the Gaza Strip's underground water supplies were "in danger of collapse" following years of overuse and a devastating Israeli military operations earlier in the year. "Unless the trend is reversed now, damage could take centuries to reverse. Since the aquifer is a continuum with Israel and Egypt, such action must be coordinated with these countries," the report stated. (www.unep.org)

A three-year-old Palestinian girl in the Gaza Strip died as she was unable to leave the territory for life-saving medical care owing to the Israeli siege.

The health authorities in Gaza said that the number of patients who had died because of the Israeli siege had reached 356. (*IMEMC*)

15

Israeli troops detained six young Palestinian men in Jenin and Bethlehem. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Haaretz reported that Israeli President Shimon Peres and Saeb Erakat, Head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), held a secret meeting last week in Jerusalem in an effort to ease the way towards a tripartite meeting involving US President Obama, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and PA President Abbas on 23 September on the sidelines of the General Assembly. (*Haaretz*)

US Middle East Envoy George Mitchell and Prime Minister Netanyahu ended more than two hours of talks without any sign of a deal on a settlement freeze. Mr. Mitchell was scheduled to meet with PA President Abbas later in the day and again with Mr. Netanyahu the next day. (*Reuters*)

Israel's Minister for Foreign Affairs Avigdor Liberman, while on an official visit to Croatia, said that Israel was ready to resume peace talks with the Palestinians. (*AFP*)

Egypt opened its Rafah border crossing with the Gaza Strip to allow the passage of people and aid for three days ahead of the Eid al-Fitr holiday.

(AFP)

A Palestinian shepherd was shot in the shoulder and wounded by Israeli settlers from "Yitzhar," south of Nablus. The settlers also slit the throats of 10 sheep belonging to residents of Ainabous village. (AFP)

The United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, led by Justice Richard Goldstone, had released [its report](#), concluding that serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law had been committed by Israel, amounting to war crimes, and possibly crimes against humanity. There was also evidence that Palestinian armed groups had committed war crimes, as well as possibly crimes against humanity, in their repeated launching of rockets and mortars into Israel. It recommended that the Security Council require Israel to report, within six months, on investigations and prosecutions with regard to the violations identified in the report. If a body of independent experts set up by the Council does not indicate within six months that good faith, independent proceedings are taking place in Israel, the Council should refer the situation to the International Criminal Court Prosecutor. (www.ohchr.org)

Israel rejected the findings of the Goldstone Mission and launched a global campaign to block the effects of the report and prevent it from being brought before the Security Council and the International Criminal Court. Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement, saying that it was "appalled and disappointed" by the conclusions, and complaining that the Fact-Finding Mission's mandate had been one-sided, while Israeli President Peres called the report "a mockery of history", saying that it failed "to distinguish between the aggressor and a State exercising its right for self defense". Israel also said that it would not appoint an independent inquiry into its conduct in the Gaza Strip, which had been recommended by the Goldstone report. (AFP, DPA, Haaretz, The Jerusalem Post)

Amnesty International called on the Security Council and other United Nations bodies to follow through on the Goldstone report in order to "ensure that the victims receive the justice and reparation that is their due and perpetrators don't get away with murder". (AFP)

The Geneva Initiative, a group of Israeli and Palestinian activists, presented annexes to the 2003 Geneva Accord. The core of the plan was a Palestinian State in nearly 98 per cent of the West Bank, all of the Gaza Strip and the Arab-populated areas of Jerusalem. The plan was put together over the past two years by Israeli and Palestinian experts, ex-Government officials and former negotiators. (AP)

16

Israeli forces invaded 5 of the 11 West Bank districts, detaining seven Palestinians, including one woman. (IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli troops in East Jerusalem arrested at least five residents who had participated in a protest last week against an earlier shooting of a Palestinian in the Silwan neighbourhood by an Israeli. (Ma'an News Agency)

In interviews with the Israeli press, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu reiterated that Israel would not withdraw to the borders that existed prior to the 1967 Israeli-Arab war. (DPA)

Ghana's Vice President John Mahama called on the parties to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to work towards reaching an amicable solution rather than initiating unilateral actions that would further exacerbate the already volatile situation. "No amount of force of arms can create any (peaceful) solution," he said, as he launched a photo exhibition in Accra, which highlighted the Palestinian predicament. "The conflict is not a battle between Christians and Muslims; it is a question of universal human rights," he emphasized. (Xinhua)

US State Department spokesman Ian Kelly told reporters, "We think that we are making some progress towards the goal of bringing the parties together... But we don't have anything to announce about any meetings next week". (www.state.gov)

PA spokesman Ghassan Khatib welcomed the Goldstone report, calling it "positive" and saying that he hoped it would be the beginning "for the international community to hold Israel accountable for its continuing crimes". (DPA)

Palestinian human rights organizations issued a statement expressing support for the work and recommendations of the UN Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict and demanded effective judicial redress and the protection of victims' rights. (www.pchrgaza.org)

17

At least six Palestinians were injured by Israeli soldiers and settlers in Hebron, Bethlehem, and the village of Awarta, south of Nablus, according to PA police. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israel would seal off the West Bank for four days ahead of Jewish New Year celebrations, a military spokesman said. An exception would be made for Muslim women aged 45 and over and men over 50 who wished to pray in Jerusalem, urgent humanitarian cases, and journalists. (AFP)

US Special Envoy George Mitchell said that the Middle East region should "take responsibility" and the necessary steps to resume the Arab-Israeli peace talks. He made his comments after his meetings in Cairo with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Intelligence Chief Omar Suleiman, and Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit, who said, "Cairo sees there is an effort being made and an attempt to place the foundations for negotiations".

Mr. Mitchell then left for Jordan for talks with King Abdullah II, and was due to return to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory the following day. (DPA, www.state.gov)

Israeli Prisons Service said that it had freed Hamas leader Nasser al-Shaer. Mr. al-Shaer, a former Minister in the PA unity Government, had been held for six months without trial. (Canadian Press Agency)

The head of the UN Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, Justice Richard Goldstone, in a radio interview, rejected Israeli criticism that the investigation had been biased from the start. He said, "I was completely independent, nobody dictated any outcome, and the outcome was a result of the independent inquiries that our mission made". He noted that Israeli leaders had yet to address the substance of the allegations contained in the report. He wrote in a *New York Times* [op-ed piece](#) that "Western Governments in particular face a challenge because they have pushed for accountability in places like Darfur, but now must do the same with Israel, an ally and a democratic State". (AFP, Ma'an News Agency, The New York Times)

United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Robert H. Serry [briefed](#) the Security Council on "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question". (UN press release SC/9743)

The annual conference of the British Trades Union Congress (TUC) called for a ban on importing goods produced in Israeli settlements, an end to arms trading with Israel and disinvestment. "This is not a call for a general boycott of Israeli goods and services which would hit ordinary Palestinian and Israeli workers, but targeted, consumer-led sanctions directed at businesses based in, and sustaining, the illegal settlements," said TUC Secretary General Brendan Barber. (AP)

18

Israeli troops detained five Palestinians from Nablus, Tubas and Jericho. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Swedish European Union Presidency said in a [statement](#): "We strongly support the United States' vigorous pursuit of a two State-solution and call on the parties to fully engage in resumed negotiations to create a viable Palestinian State on the basis of the June 1967 borders, living side by side in peace and security with the State of Israel. We urge Israel to immediately end all settlement activities, including in East Jerusalem. We urge the Palestinian Authority to continue in its efforts to improve security and the rule of law, building on the achievements reached so far. The European Union urges all donors to deliver on past commitments and to enhance their efforts to assist the PA in a spirit of equitable burden sharing. We reiterate the urgency of a durable solution to the Gaza crisis and call for the immediate and unconditional opening of crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza. Underlining the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative, the European Union invites Israel and all Arab countries to take confidence building measures to create an atmosphere conducive to conflict resolution". (*DPA, www.se2009.eu*)

Saeb Erakat, head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO, said that US Middle East Special Envoy George Mitchell had ended his shuttle diplomacy between Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and PA President Abbas without agreement on terms for renewed peace talks or for a trilateral summit on the sidelines of the General Assembly. The key disputes had been over Israeli settlement expansion and whether peace talks should begin where they had left off. (*AP, Haaretz*)

The United States issued a reaction to the report of the UN Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, as follows: "Although the report addresses all sides of the conflict, its overwhelming focus is on the actions of Israel. While the report makes overly sweeping conclusions of fact and law with respect to Israel, its conclusions regarding Hamas' deplorable conduct and its failure to comply with international humanitarian law during the conflict are more general and tentative. We also have very serious concerns about the report's recommendations, including calls that this issue be taken up in international fora outside the Human Rights Council and in national courts of countries not party to the conflict. We note in particular that Israel has the democratic institutions to investigate and prosecute abuses, and we encourage it to use those institutions. We believe this report should be discussed within the Human Rights Council, and we look forward to participating in that discussion. We will approach discussions on the report keeping in mind the underlying causes of the tragic events in Gaza earlier this year – the lack of a peace agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians, and the attacks by Hamas against innocent civilians". (*www.state.gov*)

The World Bank had issued a [report](#) entitled "A Palestinian State in Two Years: Institutions for Economic Revival", prepared for the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for assistance to Palestinians meeting, to be held along the sidelines of the General Assembly on 22 September. The Israeli closure regime had stymied Palestinian private sector growth, which was a key condition for PA fiscal independence, the World Bank said, adding, "Unless further major steps are taken to enable sustainable private sector growth, particularly by improving access to Israeli markets and to international ones, via either Israel, Jordan, or Egypt, the PA will continue to require large amounts of donor aid for the foreseeable future". (*AP, www.worldbank.org*)

19

The White House confirmed that President Obama would host a trilateral meeting on 22 September with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and PA President Abbas. (*DPA, Reuters*)

20

Israeli tanks killed two Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. (*AFP*)

21

Israeli military said that its fighter jets had bombarded three arms-smuggling tunnels near the southern Gaza Strip border with Egypt. (*DPA*)

A White House spokesman said, "We have no grand expectations out of one [Obama-Netanyahu-Abbas] meeting except to continue ... the hard work, day-to-day diplomacy that has to be done to seek a lasting peace". (*DPA, Reuters*)

Former US President Jimmy Carter said that the "key factor that prevents peace is the continuing building of Israeli settlements in Palestine, driven by a determined minority of Israelis who desire to occupy and colonize East Jerusalem and the West Bank". (*AP, Ma'an News Agency*)

22

Israeli troops shot and killed a Jerusalem resident at the "Beitar Illit" settlement-area military checkpoint, west of Bethlehem, after he allegedly refused to stop his car. A neighbour told *AP Television News* that the man was not connected with any armed groups, and was on his way to work at the time of the shooting. Palestinian witnesses said that the killing had been a deliberate ambush and assassination. (*AP, Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces detained 14 Palestinians, including 8 children between the ages of 10 and 17. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli President Shimon Peres said that the Palestinians should not demand an end to all settlement activity before entering peace talks with Israel. (*DPA*)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu met with US President Obama ahead of a tripartite summit later in the day with PA President Abbas. (*Haaretz*)

President Obama hosted a trilateral meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and PA President Abbas. He told the assembled leaders at the start of the meeting: "Palestinians have strengthened their efforts on security, but they need to do more to stop incitement and to move forward with negotiations. Israelis have facilitated greater freedom of movement for the Palestinians and have discussed important steps to restrain settlement activity. But they need to translate these discussions into real action on this and other issues. And it remains important for the Arab states to take concrete steps to promote peace... Permanent status negotiations must begin and begin soon ... Senator Mitchell will meet with the Israeli and Palestinian negotiators next week. I've asked the Prime Minister and the President to continue these intensive discussions by sending their teams back to Washington next week. And I've asked the Secretary of State to report to me on the status of these negotiations in mid-October". (*www.whitehouse.gov*)

Javier Solana, European Union High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, is presenting his proposal for peace in the Middle East during his visit to the US. According to the plan, after a "given time," the Security Council should be called upon to vote on a resolution proclaiming the two-State solution, which would include the following parameters — borders based on the 1967 delimitation, the fate of refugees, the status of Jerusalem and security arrangements. The United Nations would then accept the Palestinian State among its members and create a timetable for its establishment. (*Agence Europe*)

Jordan's Queen Rania told *ABC News*, "What's missing is the political will on all sides to [move] forward," adding that "we want to get to the end game. We want to move beyond process. And really see decisive and concrete actions on the ground that [would] get the Palestinians and Israelis to move forward on peace". (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee welcomed the political programme of the Palestinian Authority for establishing a Palestinian State within the next two years. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, in a message delivered by Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs B. Lynn Pascoe, told the meeting that "The Palestinian Authority's achievements in security, the economy, financing, reform and planning over the past two years are unprecedented..."

I strongly support the Palestinian Authority's plan to complete the building of the state apparatus for Palestine in two years, and pledge the United Nations full assistance". Norway's Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre underlined the need for the reopening of the crossings to Gaza, absent which "the only local growth sectors will be tunnel trafficking and militant radicalism," he said. (UN press release SG/SM/12466-PAL/2120, www.regjeringen.no)

Bassem Khoury, PA Minister of National Economy, said that the PA would seek observer status at the World Trade Organization (WTO) as part of a process of building State institutions. He added that the process of joining the WTO would require reforms, some of which were badly needed in any event. (DPA)

Israeli authorities decided to partially open all three crossings into the Gaza Strip following four days of total closure, and would allow approximately 60 truckloads of goods for the agricultural sector into the Strip, along with some wheat and fuel. (Ma'an News Agency)

Palestine Committee-Netherlands called for a boycott of Israeli products being sold by Albert Heijn, the largest Dutch supermarket chain. Albert Heijn spokeswoman Klaartje Kluiters said: "We carry products of any country unless the Dutch Government has issued a boycott". (DPA)

23

Israeli forces invaded villages in the West Bank, breaking into homes and detaining nine men, according to the PA police. They also beat up a Palestinian near Bethlehem who was then taken to a hospital. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli forces said that their troops had been fired on by unknown Palestinians on the outskirts of Jerusalem and that their soldiers had returned fire. No injuries had been reported from either side. (Ma'an News Agency)

A senior US Administration official told Israeli media in an off-the-record briefing that the US President Obama had expressed his "impatience" during the trilateral meeting, which was "businesslike" but not cordial. He said Washington's objective was to resume Israeli-Palestinian talks within a few weeks "at a public launch event". (DPA)

Yasser Abed Rabbo, a senior adviser to PA President Abbas, told the *al-Ayyam* daily that the Palestinian message "was clear and we did not retreat from our positions". He said that backing away from their views would lead to "political disaster and total failure of the peace process". Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said the New York meeting reflected a US withdrawal from "basic legitimate Palestinian rights" and Netanyahu was the only one to benefit from it. (DPA, Reuters)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu told CNN that the dispute over a freeze in settlements was "costing us a great deal of time... The issue of settlements has to be discussed at the end or in the context [of] these negotiations, not before". He said that while he did not want to set a timetable, "the sooner we get going, the sooner we'll get an agreement". He was quoted as telling the media, "I understand English — 'restraint' and 'freeze' are two different words". "There was general agreement, including on the part of the Palestinians, that the peace process has to be resumed as soon as possible with no preconditions," the Prime Minister said shortly after meeting Mr. Obama and Mr. Abbas. He also made clear that he attached lower priority to dealing with the Palestinian issue than to halting Iran's nuclear programme. Minister for Foreign Affairs Liberman told *Israel Radio* that the Israeli Government had kept its promise to the voters not to cave in on the settlement issue. He cautioned against holding a "stopwatch" to negotiations and creating unrealistic expectations. (DPA, Ma'an News Agency, Reuters)

US President Obama told the General Assembly: "The time has come to re-launch negotiations — without preconditions — that address the permanent-status issues: security for Israelis and Palestinians; borders, refugees and Jerusalem. The goal is clear: two States living side by side in peace and security — a Jewish State of Israel, with true security for all Israelis; and a viable, independent Palestinian State with contiguous territory that ends the occupation that began in 1967, and realizes the potential of the Palestinian people. As we pursue this goal, we will also pursue peace between Israel and Lebanon, Israel and Syria, and a broader peace between Israel and its many neighbours... The United States does Israel no favours when we fail to couple an unwavering commitment to its security with an insistence that Israel respect the legitimate claims and rights of the Palestinians. And nations within this body do the Palestinians no favours when they choose vitriolic attacks over a constructive willingness to recognize Israel's legitimacy, and its right to exist in peace and security". (www.un.org)

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon voiced serious concern about the situation in Gaza in a meeting with PA President Abbas, noting that the United Nations remained ready to implement a pilot project to kick start some reconstruction and that it would continue to raise the issue with Israel. The Secretary-General also congratulated Mr. Abbas on recent steps towards political renewal and statehood and on the economic revitalization in the West Bank. (UN News Centre)

In a meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon reiterated the United Nations call for a full settlement freeze and the implementation of other commitments under the road map, which embodied the two-State solution. They also discussed the humanitarian situation in Gaza, with Mr. Ban expressing regret that Israel did not accept the UN-sponsored pilot project in Gaza. (UN News Centre)

Quartet Representative Tony Blair told CNN that renewed peace talks between Palestinians and Israelis would begin soon, "over the next few weeks. In the end, the issue really is this: What is the context within which this negotiation is being launched?" Mr. Blair said. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak had approved 37 more housing units for the West Bank settlement of "Karnei Shomron", the Israeli newspaper *Yediot Ahronot* reported. (Ma'an News Agency)

24

A mortar shell launched by militants in Gaza landed in an open field in Israel's Negev region. No injuries were reported. (Haaretz)

Israeli special forces backed by tanks entered the Al-Shojayia neighbourhood east of Gaza City and opened fire at homes and a hospital. Damage was reported but no injuries. (IMEMC)

The Israeli military seized seven Palestinians during raids in Nablus, Tulkarm, Salfit and Hebron. (IMEMC)

In New York, PA President Abbas said that, even at the risk of alienating US President Obama, the Palestinians could not return to peace talks at this time because of "fundamental disagreements" with Israel on what should be on the agenda. Mr. Abbas emphasized that dialogue was the only way to close the gaps and resume negotiations. But he said that for now "there is no common ground" with Israel. (AP)

In a telephone interview with *Radio Israel*, Prime Minister Netanyahu welcomed US President Obama's appeal to restart Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, saying, "I'm pleased that President Obama accepted my request that there should be no preconditions". (AP)

Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal was due to head a delegation to Cairo on 27 September to give a "final response" to Cairo's proposals for Palestinian reconciliation, Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum said. Mr. Barhoum also commented on the trilateral meeting of Messrs. Abbas, Netanyahu, and Obama in New York by saying, "[Mr. Abbas]... doesn't represent all the Palestinian people. Therefore, he is not authorized to speak on behalf of our people". (DPA)

The Quartet — United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, US Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George Mitchell, European Union High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, European Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner and Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt — met in New York.

They were joined by Quartet Representative Tony Blair. In a [statement](#), the Quartet said, "The Quartet shares the sense of urgency expressed by President Obama and fully supports the steps ahead as outlined in his statement to the General Assembly on 23 September. The Quartet calls on Israel and the Palestinians to act on their previous agreements and obligations — in particular adherence to the road map, irrespective of reciprocity — to create the conditions for the resumption of negotiations in the near term. The Quartet urges the Government of Israel to freeze all settlement activity, including natural growth; and to refrain from provocative actions in East Jerusalem and calls on the Palestinian Authority to continue to make every effort to improve law and order, to fight violent extremism, and to end incitement". (UN News Centre)

UNRWA commemorated in a high-level meeting the sixtieth anniversary of its establishment. National leaders and senior Government ministers from around the world gathered at United Nations Headquarters to pay tribute to the Agency. UNRWA Commissioner-General Karen AbuZayd was joined by PA President Abbas and Jordan's Queen Rania. President Abbas said, "We call on the international Community to increase their support for this Agency's vital work," thanking donor nations for responding to recent emergency appeals to enable UNRWA to provide essential services. In her statement, Queen Rania said: "I never imagined that, eight months on, after pledges of almost \$4.7 billion, [Gaza] would still be hell on Earth", adding, "not one penny of the billions pledged for reconstruction has reached Gaza". (Reuters, UN News Centre)

An Israeli group, Ir Amin, reported that plans for the construction of a new settlement called "Ma'aleh David" in the Palestinian neighbourhood of Ras Amud in East Jerusalem had been submitted to the Jerusalem Municipality for approval. The plans include the construction of 104 housing units, a kindergarten and a synagogue. (IMEMC)

Spain said that it had disqualified a group of Israeli academics from a solar power design competition because their institution, "Ariel University Centre of Samaria", was based in a West Bank settlement. "Spain acted in line with European Union policy of opposing Israel's occupation of Palestinian land," an official from Spain's Housing Ministry said. (Haaretz)

25

A 21-year-old Palestinian man was killed and two others injured in a tunnel collapse on the Gaza-Egypt border. (Ma'an News Agency)

Three Islamic Jihad fighters were killed in Gaza by Israeli aircraft in a strike that severely wounded three others. The Israeli military said the fighters were preparing to fire rockets and released a video of the operation. (AFP, Haaretz)

Several Palestinians were wounded in Gaza by Israeli gunfire as clashes erupted during a funeral held by Islamic Jihad and attended by thousands of people for the three fighters killed in an earlier Israeli air raid, when teenagers began hurling rocks at Israeli forces stationed along the border nearby, who then returned fire, according to medics and witnesses. Another three people were wounded by the ceremonial firing of guns in the air during the funeral, medics said. (AFP)

The Human Rights Council would discuss the report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, headed by Justice Goldstone, on 29 September, a United Nations Office at Geneva spokesman announced. (www.unog.ch)

26

A rocket was fired from Gaza into Israel without wounding anyone, according to the Israeli military. (AFP)

The Israeli army would close off the West Bank from on the eve of Yom Kippur, until midnight on 28 September, a military spokesman said. (AFP) Israel's Deputy Chief of Staff, General Dan Harel, predicted in a television interview that the December-January Gaza assault was just "a first round... These operations could take various forms, with or without occupation of land... There is no other choice so long as the other camp refuses to accept our existence". (Haaretz)

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton urged the Foreign Ministers of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman to offer financial and other support to the Palestinians to help them to resume peace talks with Israel, aides said. The Foreign Ministers, following an expanded meeting with their counterparts from Egypt, Jordan and Iraq, later issued a [joint statement](#) appealing for "rapid progress" toward a resumption of peace talks. The statement also renewed the call for Israel to freeze settlements; it also welcomed the speech by President Obama calling for the re-launching of negotiations "without preconditions". Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs, Jeffrey Feltman, speaking to reporters before the meeting, said: "We hope that the Arabs would find ways to demonstrate to the Israeli public that Israel will be an accepted, normalized part of the region which actually reflects reality". He added it was important for the Arabs to continue financial and other support for the institutions needed for a future Palestinian State. (AFP, www.state.gov)

Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit told the General Assembly, "Throughout this year, Israel has shown lack of the necessary political will to engage in serious and credible negotiations that aim at reaching a final settlement to the conflict". He urged the international community to put forward "the formula for the final settlement" stressing the need "to ensure Israel's commitment to halt all settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem". "Israel's engagement in a serious, credible, clear and time-bound negotiating process would restore the situation on many other issues to the same way they had been in the 1990s in terms of the Arab interaction with Israel," he said. (AFP, UN News Centre)

Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan said that his country would push for the Security Council to discuss the report by the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict. (Xinhua)

The European Union and its member States should fully endorse the report of the UN Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, Human Rights Watch stated in a letter to European Union Foreign Ministers. Lotte Leicht, Human Rights Watch European Union Director, said, "The step-by-step approach proposed by the Goldstone report could finally help secure justice for the civilian victims of the war". (www.hrw.org)

Around 300 Gaza figures, including independent politicians and intellectuals, were to form a lobbying group to improve daily life in the area in the face of an ongoing Israeli blockade, the organization, the Palestinian Lobby Group, announced. Talal Aoukal, a spokesman for the group, said: "The Lobbying Group won't be able to open any of the closed crossings, either with Egypt or with Israel, but we can at least apply pressure on the politicians to ease the horrible inhuman living conditions we suffer from". (DPA)

27

According to Palestinian officials, dozens of Palestinians were wounded in clashes with Israeli soldiers who were providing protection to Jewish extremists as they broke into the Al-Haram Al-Sharif compound (Temple Mount) in East Jerusalem. According to Israeli police, the group in question were foreign tourists. Fifteen of the injured were believed to be members of Israeli security forces. (AFP, AP, Haaretz)

A Palestinian was killed and two injured when a smuggling tunnel under the Gaza Strip's border with Egypt collapsed, medics and witnesses said.

(DPA)

Hamas believed that PA elections could not be held on schedule on 25 January 2010 for practical reasons, Hamas sources in the West Bank told *Ma'an News Agency*. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Jordanian Foreign Ministry had summoned the Israeli chargé d'affaires in Amman and handed him a strongly worded protest over what it called the breaking into Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque by Israeli soldiers. The Jordanian Minister of State for Media Affairs and Communication, Nabil Sharif, said that his Government "rejects any attempt by Israeli soldiers to violate the sanctity of the Islamic shrine which is guaranteed by international law and conventions". PA Presidency spokesperson Nabil Abu Rudeineh said that East Jerusalem and its Holy Shrines constituted a red line. The PA Information Ministry released a statement that condemned the actions of "Israeli occupation police and extremist settlers" wanting to "implement a new series of organized State terror" in Palestinian East Jerusalem. Saeb Erakat, Head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO, said that Israel was deliberately raising tensions "at a time when President Obama is trying to bridge the divide between Palestinians and Israelis, and to get negotiations back on track". Mohammed Dahlan, a member of the Fatah Central Committee, warned that a third intifada could arise in the light of "Israel's contempt for the feelings of Muslims". (DPA, *Ma'an News Agency*, Wafa)

28

Three Palestinians were wounded by Israeli fire near the Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza, as Israeli tanks invaded the area. (*Ma'an News Agency*, Wafa)

Two rockets and a mortar shell were fired into Israel from northern Gaza, causing no damage or injuries. (*Ynetnews*)

Israeli forces raided the Old City of Jerusalem, seizing 50 Palestinians allegedly involved in the confrontations at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound the previous day. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Jordan had decided to build a \$2 billion pipeline from the Red Sea to the Dead Sea without help from proposed partners Israel and the PA, a Jordanian water official told *AFP*. "Israel and the Palestinians have raised no objection to Jordan starting the first phase by itself," the official, Fayez Batayneh said. (*AFP*)

Israel has warned the PA that it would condition permission for a second cellular telephone provider to operate in the West Bank on the Palestinians withdrawing their request at the International Criminal Court to prosecute Israeli war crimes committed during the Gaza conflict. (*Haaretz*)

29

According to Israeli police, Palestinian gunmen shot and wounded an Israeli motorist near a Jewish settlement in the West Bank. (*Reuters*)

The Israeli Air Force struck what was described as a rocket launcher ready to be fired into Israel, in the northern Gaza Strip. (www.idf.il)

Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal was in Cairo where he joined a delegation from the Gaza Strip to discuss the Egyptian proposal for reconciliation. Mr. Mashaal said that all Palestinian factions were close to agreeing on the proposal. He described the proposal as good and said despite some suggested changes, they would like to see it in its final draft form. He said that he would return to Cairo by the end of October to sign a final draft. He said that his main concerns were shared security arrangements in Gaza, prisoners and the freedom to campaign for the 2010 elections. (*BBC*)

Yitzhak Molcho, an aide to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, and Defense Minister Ehud Barak's chief of staff, Michael Herzog, would be meeting on 30 September with US Special Envoy George Mitchell and senior White House officials for talks meant to lay the groundwork for renewed Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking, officials said on condition of anonymity. Saeb Erakat, Head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO, would hold separate talks with Mr. Mitchell later in the week. (*AP*)

A request made by a group of Palestinians in Britain to the Westminster Magistrates Court to obtain an international arrest warrant for visiting Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak for war crimes perpetrated by Israel during Operation Cast Lead was rejected. Mr. Barak's office earlier said that he did not intend to change his plans, including speaking at the annual conference of Britain's Labour Party, at a side event for the Labour Friends of Israel lobby group. (*Haaretz*, DPA, *AP*)

On behalf of the members of the UN Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, Justice Richard Goldstone presented the report of the Mission to the Human Rights Council. In his [statement](#), Mr. Goldstone said that he strongly rejected the accusation that portrayed the Mission's efforts as being politically motivated. He said that a culture of impunity in the region had existed for too long, adding, "The lack of accountability for war crimes and possible crimes against humanity has reached a crisis point; the ongoing lack of justice is undermining any hope for a successful peace process and reinforcing an environment that fosters violence". (www.ohchr.org)

At the Human Rights Council meeting in Geneva, Michael Posner, US Assistant Secretary of State, said that the US disagreed sharply with many of the Goldstone report's assessments and its recommendations and believed it to be deeply flawed. At the same time, he called on Israel to conduct credible appropriate domestic judicial investigations into allegations of war crimes committed by its forces in Gaza, saying it would help the Middle East peace process. The Human Rights Council should also demand that Hamas investigate the allegations and stop the deliberate targeting of civilians and the use of Palestinians as human shields. The Council should ask the PA to carry out its own investigation. "If undertaken properly and fairly, these reviews can serve as important confidence-building measures that will support the larger essential objective which is a shared quest for justice and lasting peace," he said. (*Reuters*, www.ohchr.org)

30

A Palestinian teenager was killed in the West Bank after an Israeli army jeep struck him during a clash with youths. According to a Palestinian official, the vehicle deliberately ran down the teenager, while the Israeli military called it an accident. (*AFP*, *Reuters*, *Ma'an News Agency*, *Haaretz*)

According to Israeli military and Palestinian medical officials, the Israeli air force bombed three weapons-smuggling tunnels in the southern Gaza Strip border. Two Palestinians died and six others were injured as a result of the strike. (DPA)

Israel agreed to allow construction materials into Gaza to build a new hospital. The Qatar-funded project had been presented to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu by French President Nicolas Sarkozy during the General Assembly last week in New York. (*Xinhua*)

Israel's Ministry of the Interior was expected to approve what could become the most populous single settlement in the Occupied Palestinian Territory since 1967, according to the Hebrew-language daily *Ma'ariv*. The project, prepared by both the Ministry of the Interior and the Jerusalem Municipality, reportedly calls for the construction of 14,000 housing units for 40,000 Jewish Israelis on 3,000 dunums (three km²) of land near the city of Bethlehem. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel and Hamas announced that Israel would release 20 Palestinian women from prison this week in exchange for a videotape proving that the captive Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit was still alive. One prisoner, Bara Malki, 15, was released today, ahead of schedule. (*Ma'an News Agency*, *The Jerusalem Post*, *AFP*, *AP*)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu planned to present a proposal to his cabinet for the establishment of an investigative committee to probe the findings

