

## Division for Palestinian Rights

*Chronological Review of Events Relating to the  
Question of Palestine*

## Monthly media monitoring review

December 2012

*Monthly Highlights*

- Donors pledge contributions to the 2013 budget of UNRWA during the Agency's annual Ad Hoc Committee meeting ([4 December](#))
- Palestinians seek Security Council resolution to help block planned settlement expansion in the "E-1" area of the West Bank ([5 December](#))
- King Abdullah II of Jordan arrives in the West Bank, the first official visit of an Arab leader after Palestine's UN status upgrade ([6 December](#))
- Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal makes historic visit to the Gaza Strip ([7 December](#))
- President Abbas warns of a Palestinian petition with the International Criminal Court if Israel implements its "E-1" expansion plans ([11 December](#))
- Member of the US House of Representatives sign a petition calling for the closure of PLO office in Washington, D.C., as punishment for its UN bid ([24 December](#))
- PA to seek membership in other international organizations, including the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Health Organization ([26 December](#))
- Israel allows 20 truckloads of building materials into Gaza for use by the private sector for the first time in five years ([30 December](#))

**1**

Israeli troops opened fire on demonstrators near Rafah killing a Palestinian man and injuring five others. (*JTA, Ma'an News Agency*)

Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said that Israel should not, from now on, pose any obstacles to the formation of a Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Mr. Erdoğan noted, "Israel should now also see that as long as the Palestinian issue is not resolved, it won't be possible for this region to enjoy peace and stability." (*Today's Zaman*)

France's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Laurent Fabius, urged Israel to stop its new settlement expansion plan, saying that the decision would hinder peace talks. (*Press TV*)

British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs William Hague said that he was extremely concerned at Israel's proposed new housing in settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and commented that these plans undermined Israel's international reputation. He strongly advised the Israeli Government to reverse its decision. (*UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office*)

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton denounced Israel's settlement plans, calling them a setback to peace. "In light of today's announcement, let me reiterate that this Administration, like previous Administrations, has been very clear with Israel that these activities set back the cause of a negotiated peace," Secretary Clinton said. (*AFP*)

**2**

Confrontations erupted between Israeli forces and Palestinians during an arrest campaign in the village of Faqoua, east of Jenin, according to security and local forces. They told *Wafa* that forces had stormed the village amidst firing tear gas and acoustic bombs and had arrested several Palestinians, leading to confrontations. No injuries were reported. (*Wafa*)

European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton urged Israel to annul plans to build 3,000 new settler homes, saying that it would be "an obstacle to peace". (*AFP*)

Turkey strongly condemned the plan by Israel to expand settlements, demanding an immediate halt to the settlements that undermined lasting peace in the region. (*Today's Zaman*)

Israel would not transfer tax and tariff funds it collected for the Palestinians for the month of December in response to their bid for upgraded UN status, Minister of Finance Yuval Steinitz said. "[The funds] will be used to pay the Palestinian Authority's debts to the Israeli electricity company," he said. *Haaretz* said that a total of NIS 460 million (\$120 million) would be withheld. (*AFP*)

The Palestinian Detainees Research Centre published a report revealing that Israeli soldiers had seized 650 Palestinians in November, adding that 85 women, 7 children and 12 Palestinian fishermen had been among them. The Centre said that the army had carried out more than 300 invasions of Palestinian cities, towns, villages and refugee camps in November. (*IMEMC*)

The Spokesperson for the United Nations Secretary-General issued a statement saying that it was with grave concern and disappointment that the Secretary-General

had learned of the latest Israeli settlement plans. Should the "E-1" project be constructed, it would represent an almost fatal blow to remaining chances of securing a two-State solution because it would risk completely cutting off East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank. (UN News Centre)

3

Israeli forces detained a mid-level Fatah official in the West Bank at dawn, among 11 Palestinians who were seized during the night. An Israeli army spokesman said that one person was detained in Kafr al-Dik, one in Hebron and another near Ramallah. Five Palestinians were arrested in Hebron refugee camp of Al-Aroub and two others in Nablus. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli soldiers shot and injured a Palestinian teenager near a border fence area of central Gaza, medics said. An Israeli army spokeswoman said that "IDF soldiers acted in accordance with IDF rules of engagement," without providing further details. Following the latest incidents near the border fence in Eastern Gaza, Hamas accused Israel of violating the Egypt-mediated ceasefire. (Ma'an News Agency)

League of Arab States Secretary-General Nabil Elaraby described the Middle East Quartet as ineffective and said that he expected Arabs to approach the UN to pressure Israel into withdrawing from Palestinian lands. "I expect the Arabs to go to the Security Council very soon and say we don't want all this. You have 242, which said [that] territories occupied have to be de-occupied. Let's carry that out," he said, referring to Security Council resolution 242 (1967). "Either the Security Council takes its responsibilities or we might ask even for an international conference. This is in the air," he said, referring to a meeting of a League task force on the peace process that would meet in Qatar on 8 December. (AFP)

The Palestinians condemned Israel for announcing plans for new settlement construction, demanding urgent international action to stop what the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the UN, Riyad Mansour, called "this latest Israeli provocation". Mr. Mansour said in letters he had sent to the Secretary-General, the Security Council and the General Assembly, that at the same time when Palestinian leaders had reaffirmed their readiness to resume peace negotiations, "Israel continues to flagrantly pursue its illegal policies and practices." He appealed to the international community, including the Security Council, to urgently act to salvage the internationally-backed goal of two States, living side by side in peace (AP)

France summoned Israel's Ambassador to Paris to complain about the new settlement plans. Media reports said that France and the United Kingdom were considering recalling their ambassadors to Israel, but the report had not been confirmed by the French Foreign Ministry saying only that it was deciding on measures to "show its disapproval". (AFP)

Israel's Ambassador to Britain had been summoned to the Foreign Office, officials said. (AFP)

"We urge Israeli leaders to reconsider these unilateral decisions and exercise restraint as these actions are counterproductive and make it harder to resume direct negotiations to achieve a two-State solution," White House Spokesman Jay Carney said in a briefing. "We reiterate our long-standing opposition to Israeli settlement activity and East Jerusalem construction," he said. (Reuters)

The Russian Federation urged Israel to reconsider plans to expand settlements after Palestinians had won de facto UN recognition of statehood saying that building new homes would undermine any chances for direct peace talks. It also criticized Israel's announcement that it was withholding Palestinian tax revenues. (Reuters)

Germany said that it was "deeply concerned" about Israeli plans for new settlements but would not "for the moment" summon the Israeli Ambassador to Berlin.

Ahead of talks between Chancellor Angela Merkel and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, German Government Spokesman Steffen Seibert called on Israel to withdraw its plans. (AFP)

Sweden had summoned the Israeli Ambassador in Stockholm, the Foreign Ministry said. (Reuters)

Denmark's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Villy Søvndal, summoned Israel's Ambassador for consultation to discuss Israel's decision to build 3,000 new settlements east of Jerusalem in the occupied West Bank. (The Copenhagen Post)

In a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Government of Japan "deeply deplored" the plan for the construction of housing units for Jewish people in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. (www.mofa.go.jp)

The Prime Minister of Italy, Mario Monti, and the President of France, François Hollande, issued a joint statement while attending an Italy-France summit in Lyon, France, saying that they were "deeply worried" by Israel's settlement plans. They called the Israeli decisions "serious and illegal" and a "serious obstacle" to peace in the Middle East. (AP)

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions, in a letter to Ireland's Deputy Head of Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs Eamon Gilmore, called for the revocation of the favoured trading status Israel had enjoyed with the European Union and an Irish push for an EU ban on trade with Israeli settlements. (Irish Times)

Israeli authorities issued demolition orders for a home in the West Bank village of Beit Ummar, a local committee said. Several homes in the village, located near the "Kamti Tzur" settlement, had also been issued demolition orders by the Israeli military. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israel during the year had published 3,046 [settlement] housing tenders, the highest in a decade, according to a report issued by Peace Now. The latest settlement announcement could push the number to 6,046. (The Jerusalem Post)

Three Israeli residents of the West Bank settlements of "Beit El", "Yakir" and "Kiryat Arba" were arrested for entering the village of Dahariya and torching a Palestinian vehicle and planning to carry out an additional "price-tag" revenge attack in the area. (Haaretz)

A man was killed when a smuggling tunnel collapsed underneath the Egypt-Gaza border, medics said. (Ma'an News Agency)

Twelve Fatah members had returned to the Gaza Strip after fleeing the enclave in 2007 amidst a fierce battle with Hamas. "We are strugglers, we left for blood not to be shed and today, we come back to our homeland after five years," said Fatah member Mahmoud Musleh on his return through the Rafah crossing on Egypt's border. The 190 Fatah affiliates who had fled Gaza to Egypt, the 70 who had fled to around the region in Yemen, Algeria, the United Arab Emirates, and nearly 200 who had fled to the West Bank, said they would return once procedures had been completed, he said. "There should be good initiatives to gather Palestinians back together and release all political prisoners after the victory achieved in both Gaza and the UN," Mr. Musleh said. Islam Shahwan, Spokesman for Gaza's "Interior Ministry", had given reassurance that Fatah delegates could return and would not face harassment. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli forces arrested 11 Palestinians in the West Bank during the night. (Ma'an News Agency)

The Husam Society for Detainees and Ex-detainees reported that Israeli soldiers had subjected wives and mothers of Palestinian detainees to strip searches before they visited their family members. The women said that they had been humiliated and made fun of. (IMEMC)

4

A Palestinian official said that European countries were mulling a new plan to revive Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that France, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom were leading such efforts. (Xinhua)

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh appealed to Arab States and friends of the Palestinian people to help pay for reconstruction after a week of Israeli aerial attacks on the enclave inflicted damage assessed at between \$250 million and \$545 million. "We urge Arab brothers and the international community to stand beside the Palestinian people and Gaza to help us reconstruct what has been destroyed by the occupation [Israel] and to rehabilitate the infrastructure," Mr. Haniyeh told Reuters Television. Mr. Haniyeh noted that Gaza had still not recovered from the destruction suffered in a three-week war with Israel in December 2008 to January 2009.

Donor States had pledged some \$4.8 billion for Gaza reconstruction in 2009 but little of that promised aid had materialized, apart from \$400 million guaranteed by the Emirate of Qatar just weeks before the latest conflict. (Ma'an News Agency)

A spokesman for Canada's Minister for Foreign Affairs, John Baird, said that Canada's current five-year commitment worth \$300 million for security and humanitarian aid to the Palestinians was important and would remain. (AP)

Venezuela and Palestine convened the first High-Level Joint Committee in Caracas to endorse accords in matters of health, culture, education, economy and agriculture. The Palestinian delegation was headed by Minister for Foreign Affairs Riad Malki, who met with Venezuela's Minister of Industry, Ricardo Menendez. (AVN)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu faces a European "diplomatic tsunami" over controversial settlement plans as he headed to Germany and also pressure at home to hew to his tough line ahead of the January elections. In Israel, commentators expressed anxiety about the display of European anger. "Sometimes, nightmares come true," commentator Shalom Yerushalmi wrote in the *Maariv* daily. "The world, which granted non-member [observer] State status to the Palestinians a week ago, is now fleeing from Israel as from a fire," he added. "The Europeans have removed the kid gloves," a senior Israeli diplomat told *Yediot Aharonot*, who dubbed the European response a "diplomatic tsunami". "Israel is currently experiencing a new reality: Europe is about to exact a price tag for its behaviour in the Palestinian territories," commentator Shimon Shiffer wrote in the same paper. But Mr. Netanyahu's backers accused Israel's left of encouraging Europe to sanction the Jewish State and fiercely condemned opposition critics, including former Minister for Foreign Affairs Tzipi Livni, who would challenge Mr. Netanyahu in the January

elections. (AFP)

Australia summoned the Israeli Ambassador to express its concern over Israel's plans to build thousands of new homes in West Bank settlements. Minister for Foreign Affairs Bob Carr said in a statement: "These actions enormously complicate the prospects for resuming negotiations between the two sides." (Yahoo.com)

Brazil became the seventh country to summon the Ambassador of Israel to protest Israel's decision to expand Jewish settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, and withhold tax revenue from the Palestinian Authority (PA). (The Jerusalem Post)

British Foreign Secretary Hague said that European sanctions against Israel, in response to settlement building, was not an option, but he was discussing with other Ministers for Foreign Affairs what to do if construction went ahead. "I don't think there is enthusiasm around the European Union about economic sanctions in Europe against Israel. We continue to try to bring both sides back to negotiations," Mr. Hague told the British Parliament. (The Jerusalem Post)

A source in the Israeli Prime Minister's Office issued a statement saying that Israel would "continue to stand up for its vital interests even in the face of international pressure". The official said that there would be no change in the decision made on 30 November to build 3,000 housing units in large settlement blocks and with planning and zoning work for the "E-1" area. (The Jerusalem Post)

Israel continued to take retaliatory measures in wake of the UN decision to accept Palestine as a non-member observer State. The Jerusalem District Planning and Building Committee was set to discuss a controversial plan to build 1,700 homes in the East Jerusalem Jewish neighborhood of Ramat Shlomo. The controversial settlement construction had been approved in March 2010 during a visit by US Vice-President Joe Biden. (Haaretz)

According to Israeli daily *Maariv*, the Israeli Security Services rejected the Israeli Government's decision to build 3,000 additional units for Jewish settlers in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, saying that "the move is uncalculated". Israeli security officials also described the decision as "an angry move" and said that there was no need to punish the Palestinians for becoming a UN non-member observer State as long as they refrained from suing Israel at the International Criminal Court.

The officials said that Israel must keep its options open until the Palestinians head to the Court. *Maariv* reported that the security officials made their statement following talks conducted by Moshe Ya'alon, former IDF Chief of Staff and current member of the Knesset for Likud, and the country's Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Strategic Affairs; Likud Knesset Member Benny Begin; and Likud Knesset Member Dan Meridor, who all met with Israeli Minister for Foreign Affairs Avigdor Liberman and Minister of Defense Ehud Barak. (IMEMC)

Jewish settlers, protected by Israeli soldiers, uprooted and stole some 200 olive trees from a land in the village of Al-Jabaa, west of Bethlehem, a local official said. The head of the village council said that the settlers brought a bulldozer to uproot the trees, demolished several retaining walls and razed a large area of the land. (Wafa)

Israeli forces demolished a mosque for the second time in two years, in the Al-Mafqara village, near Yatta, south of Hebron, according to a local activist. The Popular Committee Coordinator in Yatta, Rateb al-Jabour, told Wafa that Israeli forces, accompanied by bulldozers and heavy machinery stormed the locale at dawn, closed the two-story 120-square-metre mosque and evicted the worshippers. Villagers condemned the demolition calling it a violation of their right to worship. He added that Israel's aim was to force the residents to leave their land to expand the settlements of "Avijal" and Mao'n that had been illegally built on Yatta town land. (Wafa, Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli forces destroyed several agricultural structures in a Nablus village, a PA official said. He said that bulldozers and military vehicles had arrived in the village of Aqraba and destroyed a chicken coop and pen for sheep. Israeli forces also demolished a residential room. (Ma'an News Agency)

Workers from the Israeli municipality of West Jerusalem demolished a two-story house in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Mount of Olives under the pretext that it had been built without permit, according to local sources. (Wafa)

Palestinian residents of the Al-Tur neighbourhood of East Jerusalem succeeded in stopping the demolition of a house owned by the Ghaith family, according to one of the homeowners. They said that the West Jerusalem municipality had sent workers and a bulldozer protected by police and border guards to demolish three homes in the area. However, the family protested the decision and insisted that they had paid more than \$25,000 in fines and that they had been waiting for a court order that would allow them to continue living in the house. Confrontations broke out in the process and police beat a number of people who tried to stop the demolition. (Wafa)

The Israeli Government's announcement that it was to expand settlements in the West Bank in response to the UN vote on Palestinian statehood violates human rights and international humanitarian law, Amnesty International said. "Settlement construction is the cause of forced displacement, a myriad of human rights violations and is a flagrant violation of international law. Israel must immediately halt all construction of settlements and related infrastructure as a first step towards removing all settlers from the occupied territories," said Ann Harrison, Deputy Director of Amnesty International's Middle East and North Africa programme. (Amnesty.org)

Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails launched a one-day hunger strike for the second consecutive week to show support for long-term hunger strikers, the PA Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs said. On 27 November, prisoners launched a solidarity strike in support of Ayman Sharawna, Samer Issawi and Odai Kilani. Inmates warned that "the situation inside prisons will explode if anything bad happens to them," the PA Ministry said. Mr. Sharawna, on hunger strike for 157 days, and Mr. Issawi, on hunger strike for 126 days, both suffered medical conditions, the Ministry added. Both prisoners were released under the 2011 prisoner swap deal but shortly rearrested and held without charge. Mr. Kilani had refused food for 44 days to protest the renewal of his administrative detention order. (Ma'an News Agency)

Twenty-seven donors [announced](#) contributions, or their intention to contribute, to the 2013 budget of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) at a meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee for voluntary contributions, as officials estimated that the chronically underfunded agency would begin the year facing a deficit of some \$69 million. (UN News Centre)

5

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs issued a [situation report](#) on the recent hostilities in Gaza and southern Israel, in which it said that 103 Palestinian civilians had been killed, 1,399 Palestinians, mostly civilians, had been injured and 3,000 Palestinians were still displaced. ([www.ochaopt.org](#))

The head of the Indonesian Parliament, Ali Marzouqi, arrived in the Gaza Strip via the Rafah crossing, leading a senior Indonesian delegation to observe the massive destruction caused by Israel during its recent war on Gaza and to express solidarity with the Palestinian people. (IMEMC, IslamTimes)

UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 Richard Falk [called](#) on Israel to abide by and fully implement the ceasefire agreement that ended the recent crisis with Gaza. He had just concluded a week-long mission to the region to assess the overall impact of Israel's prolonged occupation and blockade against the Gaza Strip. "There arose an urgent need to investigate Israel's seemingly deliberate attacks against civilian targets during recent hostilities. ... We visited the sites of attacks and spoke with surviving family members. It is clear that some attacks killed and harmed civilians in a grossly disproportionate manner and thus appear to violate international law," Mr. Falk said. ([www.ohchr.org](#))

Hamas official Fathi Hamad announced that Hamas was about to establish its own "defence ministry" in the Gaza Strip as part of lessons drawn from the "Operation Pillar of Defence". (The Jerusalem Post)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, during a visit to Prague, said: "We remain committed to a negotiated settlement between us and our Palestinian neighbours. That solution is a two-State solution for two peoples, a peace in which a demilitarized Palestinian State recognizes the one and only Jewish State of Israel." (Ynetnews)

In a statement, South Africa strongly condemned the Israeli Government's decision to build 3,000 new settlement homes in the "E-1" area of the West Bank. The South African Government was also extremely concerned with the Israeli Government's announced withholding of \$100 million of Palestinian tax revenue. (South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation)

Palestinian Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat declared that Israel's decision to build in the ["E-1"] area between Jerusalem and the "Ma'ale Adumim" settlement meant the end of the peace process. (Arutz Sheva)

Israel's "Higher Planning Council of Judea and Samaria" gave initial approval to a plan for a 3,500-apartment project in the "E-1" area. (DPA, The Jerusalem Post)

PA President Abbas told reporters: "The settlement plans that Israel announced, especially "E-1", are a red line." He said that the Palestinian representative to the UN had contacted the UN Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council to sound out the possibilities for a resolution against settlements. (AP)

Estonia's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Urmas Paet, said, "Estonia has always supported a two-State solution, meaning the creation of a State of Palestine next to Israel. ... Thus Estonia does not deem Israel's settlement activity right, as it makes it significantly harder to reach a final agreement." (ERR)

Israeli forces arrested two brothers from the village of Yatta, south of Hebron. (Ma'an News Agency)

Osama Hamdan, head of the International Relations Department of Hamas, said that representatives would head to Cairo during the month to participate in meetings on implementing Palestinian unity and reconciliation agreement. (IMEMC)

Human rights group Addameer called on the PA to seek an investigation into Israel's siege of Gaza at the International Criminal Court. (Ma'an News Agency)

6

Israeli forces conducted a wide-scale search campaign in the village of Borqa, north of Nablus. (Ma'an News Agency, Wafa)

More than 20 Palestinians were wounded in clashes with Israeli forces in central Hebron after a skirmish between Israeli troops and Palestinian police. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli soldiers seized four children in Hebron and the nearby Beit Ummar, and released two of them later. (IMEMC)

King Abdullah II of Jordan arrived in the West Bank, the first official visit of an Arab leader since Palestine obtained its status upgrade as a non-member observer State at the United Nations. Nimmer Hamad, political adviser of President Abbas, said that the visit sends a strong message to Israel regarding Jordan's full support for the Palestinian people and their rights. (AP, Al Ghad, Palestine News Network, Ma'an News Agency)

King Abdullah met with President Abbas in Ramallah and congratulated the Palestinians and their leadership, on behalf of the Jordanian people, on the "historic achievement" at the UN. During the talks, attended by Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour, Minister for Foreign Affairs Nasser Judeh and other officials, His Majesty pledged to work with US President Barack Obama at the start of his second term to ensure a swift hands-on US approach to the peace process. (Petra)

Qatari Emir Shaikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani received Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal. The meeting focused on the latest Palestinian developments. (Bahrain News Agency)

PA President Abbas was to visit Turkey on 10 December to thank the Turkish Government for its support for Palestine. He would hold talks with President Abdullah Gül, Prime Minister Erdoğan, and Minister for Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu on establishing a [Palestinian] national reconciliation Government. (Anadolu Agency, Turkish Weekly)

Italy's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Giulio Terzi, said in an interview that his Government had asked both Israel and Palestine to practise moderation to avoid a "diplomatic intifada". (La Stampa)

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People organized by the Indian Council of World Affairs, Minister of State for External Affairs E. Ahamed reiterated India's unwavering support for the Palestinian cause and said that Indians had always placed Palestinians close to their hearts. (India Blooms)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, during his visit to Germany, brushed off international criticism over the planned new settlement project near Jerusalem, claiming that Israel would keep the area under any future peace deal. At a news conference with Netanyahu in Berlin, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said that she would "agree to disagree" with him. (AFP, Yahoo News, Reuters)

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, in a phone call to Prime Minister Netanyahu, said that Canada did not support the Israeli Government's decision to revive plans for settlements east of Jerusalem. (Mail and Globe)

Malta strongly denounced the recent Israeli settlement policy, calling on Israel to abandon its plan to build thousands of new housing units in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, Malta's Minister for Foreign Affairs Francis Zammit Dimech said. (Wafa)

A 47-year-old Palestinian man was beaten up by Israeli settlers during an olive harvest south of Nablus, local officials said. (Ma'an News Agency)

The Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Palestine, Bulat Sugurbayev, said that Palestine had the right to address the International Criminal Court. (Wafa)

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization informed the PA that it would accelerate the process of recognizing the ancient terraces near the West Bank village of Battir as a world heritage site. (Haaretz)

The Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People forcefully condemned the "extremely dangerous, qualitative escalation of [Israel's] illegal settlement campaign" that "crossed all red lines", as well as the seizure of Palestinian revenues. (UN press release GA/PAL/1252)

7

Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal made his first visit to the Gaza Strip for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the movement and to congratulate its leaders and militants for battling Israel during the recent eight-day offensive. He told crowds that he hoped that his next visit would be to a liberated Palestine. "Today is Gaza. Tomorrow will be Ramallah and after that Jerusalem, then Haifa and Jaffa," he said. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israel had threatened to target the leader of Islamic Jihad, Ramadan Shalah, and his deputy, Ziad Nakhla, if they entered the Gaza Strip, causing the movement to reconsider their upcoming visit, sources said. (Ma'an News Agency)

Fatah had accepted Hamas' invitation to participate in celebrations in the Gaza Strip marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the movement, Fayez Abu Aitah, a spokesman for Fatah, confirmed. (The Jerusalem Post)

PA President Abbas was still a "serious partner" for peace despite his successful bid at the UN, Israeli President Shimon Peres said. "I told him... it's not the proper time to [go to the UN]," Mr. Peres said. (AFP)

At the end of a three-day meeting in Lebanon, 77 Catholic patriarchs and bishops of the Middle East said that peace in the region would be impossible without a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. (Catholic News Service)

In its weekly meeting, the Palestinian Cabinet urged the international community to put an end to what it called the "Israeli policy of piracy" after Israel said that it would use the November tax payments worth \$120 million it collected for the PA to pay off PA electricity debts. (Ma'an News Agency)

China condemned Israel's new settlement programme, Foreign Ministry Spokesman Hong Lei said. (Press TV)

Hamas official Ismail al-Ashqar said that the group was seeking to file a lawsuit at the International Criminal Court against Major-General Eitan Dangot, Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, for his responsibility for the Gaza blockade. Major-General Dangot's office said that it does not respond to claims by terrorist organizations. (The Jerusalem Post)

The Israeli air strike that killed 12 civilians on 18 November during the Gaza fighting was a clear violation of the laws of war, Human Rights Watch said. ([www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org))

8

The IDF arrested two PA intelligence officers in Hebron. (The Jerusalem Post)

"We are not giving up any inch of Palestine. It will remain Islamic and Arab for us and nobody else. Jihad and armed resistance is the only way," Hamas leader Mashaal told hundreds of thousands of supporters during a rally in Gaza to mark Hamas' anniversary. "We cannot recognize Israel's legitimacy," he said. "Our reference is the PLO, which we want united," he added. (AFP, AP)

"Democracy in the Arab world can take root and become stable when Palestinians are given the right to self-determination to establish a sovereign and independent Palestinian State," the President of Lebanon, Michel Sleiman said at a news conference in Athens. (The Daily Star)

9

Hamas released the leader of a Salafist group jailed for more than four months. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli forces detained 13 Palestinians in the West Bank overnight, including five youths, in a Nablus-area village. (Ma'an News Agency)

Islamic Jihad would not adhere to the Gaza ceasefire if the group's Secretary-General was banned from entering the enclave by Israel, a senior group official said. (Ma'an News Agency)

Gaza health authorities reported that a Palestinian man, seriously injured by Israeli shells during the recent war, had died at an Egyptian hospital. (IMEMC)

Palestinians threw stones at Israeli vehicles south of Ramallah, Israel Radio reported. One of the vehicles was damaged. (The Jerusalem Post)

Two Palestinians were arrested in Jerusalem during a demonstration in solidarity with prisoners. (The Jerusalem Post)

Qatar Prime Minister Shaikh Hamad bin Jasssem Al-Thani called upon the League of Arab States ministerial meeting in Doha to reconsider the Arab Peace Initiative and branded the Quartet a failure. President Abbas said: "It is not permissible to talk about sidelining the Arab Peace Initiative. It should stay." The ministerial committee agreed to form a delegation to the Security Council to negotiate an Israeli withdrawal to pre-June 1967 borders, in the light of the General Assembly vote to admit Palestine as a non-member State. The committee endorsed a call by President Abbas for Arab countries to activate a monthly \$100 million aid package agreed at a League of Arab States summit in Baghdad in March. (AFP)

President Abbas told the League of Arab States ministers meeting in Doha that he planned to head to Cairo soon to resume reconciliation talks with Hamas. Prime Minister Netanyahu called on President Abbas to condemn Hamas rather than seek to unite with it after Hamas leader Mashaal said that all Palestine, from the river to the sea, belonged to Palestinians. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Fatah was to organize anniversary celebrations in the Gaza Strip to commemorate 48 years since the party's founding, Yahya Rabah, a senior Fatah official in Gaza said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Russian Federation Minister for Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov said: "We are seeking the convocation of the Quartet ... We are supported by the EU and the UN while the US, the fourth participant in this mechanism, does not want this. We are talking about this publicly." (*RIA Novosti*)

10

Witnesses said that Israeli military vehicles had crossed the border into the Gaza Strip near Khan Yunis. An Israeli spokeswoman said that forces had been carrying out "routine activity". (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli soldiers detained five Palestinians, including a mother and her two daughters, in the Qaa' Al-Hara area of East Jerusalem after clashes had erupted when soldiers entered the area to arrest a child who had allegedly hurled stones at settler vehicles driving nearby. (*IMEMC*)

Palestinian sources in the Taqoua' village, east of Bethlehem, reported that Israeli soldiers had broken into the village's High School for Boys assaulting several teachers and students before leaving the premises. (*IMEMC*)

IDF officials warned that the recent Palestinian success in the UN, the deadlocked peace process and the military achievements by Hamas had prompted greater agitation in the West Bank, and Area C could be on the verge of an intifada. At the same time, the PA showed less interest in arresting Hamas operatives. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The PA had agreed to allow a Hamas commemoration of its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Nablus, Khalil Assaf, an independent politician said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli Defense Minister Barak had warned that Israel may lose out on opportunities if it adopted a pessimistic strategy that the PA would collapse and Hamas would take its place, referring to that as a self-fulfilling prophecy. (*Voice of Israel*)

In an address before the Turkish Parliament, PA President Abbas hailed Turkey's strong support for Palestine's UN status promotion. Mr. Abbas said, "We are on the right path which will lead us to a fully fledged independent country, built on pre-1967 lines with Jerusalem as its capital." He said that Palestinians wanted to give peace a chance and called on Israel to fulfil its obligations. To that end, he contended, Israel must end expansion of settlements, release Palestinian prisoners and return to negotiations that had been frozen since 2008. (*Today's Zaman*)

In an [interview](#) with the *DER SPIEGEL*, Israeli President Peres said that there was no alternative to restarting peace talks, adding that it was time to forget the past.

He argued that the recent upgrade of Palestine's status at the UN had made peace negotiations more necessary. He called for restarting negotiations without conditions right after the Israeli elections on 22 January. (<http://www.spiegel.de>)

Palestinian Chief Negotiator Erakat told *Voice of Palestine* that by the end of December, a Palestinian committee would travel to the P-5 countries to see "whether there is a chance for the peace process and on which principles it should hold". Erakat outlined three principles: "The first principle is that the goal of the peace process ... is the withdrawal of Israel to the 4 June 1967 borderline, including Jerusalem. The second principle is related to the necessity of re-launching negotiations from the point they were halted... The third principle is to set a six-month timetable for the negotiations to reach an agreement over all final status issues." "Settlement activity should be halted during this period of time and Palestinian prisoners should be released in accordance with previously signed agreements and not as preconditions," he said. (*AFP*)

Hamas Political Bureau Chief Mashaal ended his first visit to the Gaza Strip with a pledge that Hamas would strive to heal political rifts with other Palestinian groups, reinforcing promises he and PA President Abbas had made to forge ahead with a stalled unity deal. (*Reuters*)

A statement from Japan's Representative Office to the PA said that Japan had donated \$12.5 million to expand a landfill in Jericho and buy industrial equipment. ([www.menafn.com](http://www.menafn.com))

The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam had authorized the establishment of a humanitarian fund to raise money for the victims of the recent Israeli aggression against Gaza. (*Brunei Times*)

European Union ministers for foreign affairs met in Brussels to discuss ways to respond to Israel's latest settlement plans after failing to make a decision during their meeting on 4 December. Sweden's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Carl Bildt, said: "What the Israelis did on 'E-I' has shifted opinions in Europe." It remained possible that language censuring Israel could be included in a statement. Britain's Foreign Secretary William Hague said that the ministers would discuss the urgent need to restart the peace process. (*AP, Reuters*)

Speaking to foreign reporters in Jerusalem, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu accused the international community of having double standards, condemning not-yet-built settlements in the West Bank while standing quiet during a visit to the Gaza Strip by Hamas Political Bureau Chief Mashaal. Mr. Netanyahu said, "Why weren't Palestinian diplomats summoned to European and other capitals to explain why the PA President not only refused to condemn this but actually declared his intention to unite with Hamas?" (*AP*)

Israeli military authorities informed farmers from Qarawat Bani Hassan, a village west of Salfit, of their intention to destroy "Freedom Road" that the villagers used to reach a water spring and land on the outskirts of the village. Settlers in the area would like to take control of the spring. (*Wafa*)

A Palestinian woman was attacked and seriously injured when Israeli settlers from "Efrata", north of Hebron, hurled stones at her car, according to witnesses. (*Wafa*)

Germany's Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Dirk Niebel, made a brief visit to the Gaza Strip to inaugurate a sewage plant funded by Berlin. He also laid the cornerstone for an UNRWA school. (*AP*)

Estonia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced its support for the activities of UNRWA in 2013 with a €50,000 donation. (*Estonian Public Broadcasting*)

11

Israeli soldiers invaded the West Bank village of Ni'lin and shot two residents, one with a rubber-coated bullet, the other with a live round, in the leg. (*IMEMC*)

The PA Ministry of Foreign Affairs welcomed the conclusions on the Middle East peace process by the European Council. The Ministry said that it "especially welcomes the Council's emphasis on opposing all policies of occupation that undermine confidence and the viability of a two-State solution". (*Wafa*)

PLO Executive Committee member Hanan Ashrawi said: "With Israel's deliberate campaign of provocations and violations of international law and signed agreements, it is of utmost urgency for European countries to follow their statements with bold initiatives and concrete steps before it is too late." (*Wafa*)

During a visit to the United Kingdom, King Abdullah of Jordan and British Prime Minister David Cameron held talks on the latest developments in the Middle East, especially efforts to breathe life into the peace process. (*Petra*)

Alan Duncan, British Minister of State for International Development, met with President Abbas' political adviser, Nimr Hamad, in Ramallah. Mr. Duncan briefed Mr. Hamad on his Government's proposal to host an international conference to revive peace talks between [Israel](#) and the Palestinians. (*Xinhua*)

Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), wrote to the Governments of Albania, Togo, Cameroon and Bosnia and Herzegovina to express disappointment for their abstention in the General Assembly vote for Palestine's bid for status upgrade. The letters indicated that the 57 members of the Organization had been expected to cast affirmative votes and non-compliance with the OIC consensus to support the Palestinian bid had created disappointment. ([www.arabnews.com](http://www.arabnews.com))

President Gül of Turkey called on countries who had opposed the upgrade of Palestine's status at the UN to review their positions. (*Hürriyet Daily News*)

At a Yisrael Beiteinu event, Minister for Foreign Affairs Liberman announced that Israel would not transfer any tax revenue to the PA for four months. The move was one of a series of measures taken by the Israeli Government in response to Palestine's UN bid. Minister of Finance Steinitz had completed the transfer of NIS 435 million in Palestinian tax money to the Israel Electric Corporation to pay off the PA's debt to the company. (*The Jerusalem Post, Haaretz, Ynetnews*)

Muhammad al-Amadi, head of Qatar's Committee for Reconstructing Gaza, said that it would launch 24 projects in the Gaza Strip the following day. Qatar would build a \$25 million city for released prisoners and an \$8 million youth rehabilitation centre. The country had also committed to donating an extra \$13 million to upgrade

a hospital. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

UK International Development Minister Duncan announced that the UK would provide medical aid and shelter for thousands affected by the recent conflict in Gaza.

The Government would also assist in rebuilding damaged homes for some 85,000 Gazans. Mr. Duncan, the first British Minister to visit Gaza since the recent ceasefire, promised £1.25 million in new support. (*UK DFID*)

President Abbas warned that Palestine would file a petition with the International Criminal Court if Israel followed through on plans to build settlements in the "E-1" area. Speaking at a news conference in Ankara, Mr. Abbas said, "Israel's announcement to build settlements on the land of the State of Palestine is an aggressive act and a red line which we will not allow". (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Settlement watchdog group Peace Now announced that the Israeli Government had invited tenders to build 92 units in the "Ma'aleh Adumim" settlement near Jerusalem where construction plans had already sparked international protest. (*Ahram Online*)

Israel's Ambassador to the US, Michael Oren, said that Israel was well within its rights to create a new settlement in "E-1", and concerns that it could bisect a Palestinian State were "simply a canard". He said that Prime Minister Netanyahu was under pressure to respond to the Palestinians from the Israeli electorate, adding that most Israelis opposed the recent ceasefire. (*US News and World Report*)

A Bethlehem court sentenced two Palestinians from the village of Housan to 10 years in prison with hard labour after they had been found guilty of attempting to sell land to an Israeli citizen. (*Wafa*)

Israeli police, accompanied by 20 vehicles and bulldozers, demolished a Palestinian house, home to a family of 11, allegedly for having been built without permit in the Hardoub area in At-Tur, in East Jerusalem, close to the separation wall. (*Wafa*)

For the second time in less than a year, vandals targeted the Monastery of the Cross in Jerusalem, spray-painting graffiti. According to Israeli media, the vandals were likely to have been settlers. (*The Jerusalem Post, Wafa*)

Iraq's Prime Minister, Nuri al-Maliki, accompanied by PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad and League of Arab States Secretary-General Elaraby inaugurated an exhibition of Palestinian and Arab prisoners in Israeli jails that was on display on the sidelines of the International Conference on Palestinian and Arab Detainees and Prisoners in Israeli Occupation Jails in Baghdad. (*National Iraqi News Agency*)

On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the first intifada, the Centre for Palestinian Prisoners Studies issued a report indicating that almost 300,000 Palestinian men, women and children had been detained in Israeli prisons since December 1987. (*Middle East Mirror*)

Israeli soldiers raided the offices of three Ramallah-based civil society organizations. They wrenched open the doors of the Women's Union, the Palestinian NGO Network and Addameer, an advocate organization for Palestinians in Israeli jails, and confiscated five computers from the Addameer's offices. (*Reuters*)

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The International Solidarity Movement reported that Israeli forces fired live ammunition and tear gas at unarmed farmers and international solidarity activists working in Khuza'a, a small village outside of Khan Yunis. (*Palestine News Network*)

The Israeli army modified its instructions to soldiers in the West Bank, granting them more freedom in using live ammunition. (*IMEMC*)

Israeli border guards shot dead a Palestinian teenager armed with a pistol in Hebron, sparking stone-throwing attacks on troops in the area, police and witnesses said. (*AFP*)

According to Palestinian sources, Israeli naval forces continued to harass and arrest Palestinian fishermen despite the Egyptian-brokered ceasefire agreement. (*Press TV*)

A man from Khan Yunis had died from wounds sustained in Israel's assault on Gaza in November. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

King Abdullah of Jordan announced that Palestinian and Israeli representatives would meet in Jordan to promote the peace process. The meeting would be held under the auspices of the European Union and the United States. King Abdullah expressed the desire that Washington focus on putting "the peace process on the right track". (*Ma'an News Agency, Ynetnews*)

French Minister for Foreign Affairs Fabius said that Israel and the Palestinians needed to restart peace talks quickly, as hardliners on both sides of the conflict would otherwise take advantage. It was imperative that France, Britain, and the US become more directly involved in peace negotiations. (*Reuters*)

PA President Abbas phoned Hamas leader Mashaal to discuss ending their division in accordance with prior agreements. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Israeli Nature and Parks Authority challenged Israel's Ministry of Defense in court over a planned section of the illegal West Bank wall that threatened an ancient Palestinian farming community. A letter of support from the Israeli Nature and Parks Authority backing Palestinian farmers was part of the petition that had been submitted to the Israeli High Court of Justice to reroute the planned barrier away from the shared Palestinian-Israeli Battir cultural landscape site, located south of Jerusalem. (*Haaretz, The Jerusalem Post, Ma'an News Agency*)

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported that more than 3,000 Palestinians were still displaced in Gaza owing to loss or damage to their homes following the latest conflict between Hamas and Israel. (*Petra*)

French Minister for Foreign Affairs Fabius said that Paris would host a donors' conference in the early part of 2013 to raise funds for the PA. (*Reuters*)

Poland's Under-Secretary of State, Jerzy Pomianowski, had reportedly refused to meet with the Israel's Ambassador in Warsaw, in response to the reported destruction of water tanks in the West Bank village of Tiran by Israel that had been repaired by a Polish non-governmental organization with Polish Government funds. (*Haaretz*)

Confrontations erupted between Israeli forces and Palestinians after dozen of Jewish settlers, under Israeli the protection of soldiers, broke into Joseph's Tomb, east of Nablus and performed rituals and prayers. Israeli forces surrounded the area, closed off all streets surrounding it, and took over several roof tops of Palestinian-owned houses, firing tear gas at the residents. (*Wafa*)

Israeli settlers attacked a Red Cross bus along an area north of Hebron carrying relatives of Palestinian prisoners from Bethlehem being held in Israel's jails. The settlers threw stones at the bus, damaging its windows. (*www.middleeastmonitor.com*)

It had been reported that a group of settlers attacked Palestinians in the village of Shaqbeh, west of Ramallah, setting on fire a Palestinian-owned car. The settlers also wrote racist slogans on the walls of shops in the area. (*www.middleeastmonitor.com*)

The Israeli Supreme Court criticized the Israeli Ministry of Housing for deploying private security guards for Jewish settlers residing in East Jerusalem. The topic had come up during an initial hearing at the Supreme Court of a petition filed by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel in 2011, objecting to the use of private security guards for Jewish residents in predominantly Arab neighbourhoods like Silwan. The court was expected to deliver its verdict in the following weeks. (*Xinhua*)

The New Zealand Superannuation Fund announced that it was divesting from the company Africa-Israel Investments and its construction subsidiary, Danya Cebus, over their collaboration in the construction of Israeli settlements. (*IMEMC*)

Palestinians in Israel's Gilboa prison protested their transfer to a jail in the desert of southern Israel, a lawyer for the Palestinian Prisoner Society said. The prisoners had objected as their families would have to travel further to visit them and had insisted that any transfer must be to another jail in northern Israel. They would return meals until Israel revoked the decision. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel's Ambassador to the US, Michael Oren, said that Israel would need to be prepared for any action taken by the Palestinians at the International Criminal Court. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

13

Relatives and the Palestinian Center for Human Rights disputed Israel's claim that 17-year-old Muhammad Salaymeh, who was shot dead the previous day by an Israeli border guard at a checkpoint in Hebron had pointed a toy gun at police. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Ninety Palestinians were wounded in clashes between Palestinians and the IDF in Hebron after the funeral of Mr. Salaymeh. Red Crescent medical sources said that the casualties included 20 people hit by live fire. (*Middle East Monitor*)

An Israeli woman was left unharmed in a drive-by shooting involving a Palestinian car at a bus stop in front of the "Halamish" settlement, an IDF spokesman said.

*(The Jerusalem Post)*

Thousands of Palestinians marched through the streets of Hebron, chanting anti-Israel slogans and waving green Hamas flags during a funeral procession for a teenager killed by Israeli troops the previous day. Dozens of youths clashed with Israeli soldiers throughout the day, throwing stones and bottles while troops responded with volleys of tear gas and rubber bullets. According to some reports, five people were injured. *(AP, aljazeera.com)*

Israeli forces raided several homes and detained four Palestinians in the Jenin district of the northern West Bank. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

PA President Abbas, at the end of his visit to Turkey, criticized Hamas leader Mashaal's statement that their organization would never recognize Israel. "I don't agree with Khaled Mashaal's statement on the non-recognition of [Israel](#) because we, in fact, recognized it in 1993", Mr. Abbas said. "A four-article agreement between [Fatah and Hamas] stipulates a two-State vision. And Mashaal approved of this agreement". *(Haaretz, [www.hurriyeldailynews.com](http://www.hurriyeldailynews.com))*

Palestinian officials confirmed a media report that they were studying the possibility of establishing a confederation with Jordan. PLO Executive Committee member Wasel Abu Yusef said that the plan was just a "study". *(The Jerusalem Post)*

The PLO Ambassador in Washington, D.C., Maen Areikat, said that a congressional petition to shut down the PLO delegation's office in the capital, in response to the UN bid, could harm American interests in the Middle East. The petition, circulated to members of the House of Representatives during the week, also requested the President to recall the US Consul-General in Jerusalem for consultations and reaffirmed US commitment to withdraw funding from any international organization that Palestine joined as a member. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

League of Arab States Assistant Secretary-General Mohammad Sbeih said that the League had contacted Arab States about the monthly payment of \$100 million they had promised on 9 December to cushion the PA after Israel withheld its tax revenues. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

The General Assembly adopted without a vote a [resolution](#) on assistance to the Palestinian people. *(GA/11327)*

The European Parliament passed a resolution warning Israel that its plan to build 3,000 new settlement units in the West Bank and East Jerusalem would make the two-State solution impossible. In its resolution, the Parliament insisted that direct peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians must resume and urged all parties to refrain from any action that could hinder peace efforts. Furthermore, it called upon Israel to immediately release the \$100 million in Palestinian tax revenues it had withheld. Finally, the Parliament condemned the statements made by Hamas political leader Mashaal rejecting the recognition of the State of Israel, called on Hamas to recognize Israel's right to exist, and called for Palestinian reconciliation. *([www.europarl.europa.eu](http://www.europarl.europa.eu))*

Israel's High Court of Justice said in a provisional ruling that Israel must come up with an alternative to constructing the separation fence near Battir in order to prevent damage to the West Bank village's ancient agricultural terraces. *(Haaretz)*

**14**

Thousands of Palestinians protesters marched towards a Hebron checkpoint after Friday prayers where they hurled stones. Other protesters in the West Bank hurled stones and firebombs at Israeli security forces and vehicles. The IDF used crowd disposal means on the protesters. *(BBC, The Jerusalem Post)*

Palestinian security sources said that a 22-year-old Palestinian man had been slightly wounded by Israeli gunfire in the Khan Yunis area. An army spokeswoman said: "We don't have any information on such an incident." *(AFP)*

Israeli Minister for Foreign Affairs Liberman had resigned after being charged with fraud and breach of trust. Prime Minister Netanyahu was expected to handle foreign affairs at least until after the elections. *(Reuters)*

Palestinian negotiator Mohammed Shtayyeh said that the Palestinians would shortly decide on which international organizations to join in the wake of their new UN status. "We have put together a legal team to study to which organization we shall apply first and what are the procedures of accession and what are the benefits and the consequences of accession into any of these," Mr. Shtayyeh said, giving as examples the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. *(The Daily Star)*

Thousands of Hamas supporters in the West Bank took to the streets of Hebron for the first time in five years. Similar rallies, authorized by the PA and involving thousands, were also held in Ramallah and Tulkarm. *(Reuters, Ynetnews)*

The American Near East Refugee Aid announced in a press release that the Government of Kuwait had donated \$1 million to fund the organization's work with children in Gaza. *(Palestine Media News)*

**15**

The Palestinian Authority and the European Union finalized their joint action plan for the following five years, the first in the region to be completed within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), according to a statement. The EU Representative to the PA, John Gatt-Rutter, praised the work of the committee, saying that the PA was the first partner in the ENP with whom the EU had concluded a new action plan. He said that the PA had demonstrated its ability to be a full partner for the EU within the Neighbourhood Policy. "The real challenge will thus be to move ahead with our mutual commitments despite the difficult political and financial situation that the PA is in," he said. *(Wafa)*

Jewish settlers attacked a number of Palestinian civilians in an area east of Hebron, according to local sources. They said that settlers from "Kharsina" and "Kiryat Arba" settlements had attacked several people in the area, firing tear gas canisters and severely beating them before fleeing the scene. *(Wafa)*

Israeli settlers attacked the village of Urif, south of Nablus, provoking confrontations with its local residents, according to an activist. *(Wafa)*

**16**

An Israeli army spokeswoman said that eight people had been arrested overnight, including five in the Nablus area, one in Ramallah, one south of Bethlehem and one in Tubas. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

Israeli naval forces shot and wounded a Palestinian fisherman in waters off the northern Gaza Strip. A spokesman from the Israeli navy said that soldiers had identified a Palestinian vessel that had deviated from the designated fishing area up to six nautical miles off the coast and that the boat had failed to respond to orders to stop. *(AFP, The Jerusalem Post)*

PA Prime Minister Fayyad, at a briefing in his Ramallah office, called for a boycott of Israeli products to protest Israel's withholding of \$100 million in taxes due the PA. Israel had cut off the funds to protest the Palestinians' successful bid at the UN that granted the Palestinians non-member observer State status. Mr. Fayyad also urged members of the League of Arab States to disburse \$100 million a month in pledged "safety net" funds, warning that his Government was facing a "dangerous" financial crisis. At a meeting in Doha earlier during the month, Arab representatives had agreed to activate the network in response to Israel's measures but Mr. Fayyad said that the Palestinians had yet to see the additional funds that he warned would only plug part of the gap in his budget. "If this 'safety net' is not quickly activated, I'll call for an emergency Arab summit to discuss the financial situation because it's a dangerous situation." *(AFP)*

Israeli soldiers attacked dozens of Palestinian farmers working on their land close to the border fence in Khan Yunis, in the southern part of the Gaza Strip. Damage was reported but no injuries. Ashraf Shannon, a correspondent for Press TV in Gaza, stated that the army had opened fire on the farmers and the TV crew that had been filming a report on the ongoing Israeli violations against the residents in the coastal region. *(IMEMC)*

A Palestinian refugee camp in Damascus had reportedly been attacked by war planes, activists said. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a UK-based activist group, reported at least eight deaths. The Yamouk camp housed Palestinians and Syrians displaced by the fighting. Opposition activists said that those killed had sought shelter in a mosque as fighting raged in the surrounding areas. *(BBC, The New York Times)*

The Secretary-General, in a [statement](#), expressed his grave concern at reports of aerial bombing amidst intense violence resulting in many casualties among the Palestinian refugee population in the Yamouk camp in Damascus. *([www.un.org](http://www.un.org))*

UNRWA issued a [statement](#) following reports of numerous casualties and the flight of Palestinian refugees from the Yamouk camp in Syria. The Agency had advocated to maintain the neutrality of the 525,000 Palestine refugees in Syria and to not implicate them in the conflict. UNRWA Commissioner-General Filippo Grandi had appealed to the Syrian authorities and all parties to the conflict to safeguard the security of Palestine refugees. *([www.unrwa.org](http://www.unrwa.org))*

**17**

Pope Benedict XVI received PA President Abbas and called on all parties involved in the Middle East crisis to find the courage to work together for peace and reconciliation. In a statement following the meeting, the Vatican said that it hoped that the UN's recent recognition of Palestine as a non-member observer State would "encourage the commitment of the international community to finding a fair and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict." (AFP)

Senior Palestinian officials and analysts told *The Independent* that Quartet Representative Tony Blair's sojourn in the region should be cut short. "The Quartet has been useless, useless, useless," Palestinian negotiator Shtayyeh said the previous week. He suggested that its constant need to reach internal consensus among its warring participants had rendered it ineffective. "Always, the statement of the Quartet really means nothing because it was always full of what they call constructive ambiguity that really took us nowhere," said Mr. Shtayyeh, who had just ended a meeting with Mr. Blair. "You need a mediator who is ready to engage and who is ready to say to the party who is destroying the peace process: 'You are responsible for it,'" he said. In February, the Saban Centre for Middle East Policy at The Brookings Institution had pronounced the body already dead in a report bluntly entitled "The Middle East Quartet: A Post-Mortem". (*The Independent*)

PA President Abbas met with Italy's President Giorgio Napolitano in Rome where they discussed the peace process and the status quo in Palestine, especially after the status upgrade at the UN. (Wafa)

Hamas officials agreed to allow Fatah to celebrate the 48<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding in Gaza. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli soldiers shot and injured a Palestinian during clashes when settlers from the "Yizhar" settlement entered Madama village. One settler was injured by a stone and Israeli forces arrived in the area. Soldiers also arrested three Palestinians during the incident and several other people suffered breathing difficulties as a result of tear gas fired by soldiers. (*Ma'an News Agency, Ynetnews.com*)

A committee of the Israeli Interior Ministry had approved an intermediate stage of planning for the construction of 1,500 apartments in the Ramat Shlomo neighbourhood of East Jerusalem, risking renewed tensions with the Palestinians and its Western allies over the contentious project. The plan had been in the pipeline since it had first been announced in 2010 during a visit to Israel by Vice-President Joe Biden, causing a major diplomatic rift with Washington that had taken months to mend. (*The Washington Post*)

President Abbas asked Permanent Observer of Palestine to the UN Mansour to communicate immediately with representatives of the P-5 Security Council members to pressure Israel to halt the construction of the 1,500 apartment units in the "Ramat Shlomo" settlement that had been approved by the Jerusalem Planning and Construction Committee. Mr. Abbas' Spokesman, Nabil Abu Rudeineh, said that the approval would further isolate Israel. US State Department Spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said, "Our policy with regard to our opposition to settlement, our concern about settlement, has been consistent across at least three Administrations. The issue of where borders are ultimately going to be has to be settled by negotiation, though." (DPA)

Israeli prison authorities renewed the administrative detention of Omar Barghouti for the sixth time, the human rights organization Addameer said. Since his arrest on 24 October 2010, he had been held without charge for two six-month administrative detention terms and three four-month periods of detention. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

According to a press [statement](#) issued by US State Department Spokeswoman Nuland, the US was deeply concerned about casualties in Yarmouk, an area of Damascus that was home to 150,000 Palestine refugees, as a result of aerial bombardment and fighting between the Syrian Government forces and armed opposition. ([www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov))

The coalition "Stop That Train" said in a press release that as the Israeli Government continued unabated in its violations of international law, announcing plans for the construction of an additional 3,000 housing units in the West Bank, Italian town councils were taking concrete steps to hold complicit companies accountable. Following Rho (MI), Naples and Corchiano (VT), the town council of Sasso Marconi, in the province of Bologna, voted to condemn Pizzarotti & C. Spa for the company's participation in the high-speed train project between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem crossing the occupied Palestinian territories of the West Bank in violation of international humanitarian law. The motion, approved on 28 November 2012, expresses moral and political condemnation for the construction of the railway in violation of international law and calls on Pizzarotti to withdraw from the project. The motion also calls on the Italian Government to make a formal request to the State of Israel to respect international law. (*Palestine News Network*)

18

Israeli police entered the Al-Issawiya village, north of Jerusalem, and arrested a number of Palestinians who had been protesting in solidarity, according to witnesses, with striking prisoner Samer Issawi. (Wafa)

Israeli soldiers attacked hundreds of Palestinians participating in the funeral of a child in Beit Ummar town, north of Hebron. At least three residents were injured. (IMEMC)

Israeli forces detained three Palestinians in the town of Beit Ummar in the Hebron district. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces fired tear gas bombs and rubber-coated bullets during clashes that erupted between Palestinians and Israeli soldiers near Aida refugee camp, north of Bethlehem. (PNN)

During a meeting with PA President Abbas, Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy urged Palestinians and Israelis to avoid actions that hindered efforts towards lasting peace in the Middle East and to act responsibly and in moderation. (*Prensa Latina*)

The Head of the Hamas-controlled Gaza Border Agency, Maher Abu-Sabha, refused entry to members of the European Union Border Assistance Mission in Rafah.

The Mission was planning to return to Gaza after an absence of six years. Mr. Abu-Sabha insisted that the Rafah crossing was Palestinian and was under absolute Palestinian sovereignty. (*Middle East Monitor, The Times of Israel*)

According to crossings official Raed Fattouh, Israeli authorities reopened the Kerem Shalom commercial crossing in southeast Gaza Strip to allow the entry trucks laden with assistance and goods and the export of five truckloads of strawberries, flowers and green spices to Europe. (*The Peninsula*)

At its weekly Cabinet meeting, the PA urged immediate action to prevent the Government's collapse and said that it would remain on call until further notice in order to find a solution to the financial crisis. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

According to the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations Office in Geneva, Ibrahim Khraishi, the US was lobbying to prevent a Security Council meeting to condemn Israeli settlement activities. (*Xinhua*)

An Israeli Interior Ministry planning committee would start discussing plans for 4,500 homes in the settlements of "Givat Hamatos" and "Gilo", Ministry Spokesman Efrat Orbach said. Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Moshe Yaalon told *Army Radio* that the expansion of the two Jerusalem-area settlements had been put on hold while Western powers tried to persuade President Abbas to abandon the UN bid. (*Reuters*)

PA Prime Minister Fayyad said, "Settlement activity is unilateral and is completely adverse to the continued viability of a two-State solution and the possibility for our people to continue to exist. It's an attack on our people's right to life, essentially." (*Reuters*)

In a letter sent to his counterparts in other countries, Knesset Speaker Reuven Rivlin said that the settlement construction in Jerusalem would continue, and that Israel would never give up control over East Jerusalem under any peace agreement with the Palestinians. (IMEMC)

The US Administration criticized Israel for continuing to announce new settlement construction on land claimed by Palestinians. The US State Department accused Israel of engaging in a "pattern of provocative action" that called into question statements from Israeli leaders that they were committed to peace. Spokeswoman Nuland said that settlement activity only put the goal of peace "further at risk" and urged both Israel and the Palestinians to halt all provocations and take steps to revive long-stalled peace talks. (AP)

British Foreign Secretary Hague condemned Israel's decision to give approval for a plan to build 1,500 housing units in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Ramat Shlomo. In a statement, Mr. Hague said that the UK was extremely concerned by reports that the Jerusalem District Planning Board was considering giving the approval to a further 5,000 housing units in East Jerusalem. (*Gov.UK*)

According to a lawyer from the PA Ministry for Prisoners Affairs, Fadi Abedat, two Palestinian prisoners on hunger strike in the Israeli Ramle prison refused to be exiled, as proposed by Israeli authorities. One of the prisoners suffered from severe kidney and abdominal pains. According to Israeli Spokeswoman Siwan Weizman, the men were still on hunger strike but were "both fine". (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Israeli State Attorney announced changes in shortening the detention periods for Palestinian minors in the West Bank military court system. The changes were announced in an updated response by the State to two petitions that had been filed in 2010 against the Ministry of Defense and the IDF by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel and the PA's Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs. The shortened detention periods would take effect on 2 April 2013. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Israeli forces assaulted long-term hunger striker Samer al-Issawi during a court hearing, the head of the Palestinian Prisoner Society, Jawad Boulos, said. According to Mr. Al-Issawi, guards from the Alnhacon unit beat him, his mother and his sister when he tried to greet his family in the Jerusalem court while his hands and feet were cuffed. Mr. Al-Issawi had been on hunger strike for 140 days in Israeli Ramle Prison and had been briefly hospitalized when his heart dropped to 36 beats per minute. (*Ma'an News Agency, Press TV*)

Israel's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Yigal Palmor said that the Ministry was investigating an anti-Palestinian post on the Facebook page of Israel's Embassy in Ireland. The post had been removed and the Embassy immediately apologized after receiving complaints. (*The Washington Post*)

The General Assembly adopted nine resolutions recommended by its Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization) pertaining to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Among them were five resolutions contained in the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian Peoples and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. By the terms of a text on the work of the Special Committee, the Assembly, in a resolution, stressed the urgency of bringing a complete end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and deplored those Israeli policies and practices that violated the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The resolution was adopted by a recorded vote of 98 in favour to 8 against (Australia, Canada, Federated States of Micronesia, Israel, Marshall Islands, Palau, Panama, United States), with 72 abstentions. (*UN DPI*)

Leila Zerrougui, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, said during a visit to Syria: "The events in the Yarmouk camp in Damascus on Sunday, resulting in the killing and injuring of Palestinian children, is just one example of the horrors that children continue to face each and every day in Syria." (*childrenandarmedconflict.un.org*)

In a statement, the EU missions in Jerusalem and Ramallah said that they were deeply concerned by the incursion by Israeli security forces into Ramallah on 11 December to raid the offices of three non-governmental organizations with which the EU and some of its Member States had implemented cooperation projects: Addameer, the Union of Palestinian Women Committees and the Palestinian NGO Network. ([www.eeas.europa.eu](http://www.eeas.europa.eu))

19

A Palestinian teenager died from wounds sustained during Israel's recent military assault on the Gaza Strip. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Palestinian medical sources in Jenin reported that several residents had been treated for the effects of tear gas inhalation after the Israeli army had fired gas bombs. (*IMEMC*)

Israel had approved the Emir of Qatar's visit to the West Bank at the end of the month under the assumption that the Emir would offer financial aid to the PA and give them diplomatic strengthening over Hamas. (*Haaretz*)

The legal aide to PA President Abbas, Nimir Hamad, said that Britain and France were proposing a new initiative to resume negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis. The joint proposal would be presented to the US to help push for new talks. Mr. Hamad said that the initiative did not have a specific time frame but would have concrete terms of reference. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

On a visit to Dublin, The Special Representative of the European Union for the Middle East peace process, Andreas Reinicke, said that achieving a two-State solution might become impossible unless a major negotiating effort was made in 2013. "We do need a new, structured negotiating approach for the year 2013. The feeling of many is that the moment when the two-State solution becomes factually impossible is approaching." Mr. Reinicke said that this was the unified consensus position of 27 EU ministers for foreign affairs. (*Irish Times*)

At the Bar-Ilan University Ambassadors' Forum, former Mossad Director Efraim Halevy said that Israel was beginning to forge an official policy in Gaza that would become clear after the 22 January elections. A day later, an Israeli Government official confirmed that Israel and Egypt were in discussions in Cairo that could lead to the further easing of restrictions on the Gaza Strip and prevent a swift rearming of Hamas. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Palestinian Government employees in the West Bank began a two-day general strike to protest the delay in the payment of their wages owing to Israel's withholding of some \$100 million in monthly customs revenues. (*Reuters, Ma'an News Agency*)

PA Minister of Finance Nabil Qasbi said that his Ministry, in cooperation with the Palestine Monetary Authority, would borrow from local banks to pay part of the November salaries of public employees. (*Wafa*)

Israel gave its final approval for the construction of 1,000 new settlement homes in the West Bank. Ariel Rosenberg, Spokesman for the Israeli Ministry of Housing and Construction, said that the housing units were among 3,000 new settlement homes Israel had promised to build in response to the Palestinians' bid for upgraded status at the UN. Furthermore, a Jerusalem municipal committee approved the construction of 2,612 housing units in "Givat Hamatos", the first new East Jerusalem settlement to be built since 1997. Construction could begin in a year. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said that Jerusalem had been the capital of the Jewish people for 3,000 years, and that Israel would continue to build there. (*The New York Times, AP, The Jerusalem Post*)

In addition to the approval of 2,612 housing units in Jerusalem's "Givat Hamatos", Israeli media reported that Israeli Minister of Defense [Barak](#) had given a green light to the construction of an additional 523 units in the settlement of "Gva'ot", located in the West Bank's "Gush Etzion" block. Mr. Barak had approved the construction plan prior to the Palestinian [bid](#) in the UN. It was further reported that the Housing Ministry had issued a tender for the construction of 1,000 units in "Givat Ze'ev", "Har Homa", "Kamei Shomron" and "Efrata". (*Ynetnews, AFP*)

All the members of the Security Council, except the US, made statements at the UN opposing Israeli plans to expand settlements around Jerusalem. India's Permanent Representative, Hardeep Singh Puri, described the separate statements by the China, the Russian Federation, the E4 (Britain, France, Germany and Portugal), the Non-aligned Movement caucus and IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa) as a "Plan B" after it became clear that the US was likely to veto a resolution on the issue. (*Reuters, [www.newstrackindia.com](http://www.newstrackindia.com)*)

European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Ashton issued a statement calling Israeli approval of an additional 2,610 housing units in the settlement of "Givat Hamatos" extremely troubling and once again voicing strong opposition to settlement expansion. ([www.consilium.europa.eu](http://www.consilium.europa.eu))

Permanent Observer of Palestine to the UN Mansour said that all of the Security Council members, except the United States, would condemn Israel's recent announcements of new settlement construction at the Council's monthly meeting on the Middle East. (*AP, USA Today*)

France denounced Israel's decision to build 1,500 new housing units in East Jerusalem. The French Foreign Ministry, in a statement, said that this kind of colonization was illegal, undermined trust between the two sides and was a barrier to regional peace. (*The Voice of Russia*)

The Government of Japan issued a statement deploring Israeli plans for the construction of 1,500 new housing units in "Ramat Shlomo" in East Jerusalem. ([www.mofa.go.jp](http://www.mofa.go.jp))

The Russian Federation, in a statement issued by the Russian Foreign Ministry, warned that Israel's policy to settle Jews on occupied Arab land created obstacles for Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and put back the prospect of a sovereign Palestinian State. (*The Voice of Russia*)

Turkey strongly condemned Israel's authorization for new residential units in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. (*Anatolia News Agency, ANSA*)

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that he was "deeply concerned" by heightened settlement activity in the West Bank, in particular, around Jerusalem. He called on Israel "to refrain from continuing on this dangerous path, which will undermine the prospects for a resumption of dialogue and a peaceful future for Palestinians and Israelis alike" and stressed that it was important to "get the peace process back on track before it is too late." ([www.un.org](http://www.un.org))

PA President Abbas urged Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to help the Palestinian refugees in Syria return and live in the Palestinian Territory. (*AFP, Wafa*)

Israeli forces confiscated a protest tent erected to show solidarity with Palestinian hunger striker Al-Issawi in East Jerusalem. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman, during the regular monthly Security Council [briefing](#) on the situation in the Middle East, said that as 2012 drew to a close, momentum was slipping for a two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and tensions on the ground were worsening after the upgrade of Palestinian status in the General Assembly the previous month. He predicted that 2013 would be "a decisive year in the peace process". (*UN DPI, AFP, Reuters*)

In a new report, the World Health Organization said, following Israel's recent onslaught on Gaza, that the eight-day war had placed additional strains on the public health system, because of the Israeli blockade and by the political divide between the West Bank and Gaza. (*Wafa*)

Human Rights Watch removed UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 Richard Falk from its international non-governmental organizations' local committee in Santa Barbara, California, United States. UN Watch said that the move came after it sent an open letter to Human Rights Watch calling for Mr. Falk's removal. Mr. Falk wrote on his blog that the organization had asked him to resign, but believed that it was because of his connection with the UN, which was against the organization's policy. (*The Times of Israel*)

20

Israeli forces raided the Al-Aroub refugee camp, north of Hebron, and a village west of Hebron, arresting one Palestinian. (*Palestine News Network*)

The IDF detained eight Palestinians, three in the Hebron district, two in Tulkarm and three from the village of Rummana, north of Jenin. An Israeli military spokesman said that they were taken for security questioning. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Twenty-five press officers from the Palestinian Civil Police and criminal justice institutions completed a two-day workshop on "Media capacity-building" in Ramallah, to improve their media and public relations skills. The event, funded and organized by European Union Co-ordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support, was the first of its kind. (*Wafa*)

Human Rights Watch said that Israel's killing of two Palestinian journalists and attacks on media facilities during its Gaza offensive the previous month violated the laws of war. (*Reuters*)

Fatah official Nabil Sha'ath said that "The struggle will evolve and take new forms of boycott of Israeli goods and civil disobedience." (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Fatah official Hussam Zumlot said, "2013 will see a new Palestinian political track. There will be new rules in our relationship with Israel and the world". Palestinian officials were preparing a series of steps to be taken if Prime Minister Netanyahu was re-elected and peace efforts remained stalled, including filing war crimes charges against Israel, staging mass demonstrations in the West Bank, encouraging the international community to impose sanctions, and ending the security cooperation that had helped preserve quiet in recent years. (*AP*)

A poll by the Jerusalem Media and Communications Centre showed that 74 per cent of Palestinians who responded to a survey said that rockets fired at Israel would help "with regards to the Palestinian goals" while 40 per cent rated peaceful negotiations as the best way to achieve statehood. Support for "armed resistance" was favoured by 32.6 per cent and "non-violent resistance" by 21.9 per cent of the participants. The survey also showed broad support for PA President Abbas' successful upgrade of the Palestinian status at the UN. (*AFP*)

The Jerusalem municipality was constructing a highway running through the Arab neighbourhood of Beit Safafa, cutting the pastoral area in the south of the city into two. (*Haaretz*)

In a [statement](#), France strongly condemned the approval of the "Givat Hamatos A" settlement, saying that it was seriously threatening the viability of the two-State solution. The statement added that "France and its European partners at the UN Security Council yesterday had expressed their strong opposition in the face of these negative developments". ([www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/))

Commenting on recent Israeli decisions to accelerate plans to construct new housing units in "E1" and East Jerusalem, Quartet Representative Blair said, "The problem is not only the building of such settlements itself but also that this is a moment when it is vital to restart a proper negotiation and all such announcements do is to put new obstacles in the way of progress and undermine the prospects for a negotiated peace." ([www.quartetrep.org](http://www.quartetrep.org))

Settlers set two Palestinian-owned cars on fire and sprayed racist slogans in the area in Majdal Bani Faddeh, a village south of Nablus. (*Wafa*)

"The settlers and the Government of Israel should know that they would be held accountable," PA Presidential Spokesman Abu Rudeineh said, shortly after Israel had reportedly approved initial plans for a new settlement city in the southern West Bank. (*AFP*)

21

Two Palestinians broke into an IDF base, attacked a soldier and stole his weapon before fleeing the scene. (*Haaretz*)

European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Ashton and Russian Federation Minister for Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov issued a joint [statement](#) on the Middle East peace process saying that now was the time to take bold and concrete steps towards peace between Palestinians and Israelis.

All parties must avoid acts that undermined confidence and the viability of a two-State solution. They expressed deep dismay and opposition to settlement expansion, in particular, plans to develop the "E-1" area. The EU and the Russian Federation would not recognize any changes to the pre-1967 borders and called on Israel to avoid undermining the financial situation of the Palestinian Authority. ([www.consilium.europa.eu](http://www.consilium.europa.eu))

At its annual conference, South Africa's African National Congress voted to support the Palestinian boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign against Israel. The Congress declared that it was "unapologetic in its view that the Palestinians are the victims and the oppressed in the conflict with Israel". (*Haaretz*)

Senior Fatah official Azzam al-Ahmad said that Arab States would present a new initiative meant to facilitate the Israeli-Palestinian peace process right after the Israeli elections. According to a report in the London-based Arabic newspaper *Al-Hayat*, the US had provided assurances that it would back the process. Mr. Al-Ahmad, however, said that he had "little confidence" in the US promise. (*Ynetnews.com*)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's Spokesman, Mark Regev, said, "There is no substitute for direct talks. You're not going to make peace in resolutions at the UN or other international forums." (*AP*)

Ziad Zaza, a deputy to Hamas leader Haniyeh, said that Israel was not committed to the Egyptian-brokered ceasefire in Gaza. He said that Israel did not act on pledges it had made to ease the blockade on Gaza since 2007 and had breached the ceasefire by firing at the borders and at fishermen in the sea. "I believe that the Israeli practices on the ground would put the ceasefire agreement in danger and would be subjected to collapse," he said, adding, "We hope that the Israeli occupation will directly and immediately start to implement the agreement and I believe that all the parties involved are following up the situation closely." (*Xinhua*)

According to the results of a Maagar Mohot survey published in the Israeli daily *Maariv* newspaper, 66 per cent of Israelis were opposed to the establishment of a demilitarized Palestinian State in the West Bank. The poll also revealed that 51 per cent said that they would support building new settler homes in the "E-1" area. Only nine per cent were against such a move and 40 per cent were undecided. (*AFP*)

Upon the instructions from the President and Government, the Russian Federation sent humanitarian aid for Palestinians to be delivered via Egypt. A Russian Emergencies Ministry official left for the Egyptian city of El Arish with over 40 tons of tents, blankets and canned food. (*The Voice of Russia*)

In a TV interview, Prime Minister Netanyahu said: "We live in a Jewish State, and Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. ... We will build in Jerusalem because this is our right. What the UN says doesn't interest me." He denied that recent settlement announcements were a political manoeuvre ahead of the January elections. (*Haaretz*)

A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman reiterated China's firm opposition to the expansion of Israeli settlements. "China's stance is consistent and clear on the settlement issue," Spokeswoman Hua Chunying said at a daily news briefing, adding that China was also concerned about Israel's plans to build settlements in the "E-1" area. "Israel should take substantial steps to rebuild mutual trust with Palestine and make constructive efforts to advance the peace process in the Middle East and maintain peace and stability in the region," she added. (*Xinhua*)

Lebanese President Michel Suleiman said that Israel's decision to construct 2,600 new settlements units in the West Bank revealed Israel's rejection of international efforts to reach peace in the region. He called on the international community to pressure Israel to retract its decision. ([www.naharnet.com](http://www.naharnet.com))

In a [statement](#), Spain regretted the decision of Israel to build new homes in East Jerusalem, urging Israel to reconsider the decision that would compromise the viability of a future Palestinian State. ([www.maec.es](http://www.maec.es))

PA Presidency Bureau Chief Nimr Hammad said that several members of the European Union were "making considerable efforts" to convince the US to side with other members of the Security Council to condemn Israeli settlements. According to *Ma'an News Agency*, Mr. Hammad added that if the Security Council failed to censure Israel, the PA would seek International Criminal Court action. (*Ynetnews.com*)

22

Israeli soldiers opened fire and injured five young Palestinian men north of Hebron as clashes erupted when soldiers attacked a funeral procession. An Israeli army spokesman said that some 300 Palestinians hurled rocks and firebombs injuring one soldier. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

President Abbas told a Fatah meeting that Israel's plan to build the "E-1" settlement project "is a red line and we will not allow it to happen." Settlements "should be stopped in total ... in order to resume serious and real negotiations," he said. The Palestinian leadership "was considering all options if Israel persists in its settlement activities, dictates, blockade and withholding the Palestinian people's money." He called on the international community to force Israel to release the Palestinian money and also called on Hamas to allow the Central Elections Commission to resume work in the Gaza Strip. "We will not be guards of Israel's security and will never be a tool at Israel's hand to implement its plans in the Palestinian territories," he was quoted as saying. (*Haaretz, Xinhua, Wafa*)

23

A Palestinian taxi driver was shot after attempting to run over an Israeli policeman in East Jerusalem. Both the Palestinian and the policeman suffered light wounds. (*Haaretz*)

Prime Minister Netanyahu visited the IDF Central Command along with Minister of Defense Barak for a briefing on the situation in the West Bank. The visit stemmed from an escalation of Palestinian violence in recent weeks. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Central Elections Commission-Palestine announced the preliminary elections results for 24 municipalities that did not participate in the October elections. Clashes had erupted in Marda, north of Salfit, over the results that led to the Palestinian security forces imposing a curfew on the town. (*Ma'an News Agency, www.elections.ps*)

Israel's Labor party presented its security and diplomatic electoral platform though party leader Shelly Yacimovich said that socioeconomic issues were her priority.

The central points included an immediate return to peace talks without preconditions, strengthening relations with the West and rehabilitating relations with moderate Muslim countries. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The PA Ministry of Finance announced that 22 per cent of PA employees would be paid their full November salary and 78 per cent would receive partial salaries. The money had been borrowed from local banks and guaranteed by the Arab financial "safety net". PA employees would strike on 27 December, their union said.

(*Ma'an News Agency, Wafa*)

The EU contributed approximately €7.4 million for the payment of the November salaries and pensions by the PA. Ireland contributed €1.0 million, The Netherlands €1.2 million, earmarked for the justice sector, Spain €4.0 million and Sweden €1.2 million. (*Wafa*)

Qatar would pay its share of the Arab financial security net, Emir Shaikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani told President Abbas in a phone conversation. President Abbas told the Emir that he would receive a warm welcome when he visits the West Bank in December. (*Wafa*)

Prime Minister Fayyad criticized Arab States for evading their financial commitments and called for an urgent Arab Summit to address the Palestinian financial crisis. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A PLO official said that more than 700 Palestinians had been killed in Syria since the beginning of the conflict more than 21 months ago. (*AFP*)

PA Minister for Prisoners' Affairs Qaraqe said that prisoner Ayman Sharawneh had suspended his hunger strike for a week after 176 days because doctors had warned that he risked death. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

24

The armed wing of Hamas hailed 2012 as the year that changed the rules of its confrontation with Israel. Spokesman Abu Obaida said that sending rockets to populated areas of Israel had been one of the group's distinctive achievements of the year. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces detained 10 Palestinians in raids across the West Bank. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Human Rights Watch said that Palestinian armed groups in Gaza had violated the laws of war during the November 2012 fighting by launching hundreds of rockets towards population centres in Israel. (*www.hrw.org*)

A local official said that Israeli soldiers had raided a mosque in a village near Jenin searching for Jewish antiquities. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Over half of the US House of Representatives (239 members) signed a petition calling on President Obama to shut down the PLO office in Washington, D.C., as punishment for its UN bid. The petition did not include a call to defund the PA. (*Haaretz*)

Israel advanced the process of building 942 more settler homes in East Jerusalem under a new fast-track plan to tighten its grip on the territory. According to the Interior Ministry, a Government planning committee had moved the project to the advanced stage of asking contractors to submit bids to build them. Once a bid is awarded, construction can begin on the project in the "Gilo" settlement area. Attorney Daniel Seidemann, an expert on Jerusalem construction, said that an additional 300 units could be built after further planning. (*AP*)

Israel had upgraded a college in the "Ariel" settlement to a university, giving it the same status as universities inside Israel. Final approval came from military chiefs, who formalized a cabinet decision that had been made in September. (*Reuters*)

Several Hamas-affiliated members of the Palestinian Legislative Council went on a one-day hunger strike in solidarity with prisoners in Israeli jails. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

"For Sale" signs were placed on used cars around Jerusalem with phone numbers leading potential buyers to a recorded message profanely insulting Palestinians and the Prophet Muhammad. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

25

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, addressing supporters as he launched his election campaign, pledged to keep building in Jerusalem and continue to support the settlement movement. (*PNN*)

26

Four Palestinians had been arrested on suspicion of throwing Molotov cocktails at an Israeli army position south of Nablus, *Army Radio* reported. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Israeli forces detained five Palestinians in Nablus and two others in Tulkarm. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

According to a Palestinian source, President Abbas had revealed that there was a European effort aimed at resuming Israeli-Palestinian peace talks in 2013.

President Abbas informed members of Fatah that a number of European countries such as Britain, Italy and Spain were formulating a peace initiative for resuming peace negotiations. (*Xinhua*)

*Maariv* reported that, following the status upgrade of Palestine at the UN, the PA was seeking to join other international organizations, including the Universal Postal Union, the World Intellectual Property Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Health Organization. The Israeli Foreign Ministry was reportedly attempting to block the Palestinian efforts via its ambassadors in countries where the organizations' headquarters were located. (*The Times of Israel*)

In a [joint statement](#), the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and the Palestine Monetary Authority said that the deficit for the third quarter of 2012 amounted to \$672.6 million, 25.7 per cent of the gross national product. (*Wafa*)

Israeli forces issued 10 demolition orders to residents of Idhna village, west of Hebron, claiming that the buildings had been built without permission. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

UK Foreign Office Minister for the Middle East Alistair Burt [said](#), "Last week, Foreign Secretary William Hague made clear our condemnation and deep disappointment at the approval of the East Jerusalem Ramat Shlomo plan. We also condemn the Jerusalem District Planning Board's approvals for over 3,150 units in Givat Hanatos and 1,242 units in Mordot Gilo South. These are further profoundly provocative actions that run contrary to the Fourth Geneva Convention. By taking these steps, despite the international community repeatedly raising our profound concerns, the Israeli Government is damaging Israel's international reputation." (*Wafa, www.gov.uk*)

Four Israeli settlers attacked and seriously injured a 17-year-old Palestinian teenager while he was on his way home in Silwan in East Jerusalem. (*Wafa*)

UNRWA shut down its Area and sub-Area Offices in the West Bank until further notice owing to continued harassment against its employees. Young men had

forcibly closed the offices in protest against the dismissal of 114 employees brought about by a reduction in donor funding. (PNN)

The Government of Japan [contributed](#) an additional \$2 million to support UNRWA's emergency work in the Gaza Strip. The donation was in response to the Agency's call for support for Palestine refugees recovering from the recent violence in the Strip. ([www.unrwa.org](http://www.unrwa.org))

27

Israeli forces arrested 10 Palestinians across the West Bank. (Wafa)

A report from the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that the EU had become disenchanted with the diplomatic process in its traditional format of direct talks between Israelis and Palestinians, because they doubted its ability to lead to a solution. The report predicted that the EU would step up efforts to pressure Israelis and the Palestinians to come to an agreement in 2013. (Haaretz)

PA President Abbas told a visiting delegation from the Israeli leftist party Meretz in Ramallah that the intensified settlement projects would destroy the peace process. The delegation, led by Zahava Galon, expressed support for the two-State solution and congratulated Mr. Abbas on becoming a non-member observer State of the United Nations. (Wafa)

In an interview, PA President Abbas said that if diplomatic stagnation continued after the Israeli election and construction in the settlements did not stop, he would dismantle the Palestinian Authority and return responsibility for the West Bank to the Israeli Government. (Haaretz)

PA Prime Minister Fayyad and World Bank Country Director for the West Bank and Gaza Mariam Sherman signed an agreement on the rehabilitation and expansion of water supply and sewage in the Gaza Strip. (Ma'an News Agency)

Settlers uprooted 40 olive trees in Qasra village, south of Nablus in the West Bank. (PNN)

Four Palestinians were killed when Syrian forces shelled the Yarmouk refugee camp in Damascus. (Ma'an News Agency)

*Al Arabia* reported that the PA had been looking into the possibility of filing a complaint with the International Criminal Court against Israel for arresting 900 Palestinian children in 2012. Palestinian Minister of Detainees' Affairs Issa Qaraqe said, "We need to use the newly gained status to take measures against Israel for its crimes, especially the arrest, detention and abuse of Palestinian children, let alone trying them before military courts." (*Al Arabia*)

28

Israeli forces arrested an off-duty PA policeman in Yatta. (Ma'an News Agency)

Settlers from "Haggay" raided the village of Dura in Hebron accompanied by Israeli soldiers and threatened to take control of a water spring in the area. (Ma'an News Agency)

29

A delegation from the Ministry of Justice of Hamas visited Cairo to discuss the terms of a truce agreement that ended eight days of violence between Gaza and Israel in November. (Ma'an News Agency)

The IDF arrested two Palestinians south of Nablus. (The Jerusalem Post)

League of Arab States Secretary-General Elaraby and Egyptian Minister for Foreign Affairs Mohamed Kamel Ali Amr paid a rare visit to the West Bank to discuss the current Palestinian financial crisis. Mr. Elaraby, the first Secretary-General of the League to visit Ramallah, told a news conference in Ramallah: "Palestine is in need of material and political support. ... Arab countries agreed at their Baghdad summit for an Arab 'safety net' of \$100 million each month, but unfortunately none of this has been achieved yet." He also said, "We will return to the UN Security Council. ... Palestine will be cooperating with Arab and EU countries to change the equation (in the peace process) that prevailed over the past 20 years, which was a waste of time." (AP, Reuters)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation said, "The situation on the Palestinian track of the Middle East peace process remains difficult. Israel's settlement activity remains a serious obstacle towards resuming talks. In recent days, Israel has announced further steps towards realizing the plans to construct settlements on the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. Russia and the international community condemned this fact." (Itar-Tass)

According to the Palestinian Detainees Studies Center, the Israeli Salem military court had sentenced three Palestinian children from Azzoun town near Qalqilya to four-month imprisonment each. (IMEMC)

30

Speaking with Israeli diplomats at his Jerusalem residence, Israeli President Peres called for the resumption of peace talks with the Palestinians saying that President Abbas was a willing partner with whom an agreement could be reached. Mr. Peres said that the only way Israel could positively affect the fluctuating reality in the region was "to complete the peace agreement with the Palestinians". He added that Israel would be willing to talk to Hamas if it accepted the three conditions that had been laid down by the Quartet: renunciation of terror, recognition of Israel and entering negotiations with Israel. (AFP)

Palestinian Chief Negotiator Erekat recommended that the PA add the label "State of Palestine" to all of its official documents and signs. He also suggested that the PA leadership should prepare a new constitution, achieve reconciliation with Hamas and seek membership in UN conventions and agencies following its UN status upgrade. (PNN)

For the first time in five years, under a [ceasefire deal reached after the eight days of intensive fighting in November](#), Israel allowed 20 truckloads of building materials into [Gaza](#) for use by the private sector. Israeli officials said that construction materials would be allowed in on a daily basis via the Kerem Shalom crossing. (The New York Times)

PA Prime Minister Fayyad signed an agreement with representatives of refugee camps in the West Bank that had been exempt from paying electricity bills, to start paying as a measure to address accumulated debts for electricity. (Ma'an News Agency)

The IDF completed the evacuation of the "Oz Tzion" outpost during the night. (Haaretz)

PA Prime Minister Fayyad condemned Israel's decision to seize 456 dunums of land from the village of Beit Ikka to build a barrier to separate the village from nearby settlements. (Wafa)

PA Chief Negotiator Erekat called on the international community to prevent the imminent eviction of a Palestinian family from their home in Sheikh Jarrah in East Jerusalem, following the order by the Israeli court to the family to leave the home by the following day. (Ma'an News Agency)

31

During a home raid in the Hebron village of Al-Dhahiriya, Israeli forces arrested a member of the PA security forces. (Ma'an News Agency)

President Abbas expressed support for an international peace conference under which the Palestinians would negotiate directly with Israelis within a time frame. He said that he appreciated the vital role and friendship of the US, including its stance against Israeli settlement policy. (AP, KUNA)

Israel eased its five-year ban on construction materials crossing into Gaza. Major Guy Inbar, a military spokesman, said that 20 truckloads each day could enter Gaza, and other concessions may follow "depending on the continuation of the calm". (AP)

The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries issued a statement after the group's Permanent Representatives to the United Nations held a meeting in New York demanding that Israel halt its illegal settlement construction activities. In addition, the Movement urged the United Nations to pressure Israel to lift all restrictions imposed on Palestinians. (Press TV)

At an Israeli Ambassadors' conference, after Ron Prosor, Israel's Ambassador to the UN, questioned the timing of the "E-1" announcement, Yaakov Amidror, Israel's national security advisor, told the diplomats: "If you do not agree with Government policy, either go into politics or resign." Ran Curiel, Deputy Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said: "It may be that a certain frustration was expressed because sometimes we are not given the tools needed to explain governmental policy." (Ynetnews)

Ahead of a military training exercise, Israeli forces delivered orders to some 100 Palestinian families in the northern Jordan Valley to evacuate for 48 hours, affecting some 1,000 Palestinians living in rural communities around Wadi al-Maleh, a local official said. (Ma'an News Agency)

The Palestinian Prisoner Society reported that the Israeli army had detained 88 Palestinians in Hebron, including 12 children, since the beginning of the month. (IMEMC)

The Israeli authorities demolished a Palestinian-owned home in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Jabal al-Mukabber, claiming that it had been built without permit. (Wafa)

