

Division for Palestinian Rights
***Chronological Review of Events Relating to the
 Question of Palestine***

MONTHLY MEDIA MONITORING REVIEW

August 2005

Monthly highlights

- Israel's disengagement from the Gaza Strip has begun. ([15 August](#))
- Evacuations of all 21 settlements in the Gaza Strip and of 4 in the northern West Bank completed. ([23 August](#))
- Largest ever settlement expansion plan east of Jerusalem stepped up. ([23 August](#), [25 August](#))

1

A Qassam rocket was fired at the Israeli town of Sderot and a mortar shell was fired at a settlement in the "Gush Katif" block, according to *Israel Army Radio*. There were no casualties. (*Ha'aretz*)

A large explosion damaged the front of the house of Hussein Abu Assi, PA Attorney General in Gaza City, causing no injuries. (*AP*)

The IDF said Palestinians had opened fire at an army post near the "Gadid" settlement in the southern Gaza Strip, causing no injuries or damage. The army arrested two wanted Islamic Jihad members near Ramallah and three others near Bethlehem. (www.idf.il)

Israeli soldiers uncovered a tunnel into the "Gush Katif" settlement block, dug by Islamic Jihad operatives to carry out suicide attacks against the "Neve Dekalim" settlement. (*Ha'aretz*, *The Jerusalem Post*)

Israeli paratroopers uncovered a cache of pipe bombs and materials used to produce explosive devices in Hebron. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

PA Civil Affairs Minister Mohammed Dahlan said that following the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, an international task force would be sent in to make sure that no landmines or dangerous materials were left behind. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The PA Interior Ministry announced that Israel would allow Palestinian security forces access into areas to be evacuated simultaneously with the Israeli pullout, to prevent armed groups from taking them over. (*International Press Centre*)

The PA Ministry of Health said in a report that 3,804 Palestinians had been killed and 34,431 injured since the start of the intifada in 2000.

(*International Press Centre*)

2

Palestinians fired an anti-tank rocket at a convoy travelling to the Gaza Strip settlement of "Netzarim", settlers said. There were no reports of injuries. (*Ha'aretz*)

Yasser Ashkar, a six-year old Palestinian boy, was killed, and nine Palestinians wounded in Beit Hanoun, in the northern Gaza Strip, when rockets fired by Palestinian militants misfired and landed on Palestinian areas, rescue workers said. Witnesses said militants fired three rockets at Sderot, where thousands of opponents of the disengagement had gathered in a demonstration. Two of the rockets fell in Palestinian areas and the third fell in an open field near Sderot. Hamas and Saraya al-Quds, the armed wing of Islamic Jihad, denied responsibility for the attack. (*AP*, *Ha'aretz*, *Xinhua*)

Gunmen occupied the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) and Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs buildings in Rafah, official sources said. They said the gunmen were former prisoners released from Israeli detention who protested what they claimed was the PA's reluctance to give them jobs.

(*UPI*)

An IDF soldier was slightly wounded by Palestinian gunfire in the southern Gaza Strip. (*Ha'aretz*)

Mosallam Al-Najjar, who was affiliated with Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, died, and five other Palestinians were wounded in an explosion at his house in the town of Bani Suheila in the Gaza Strip. (*IPC*)

IDF forces raided the towns of El-Bireh and Tubas in the West Bank, to search for wanted Palestinians. (*IPC*, *Wafa*)

Israel's Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz warned that armed Palestinian factions would escalate militant activity in the West Bank following Israel's pullout from the Gaza Strip. "Therefore, we must better consider the needs of the [West Bank Palestinian] population but at the same time prevent any possibility of an attack on Israeli territory," the minister added. (*AFP*)

On 3 August the Israeli side would present to PA senior security officials its plans for withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank, a PA Interior Ministry statement said. (*Xinhua*)

Thousands of Israeli troops and police deployed in southern Israel to prevent an attempt by thousands of opponents of Israel's upcoming Gaza Strip withdrawal to march into the "Gush Katif" settlement block in the Gaza Strip, which had been declared a closed military zone and were off limits to non-residents. (AP)

The PLO Executive Committee said in a statement issued after its meeting in Ramallah, "The Israeli side has to completely coordinate with the responsible Palestinian sides to insure that the Israeli pulling out from all areas, crossings and settlements would be according to a specific and known plan." The Executive Committee also agreed that there would be a role for the Higher Follow-up Committee of Palestinian National and Islamic Factions in safeguarding the vacated facilities and assets through the administrative and security services of the PA. (Xinhua)

The construction of the separation wall and Israeli settlement activity in and around East Jerusalem had created an explosive situation there and undermined the two-State solution, according to a report by the International Crisis Group entitled "[The Jerusalem Powder Keg](http://www.crisisweb.org)". (www.crisisweb.org)

A Fatah volunteer militia had been established in the Gaza Strip on the instructions of Fatah Secretary-General Farouk Kaddoumi, to preserve quiet and stability after the Israeli withdrawal, the *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* reported. Two hundred fifteen volunteers had been recruited and Fatah hoped to recruit a total of 1500, according to the Fatah public relations office in Khan Yunis. (Ha'aretz)

Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia met with the Indian Representative to the Palestinian Authority, Ohm Prakash, who informed him about the Indian Government's decision to donate US\$15 million to the PA. During the meeting in Ramallah, Mr. Qureia expressed the appreciation of the PA for the decision. Mr. Prakash said that the pledge was for projects such as the construction of the Palestinian Embassy in Delhi, a medical heart centre in Nablus and a school in Abu Dees. (Wafa)

3

Israeli bulldozers destroyed 241 dunums of arable lands in the West Bank city of Qalqilya. The Head of Kufr Thulth Rural Council, Hussein al-Saifi, said that Israeli bulldozers uprooted the trees of Kaft al-Shamla, Khilat Abu Zeina and al-Salama villages, east of Qalqilya, that were located opposite to the settlement of "Ma'li Shimron". Mr. al-Saifi said this act would isolate over 500 dunums inside the separation wall and prevent the villagers from planting on their lands. (Wafa)

Up to 40,000 soldiers and police were expected to take part in the operation to remove the approximately 8,000 residents of 21 Gaza settlements, starting mid-August. Three 8,000-strong divisions would take part in the withdrawal under the overall charge of southern regional commander General Dan Harel, army spokesman Captain Yishai David said. Another 10,000 reservists on standby, as well as 5,000 officers, would be involved in the operation. Mr. David said one of the divisions would be ready to respond to any attack from Palestinian militants during the pullout, while two other divisions would carry out the evacuation operation. Apart from intensive military exercises, soldiers had undergone psychological training to deal with the trauma of confrontation with fellow countrymen. Soldiers and police had already staged mock exercises with giant cages which will be suspended from cranes to entrap settlers who try to entrench themselves on roofs of houses. The army was also bracing itself to the media. Some 4,000 foreign journalists were expected to turn the spotlight on the armed forces. (AFP)

Tens of thousands of Israelis had participated in an anti-disengagement rally in Sderot on 2 August, after which they left the town and travelled south to Ofakim to continue their protests today. They were set to rally in the western Negev town of Ofakim at 7 p.m., after which they would set off in the direction of the Gaza Strip. Earlier today, Yesha leaders ordered thousands of youths to infiltrate the Gaza settlement block of "Gush Katif", with instructions not to resist if they were arrested by security forces. Defying police warnings, hundreds of anti-disengagement activists infiltrated overnight into Gaza Strip settlements and dispersed among local residents, the Yesha Council said. Meanwhile, residents of the settlement of "Netzer Hazani" would hold a ceremonial handover of their weapons to the IDF on 4 August to "refute wicked rumours of plans to use these weapons during the evacuation." The IDF had stationed thousands of soldiers along the Green Line to thwart any attempt to infiltrate the Gaza Strip.

Senior IDF officers took personal command of various sectors to ensure maximum control of the forces in the area. In addition to road blocks, mobile forces had also been deployed with various surveillance means. All told, some 18,000 troops and 12,000 police were involved in preventing protesters from getting to "Gush Katif". (Ha'aretz)

The PA Interior Ministry warned that militant factions firing homemade rockets on Israel would damage Palestinian interests, the Ministry's spokesman Tawfeek Abu Khousa told the *Voice of Palestine* radio. (Xinhua)

Islamic Jihad denied reports that it would halt rocket fire at Israelis. (Ha'aretz)

A group of 34 Egyptian officers had arrived in the Gaza Strip to train members of the Palestinian security services as part of the preparations for this month's Israeli pullout from the territory. They would assist the PA in the training of some 5,000 special forces designated to take charge in settlement areas and of abandoned army bases as the Israelis departed. (AFP, Ha'aretz)

Israel and Egypt had agreed in principle to a deployment of 750 Egyptian soldiers along the Salah al-Din ("Philadelphia") area. The joint military-security committee would meet next week to decide on the detailed protocol of the deployment and initial the agreement, after which it would be brought before the Israeli Cabinet and the Knesset for a vote. According to the agreement, the Egyptian troops would take up positions along the 14-kilometre southern border of the Gaza Strip, from the Mediterranean to the border with Israel, near Kerem Shalom. The Egyptians would deploy in September, and Israel would withdraw from the area in October. Israel's pullout from parts of the northern West Bank would begin on 4 September. (Ha'aretz)

James Wolfensohn, the Middle East Quartet's Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement, toured the Beit Hanoun (Erez) crossing to witness the process that some 10,000 Palestinians experience daily as they enter Israel to work. He said after his predawn tour that there was a "need for improvement" at the main crossing for Palestinians from Gaza who worked in Israel. Mr. Wolfensohn said the crossing was not up to the job. "Some of it is method and some of it is physical facilities ... and certainly that's going to be very important for the future," he told reporters, as he followed in the footsteps of workers through a meticulously monitored kilometre-long (half-mile) tunnel, fully equipped with metal turnstiles, single-file barriers, x-ray machines, and Israeli army cameras. "There is no doubt on both sides that there is a need for improvement. It's quite obvious that there are substantial delays both ways when you have so many people with an inadequate facility," Mr. Wolfensohn said. (AP)

Israeli and Palestinian officials had failed to agree on issues related to water, electricity and the free movement of Palestinians through crossings after Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip. The talks involved PA Civil Affairs Minister Mohamed Dahlan, Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz and Middle East Quartet Envoy for Gaza Disengagement James Wolfensohn. (DPA)

Israel's Health Minister Danny Naveh submitted a proposal to Cabinet Secretary Yisrael Maimon, urging the Government to approve the construction of a new settlement between Jerusalem and "Ma'ale Adumim" as part of the construction plan known as E-1. (AFP, Ha'aretz)

Jordan's King Abdullah II held talks in Amman with PA President Mahmoud Abbas on Israel's upcoming withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, a Royal Court official said. The official said the Jordanian-Palestinian leaders' meeting and a meeting scheduled the following day with Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz were efforts by King Abdullah "to guarantee a smooth Israeli withdrawal from Gaza". "The King reiterated Jordan's support for the Palestinians," he added. (DPA)

Fuad Halhal, a military civil administration official, said Israel's withdrawal from four West Bank settlements would begin on 4 September and would take place over six days. He said the army was concerned about violence by settlers against Palestinians. Mr. Halhal spoke during a meeting

with officials from the United Nations and international relief groups. (AP)

IDF representatives met with PA security chiefs to coordinate the disengagement for the first time in a month. At the meeting, which took place at Beit Hanoun (Erez) crossing, the Palestinians presented detailed plans to deploy their forces in the Gaza Strip during the Israeli withdrawal. The commander of the IDF forces in the Gaza Strip, Brig. Gen. Aviv Kochavi, liaison and coordination head Col. Yoav Mordechai and the division commanders attended the meeting. The Palestinian delegation was headed by Jamal Abu-Zid, Deputy Public Security Minister. The Palestinians presented maps showing their planned deployment and positions. Their forces were supposed to protect the evacuees and evacuees on the Israeli side from attacks during the disengagement. This included preventing sniper shots, mortar and Qassam rocket fire. Other units were to prevent mass marches to the settlements and the looting of evacuated houses. (Ha'aretz)

Lt. Gen. William E. Ward, US Security Coordinator in the Middle East, said, "The Palestinian Authority plans to move forces from the Gaza Strip to areas bordering the evacuation of the Israeli settlements, in order to enforce law and order. To this end, they are fully coordinated with the Israel Defense Forces and are jointly examining different possible military scenarios. These are some of the steps the Palestinians are taking before the disengagement, and if all proceeds as planned, we will succeed." Lt. Ward cautioned Israel against playing out a scenario that senior IDF commanders had discussed recently, which would involve moving large Israeli forces into the Gaza Strip before the disengagement. The international community would not want to see this play out, and it should be avoided, he said. Lt. Ward said that he knew Israelis were aware of the need to avoid a deterioration of the situation into military action. (Ha'aretz)

Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip this month could be the most significant step towards Middle East peace in more than a decade, Middle East Quartet's Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement James Wolfensohn, said. "This is a moment of destiny and it requires courage on both sides," he said, adding, "This really is a strategic moment that has all the elements for a future settlement." Mr. Wolfensohn had decided to extend his stay in the region until 10 August to supervise personally the series of meetings held by the technical committees between the Israelis and Palestinians on the issue of crossings and freedom of movement between the West Bank and Gaza Strip. (The Financial Times, Ha'aretz)

4

An Israeli opened fire inside a bus in northern Israel, killing four Israeli Arabs. An angry crowd then killed the gunman. PA President Abbas condemned the shooting in Shfaram (Shfa-Amr) as a "savage crime". "This crime is a clear illustration of the danger posed by Jewish settlers to our people and we want to know why the Israeli Government allows them to be armed and commit crime after crime," his statement said. Prime Minister Sharon denounced the shooting as an act of terrorism. (AP)

A Palestinian, wounded two days earlier by a rocket attack which had targeted Israel but landed on a house in the northern Gaza Strip, died of his injuries. Mr. Adnan Al-Askar, 50, was injured in an aborted attack in Beit Hanoun which claimed the life of his six-year-old son. (AFP)

IDF forces arrested six Islamic Jihad members in the West Bank. Mr. Khader Adnan, West Bank spokesman of Islamic Jihad, was taken into custody during a raid in Ramallah. Senior Islamic Jihad official Khaled Al-Batsh said Mr. Adnan's arrest violated a "calm" declared by Palestinian militants in March. (Reuters, Ha'aretz)

Armed Palestinians took over the Fatah buildings in Beit Lahya in the Gaza Strip to protest what they called persisting corruption in the upper echelons of Fatah and the slow pace of democratic reform. The building was taken after work hours and no employees were inside at the time. (Reuters)

Israeli police said around 150 Israeli right-wing activists were arrested overnight after infiltrating the northern Gaza Strip and one of the settlements. Police made arrests during house-to-house searches in "Nissanit" and bussed detainees back to Israel. (AFP)

Thousands of Palestinians rallied in the Gaza Strip to celebrate the imminent Israeli withdrawal from the area. PA Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia told a crowd of around 10,000 people that the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip would be the first step towards the creation of a Palestinian State, including the whole of the West Bank, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Mr. Kamal Ashrafi, organizer of the rally, said it was essential that the international community kept up pressure for further withdrawals. (AFP, Reuters)

Israel will be able to keep at least 180,000 settlers out of the 240,000 currently residing in the West Bank, with US blessing, Dov Weissglas, Special Advisor to Prime Minister Sharon, said in a conference broadcast on Israeli radio. (IMEMC, Reuters)

The Israeli Housing Ministry issued tenders for the building of 72 housing units in the "Betar Illit" settlement situated between Jerusalem and the "Etzion" block of settlements in the West Bank. (AFP, Ha'aretz)

Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres told a ministerial committee that an agreement with the World Bank on the handing over of Gush Katif greenhouses to the Palestinians may not go through because of Palestinian objections. (Ha'aretz)

A group of Palestinian children were welcomed to San Fernando de Henares on the outskirts of Madrid as guests of local authorities and the Paz Ahora, or Peace Now. San Fernando de Henares and Ramallah have a twinning arrangement. The group, comprising 12 boys and 11 girls, aged 13 to 17, spent a month in Spain as part of Paz Ahora's Holidays for Peace initiative for children caught up in the Middle East conflict. Some of the children live in the Al-Faraa refugee camp between Nablus and Jenin; others come from Bethlehem, Jenin, Jericho, Nablus and Ramallah. (AFP)

Jordan's King Abdullah II met in Amman with Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz on Palestinian security needs following Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. King Abdullah was quoted by palace sources as saying that implementing the [Road Map](#) was the only way to garner peace and stability in the region. "Withdrawing from Gaza is the beginning of Israel's pullout from the West Bank and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State," he said. Mr. Mofaz said he would agree to Jordanian officers training PA officers in the West Bank. (DPA, Ha'aretz)

James Wolfensohn, the Middle East Quartet's Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement, met with PA Economy Minister Mazen Sonokrot in Ramallah.

"My timetable is to resolve many of these issues by the end of the withdrawal, but, frankly, in the next 10 days we have to get agreement in principle on many of these issues," Wolfensohn said after the meeting, adding, "I think we've done it on the houses, I think we're doing it on the crossings and I see some real progress". Mr. Sonokrot said if a deal was reached, he expected President Abbas would provide details in a speech on 12 August. (Reuters)

Eight UN Commission on Human Rights Special Rapporteurs had issued [press release](#) marking the one-year anniversary of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) advisory opinion on the construction of a separation wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It said the ICJ's opinion had been ignored in favour of negotiations of the [Road Map](#), and that neither the General Assembly nor the Security Council had considered it since 20 July 2004 when resolution ES-10/15 was adopted by the Assembly. (www.unhchr.ch)

5

Graffiti artist Banksy created nine stencil spray paintings on the Palestinian side of the West Bank barrier during a trip there last week. Banksy spokeswoman Jo Brooks said, "The Israeli security forces did shoot in the air threateningly and there were quite a few guns pointed at him. The images are still there." (The Guardian, www.banksy.co.uk)

The 2005 General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) called upon Israel to tear down the barrier it was building in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and to pay reparations to Palestinians harmed by it. The amended [resolution 0522](#), entitled "Breaking Down the Dividing Wall", also called upon the US Government to engage actively, fully and fairly in a peace process that will lead to the peaceful coexistence of both Israel and a Palestinian State. A letter endorsed by three major branches of American Judaism, along with the Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress and the Jewish Council for Public Affairs condemned the vote. (AP, www.disciples.org)

A Presbyterian committee accused five companies of contributing to "ongoing violence that plagues Israel and Palestine" and pledged to use the church's multimillion-dollar stock holdings in the businesses to pressure them to stop. The move followed a vote last year by leaders of the Louisville, Kentucky-based Presbyterian Church to put economic pressure on companies that profited from the Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza. Presbyterian leaders insisted that divestment would be only a last resort, if discussions with corporate leaders and lobbying stockholders failed. The targeted companies were Caterpillar Inc., Citigroup, ITT Industries Inc., Motorola Inc. and United Technologies Corp. The Presbyterians accused all, except Citigroup, of selling products such as night vision equipment, wireless communications and helicopters that the Israeli military uses to hurt Palestinians and bolster control of the territories. To demonstrate equal abhorrence of violence against Israelis, the panel accused Citigroup of being part of a conduit for funds used to support Middle East terrorist groups. (AP)

Following is the text of the press statement attributable to the spokesman for the Secretary-General:

The Secretary-General is saddened by the news of the deaths of four innocent civilians, including two girls not yet 20, who lost their lives yesterday in a bus in the Arab town of Shfar'am in northern Israel at the hands of an Israeli in IDF uniform who had gone AWOL. He sends his condolences to the families of the victims and wishes those injured a speedy recovery. The Secretary-General condemns this terrorist act.

Although the incident is under investigation, it appears that the killer was lynched by the surrounding people. The incident is thus not only a painful tragedy but also a cautionary tale, vividly illustrating the dangers of fanaticism run amok in an atmosphere of tension at a crucial time.

(UN press release SG/SM/10032)

6

The IDF, backed by armoured vehicles and tanks, stormed at predawn the town of Meghraqa in the southern Gaza Strip, Palestinian sources said. Nabil Abu Kmeil, the Mayor of the town, told reporters that the Israeli troops, backed by at least two dozen armoured vehicles, stormed the northern area of the town. He said the troops erected barricades and then stormed houses. Meanwhile, Israeli troops stationed at their outposts around the settlement of "Neveh Dekalim" fired at houses in Khan Yunis, causing severe damage to the houses but no injury, Palestinian witnesses said. (Xinhua)

Moaweya Hasaneen, chief of emergency of the PA Public Health Ministry, said eight people suffered burns and wounds from a mysterious explosion inside their home in the Islayeh area, east of Khan Yunis, medics said. Mr. Hasaneen said three of them were seriously wounded and were taken to Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City for surgery, adding that the rest were transferred to Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis. Meanwhile, Israeli troops wounded 23-year-old Nihad al-Qadi near Rafah in the settlement of "Morag", Palestinian medics said. (Xinhua)

A Palestinian was shot as he was planting a bomb near the fence protecting the "Gush Katif" block of settlements in the Gaza Strip, the Israeli army said. "Three Palestinians were spotted crawling towards the 'Gush Katif' security fence, near the settlement of 'Ganei Ta'". Soldiers opened fire and shot one of them as he was planting an explosive device," an army spokesman said. He could not specify whether the Palestinian had been wounded or killed but added that his two accomplices managed to flee the area. (AFP)

Palestinian judges and lawyers shut down the Palestinian legal system to protest recent attacks against senior legal officials. The shutdown was announced in a statement signed by judges and lawyers. Earlier in the week in Gaza City, an explosive device was detonated outside the home of former Palestinian Justice Minister Zuhair al-Sourani, while a separate blast damaged a wall outside the home of the Palestinian Attorney General in the city, Hussein Abu Assi. Both men were appointed by Parliament to investigate widespread corruption in the Palestinian Authority. The judicial shutdown will continue until "the Palestinian Authority puts an end to the serious deterioration that has undermined the Palestinian legal system and its personnel and has escalated in the past few days, especially after the attacks," the statement said. (AP)

A senior Palestinian cleric and political leader of Hamas, Sheikh Hamed al-Bitawi, 61, was arrested by Israeli police in Jerusalem's Old City after leaving the Al-Aqsa Mosque, Palestinian security sources said. *Israel Radio* said Sheikh al-Bitawi was arrested because he did not have a permit to enter Israel. He is a political leader of Hamas in the West Bank and head of the Palestinian Islamic courts, which are charged with handling civilian matters. He was among hundreds of Palestinians expelled to southern Lebanon in December 1992, before being allowed home nine months later. (AFP, Reuters)

7

Mohammed Qashta, a 23-year-old Palestinian, was killed when Israeli troops in an observation post at Salah Al-Din gate, in the southern Gaza Strip near the border with Egypt, suddenly opened fire. Palestinian witnesses said Mr. Qeshta had just stepped out of his house when he was shot in the head. He was immediately taken to a hospital where he died. (AFP, Xinhua)

Two Israelis, including a 10-year-old boy, were wounded in a shooting attack north of Ramallah, as armed Palestinians were driving towards the settlement of "Ateret" on a road used only by settlers, the Magen David Adom emergency services said. The boy was taken to a hospital and was in stable condition, the sources said. Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades claimed responsibility for the attack. "The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, Massud Ayyad platoon, shot at a car carrying settlers. Our men escaped and are now in a safe location," the militant said on condition of anonymity.

"This attack was in retaliation for the crime committed in Shfaram (Shfa Amr) in which a settler killed four Palestinians," the caller said. (AFP) Israeli settlers assaulted two Palestinians in Bethlehem. In Tulkarm refugee camp, Israeli soldiers wounded a child during an intensive military operation. Eyewitnesses said that Israeli soldiers, backed by tanks and armoured vehicles, thrust into the camp and fired live bullets, gas canisters and sound bombs at citizens, wounding a child and causing a state of panic among others, mostly children and women. In another incident, local sources said Israeli soldiers stationed at a military checkpoint, located in the main road which links Nablus and Jenin, stopped and searched cars arresting one Palestinian. In Qalqilya, the IDF arrested five Palestinians while on their way to work. (Wafa)

Israel's Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced he was quitting the Government to protest the planned Gaza withdrawal, as the Cabinet gave final approval to evacuating three settlements. He announced his decision during the Cabinet session saying, "I cannot stop [the pullout], but I can be at peace with myself. I cannot be a party to a move that I believe will endanger security and will divide the people." (Ha'aretz, Los Angeles Times)

In a statement released by Prime Minister Sharon's office, Mr. Sharon announced the appointment of Ehud Olmert as interim Finance Minister, in place of Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, who resigned earlier in the day. "The Prime Minister told Minister Olmert to continue the fiscal policy and bring the State budget for Government approval on Tuesday [9 August] as planned," the statement said. (Ha'aretz)

The Israeli Cabinet gave final approval for the evacuation of three Gaza Strip settlements and announced intentions to authorize more withdrawals next week. The first three settlements to be evacuated are "Kfar Darom", "Morag" and "Netzarim", which were described as fairly isolated.

On 15 August, Prime Minister Sharon would present the Cabinet with a proposal to evacuate the settlement of "Gush Katif". Cabinet Secretary Israel Maimon said the evacuation of the three settlements at the northern tip of the Gaza Strip would take place several days after the army said it

was ready. (UPI)

Khaled al-Batsh, a senior Islamic Jihad official, told reporters that his movement would not obstruct Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and northern West Bank. He said the movement was interested in seeing the withdrawal happen with less loss on the Palestinian side. He said that the subject was discussed with an Egyptian security delegation headed by Gen. Mustafa Al-Behairy, Deputy Chief of Egyptian intelligence.

(Xinhua)

Prime Minister Sharon denounced a Jewish extremist's shooting that killed four Israeli Arabs as an act of terrorism and warned that militants could strike again. Addressing the weekly Cabinet meeting, Mr. Sharon complained of "terrible incitement" by Jewish extremists. "There is a danger that such an incident can occur again," he said. (AP)

Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz said that around two thirds of the Jewish settlers slated for evacuation from the Gaza Strip and northern West Bank would obey orders to leave their homes. He said that 60 to 70 per cent of the settlers who were due to be evacuated would leave willingly.

(AFP)

PA President Abbas met with Deputy Chief of the Egyptian Intelligence Service, Mustafa Al-Behairy, in the Presidential headquarters in Gaza City. Mr. Al-Behairy informed President Abbas of the Egyptian delegation's efforts in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the current preparations regarding the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the northern West Bank (Wafa)

PA President Abbas headed a meeting of the Fatah Central Committee in Gaza. Following the meeting, Deputy Prime Minister and Information Minister Nabil Sha'ath said that the meeting focused on the preparations of the Palestinian Authority to ensure the success of the upcoming withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. Mr. Sha'ath said the meeting also tackled internal issues of Fatah and ways to pave the way for holding its General Conference as well as the possibility of setting a date for the coming legislative elections. He said that two dates were proposed for the elections, 21 January and 21 March 2006. Mr. Sha'ath said that President Abbas would meet with Palestinian factions in the next three days in order to set a final date for the elections. (Wafa)

8

Palestinian militants briefly abducted two international United Nations workers and their driver in Khan Yunis before Palestinian security forces broke into the militants' hideout and freed the hostages, sparking a gunfight between the kidnappers and security forces. The United Nations confirmed the three were missing. Palestinian security officials said the kidnapping was carried out by a group of gunmen loyal to Farouk Kaddoumi, Secretary-General of Fatah and head of the PLO Political Department. The previous day, Mr. Kaddoumi's spokesman in Gaza, Suleiman Al-Farra, had released a statement saying Mr. Kaddoumi had ordered the creation of a miniature army of some 1,500 soldiers to help the Palestinian Authority maintain law and order during Israel's withdrawal from Gaza next week. Mr. Al-Farra was later arrested by Palestinian security officers.

No official reason was given for his arrest, and Mr. Kaddoumi had threatened, in a handwritten statement, harsh punishment if Mr. Al-Farra was not immediately released. (AP)

IDF troops shot and killed an 18-year-old Palestinian youth in the Nur Shams refugee camp in Tulkarm. Dozens of youths threw stones and firebombs at three army jeeps patrolling the area, sources said. One of the jeeps caught fire after a firebomb hit it. The soldiers responded by firing in the air and toward the youths, killing Samer Zandik and moderately wounding one of his relatives, Mohammed Zandik. Hospital officials said Samer Zandik had been shot in the head. (Ha'aretz)

A group of settlers surrendered their guns to the Israeli army in the Gaza Strip as part of a weapons handover aimed at minimizing the risk of armed clashes during the planned Israeli pullout. In "Ganei Tal", a religious farming community in the settlement block of "Gush Katif", settlers handed a local security official more than 20 assault rifles used for guard duty. An orange ribbon was wrapped around each weapon, marking the symbolic colour of the settlers' protest against Israel's planned evacuation beginning 17 August. Ami Shaked, head of security in the "Gush Katif" block, said efforts were being made to collect many of the hundreds of handguns still held by the 8,500 Gaza settlers who lived among 1.4 million Palestinians. It was unclear how many other settlers would willingly give up arms. (Reuters)

Prime Minister Sharon stiffened his resolve to push ahead with the Gaza Strip pullout as polls showed public support for the evacuation held up. According to a poll published in the daily *Yediot Aharonot*, 55 per cent of those questioned back disengagement, with 39 per cent against and 6 per cent undecided. (AFP)

Israel's Security Cabinet considered far-reaching new arrangements for Gaza's international border crossing, including the deployment of foreign inspectors, after Israel pulls out of Gaza in the coming weeks. Israel's Defence Ministry favours the plan and had recommended Government approval, security officials said on condition of anonymity because the Cabinet had not yet voted. The deployment of foreign inspectors was supported by international envoy James Wolfensohn, who had urged Israel to make a decision on border arrangements before the withdrawal starts next week. Mr. Wolfensohn had said the withdrawal would only be a success if fenced-in Gazans could move freely, a prerequisite for reviving their economy. (AP)

PA Foreign Minister Nasser Al-Kidwa said Israel's pullout from the Gaza Strip would not mark the end of the territory's occupation as Palestinians would be unable to exercise full sovereignty. "The Israelis are leaving the entire Gaza Strip but Israel will maintain control of its air space, territorial waters and, partially, the crossing points; consequently, the movement of people and contact with the outside world will still be controlled by Israel," he said in an interview with AFP. The departure of Israeli troops and the dismantling of Jewish settlements, 38 years after soldiers first occupied Gaza "will not amount to a total end of the occupation," he stressed. "There will be no quick or satisfying solution for the Palestinians on matters connected to going abroad or the link between the Gaza Strip and West Bank. That needs more struggle and work," he said. Mr. Al-Kidwa emphasized the importance of the impending pullout, due to begin in nine days, saying the settlements would be out of Gaza "forever" and the pullout would deal "a heavy blow to settlements in general". He said Israel was refusing to remove the rubble of settler houses, which are to be bulldozed during the operation. "The question of the rubble is still a problem," he said. (AFP)

9

IDF soldiers beat and injured a Palestinian and arrested four others in the cities of Bethlehem and Nablus in the West Bank, according to witnesses.

The soldiers stormed into the town of Al-Khader, southwest of Bethlehem, breaking into the house of Mahmoud Issa, 28, and assaulting him. He was taken to a hospital. Meanwhile, a group of Israeli soldiers, backed by military vehicles, entered the Balata refugee camp, east of Nablus, into the home of Abed Al-Al, searched it and arrested four Palestinians from the Al-Mohajin neighbourhood. (Wafa)

Mohammad Amin Tayin, 73, from the village of Al-Funduq, south of Nablus, died after the ambulance taking him to a hospital following a heart attack was stopped at an Israeli checkpoint in the West Bank for half an hour, Palestinian medical sources said. The IDF said it was trying to verify the incident. (AFP)

Two Israelis travelling by car south of Hebron were wounded by Palestinian gunfire. (AFP)

Palestinians in the southern Gaza Strip and in the Nablus refugee camp, fired at IDF troops. No casualties were reported. (Ha'aretz)

The Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) said the IDF killed five Palestinians and wounded 29 others during the period 30 July to 5 August in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It also reported that the IDF had continued to violate international humanitarian law and fundamental human rights by restricting freedom of movement of ambulances and its medical teams. (Wafa)

Addressing a special session of the PLC, PA President Abbas urged Palestinians to maintain calm during Israel's upcoming withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. He said, "There is a requirement to ensure that withdrawal takes place in a civilized manner. We will be able to show the world we

deserve independence and freedom.” He said the rocket attacks only brought misery to Palestinians, either by inadvertently hitting Palestinians or by prompting tough Israeli reprisals. He said, “This must stop so that we can focus on security and economy. When the occupation is lifted, weapons should no longer be seen on the streets.” He warned against looting, saying that the land on which the settlements had been built belonged to all Palestinians. Mr. Abbas also said parliamentary elections would be held in January 2006. (AFP, AP, Ha’aretz, Reuters)

The top Palestinian Muslim cleric issued a religious edict against any disruption of Israel’s planned withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem also said in a fatwa that there should be no looting or theft of anything left behind by the Israelis. (Reuters)

Some 200 masked and armed members of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades rallied outside the PLC building in Gaza City demanding an end to what they called attempts to arrest their members by Palestinian security services. They also demanded the resignation of PA Finance Minister Salam Fayyad, who had tightened control over spending, and assurances of jobs and safety after Israel’s imminent withdrawal. Several members reportedly broke into the PLC building. (AP, Ha’aretz, Xinhua)

The Israeli army declared the two northern West Bank settlements “Ganim” and “Kadin” as closed military zones. Non-residents would no longer be allowed to enter the settlements in an effort to prevent opponents of the pullout plan into the area. Most of the settlers in the two settlements had left their houses in recent weeks, and most of the houses stood abandoned. (AP, Ha’aretz)

Hamas criticized a call by PA President Abbas to stop firing Qassam rockets. “The President’s speech made no reference to the fact that the rockets are the main reason behind our victory,” Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said. He added that the Palestinian resistance had managed to replicate the achievement of Hezbollah in Lebanon by “chasing the enemy out of occupied land.” (AFP)

The Government of Israel said it would scrap a customs union with Gaza if there were no agreement on Israel retaining security control over traffic between the territory and Egypt. Israel’s latest proposal is to retain the customs union only if Egypt and the PA agreed to move the main transit terminal from Rafah, which straddles the border, to Kerem Shalom, where the borders of Egypt, Gaza and Israel meet. A possible compromise, supported by Labour members of the Israeli Cabinet, would be for international supervision of a terminal between Gaza and Egypt. (The Financial Times)

The Israeli army had issued letters to the settlers in the Gaza Strip telling them to leave their homes or face forcible eviction. They were told their presence would be considered illegal by 15 August. The army was also searching for nine soldiers, some of them armed, who had deserted the army in protest of the pullout, officials said. (BBC News)

Fatah and Hamas reached an agreement to form Fatah-Hamas joint committees to observe the Israeli pullout from Gaza Strip after a meeting between PA President Abbas and a Hamas delegation in Gaza City. Fatah’s senior member, Samir Masharawi, and Hamas leader Ismail Haneya told reporters in Gaza that the meeting discussed the Palestinian parliamentary and municipal elections, as well as the national committee for consultations and coordination. (Xinhua)

Few Palestinian refugees want to return to lands in Israel, though they demand Israel accept that they have the right to do so, UNRWA Commissioner-General Karen AbuZayd said in remarks published in Hebrew. “Any solution of this issue must be acceptable to both sides,” she told NRG, the web site of the Israeli daily *Ma’ariv*. “But I am really convinced that most of the people would not want to return. Perhaps there are a few old people who dream about going back to their houses, but no more than that. Most refugees do not think about it at all. The right to return to their homes is much more important to them than the act of returning,” she said. Asked about the NRG interview, a spokesman for Ms. AbuZayd said the quotes were accurate, but he clarified in a statement that “the position of UNRWA on this issue is clear and has never changed: the refugees themselves must have the right to choose”. “We demand that Mrs. AbuZayd stop intervening in this issue, because her role is to serve Palestinian refugees and not cancel their political right to return to the land from which they were displaced,” said Sami Abu Zuhri, a spokesman for Hamas. The spokesman for Israel’s Foreign Ministry Mark Regev said, “When we reach final-status discussions, Israel is committed to discussing the refugee issue.” “I think everyone in the international community understands that the so-called right of return is diametrically opposed to the principles of a two-State solution in which both peoples have national self-determination,” he added. (Reuters)

IDF General Gai Tzur told *Israel Radio* that the army would begin destroying the Gaza Strip settlers’ homes from 7 September, three weeks after the start of the evacuation of the 21 settlements. “This operation should last around two or three weeks,” he said. Some of the rubble from the houses was expected to be used to help build a new seaport in the Gaza Strip. (AFP)

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) suspended field operations in the Gaza Strip fearing the safety of its staff following a spate of kidnappings of foreigners, a spokesperson said. The decision came after two international UNRWA employees and a Palestinian worker were abducted by gunmen in the Khan Yunis refugee camp the previous day and freed in a police raid on the militants’ hideout. Iyad Nasser, ICRC spokesperson in the Gaza Strip, said, “Because of the security situation on the ground, we cannot risk the safety of our staff. Once the security situation improves, we hope we can return to normal.” He said the organization’s headquarters in Gaza City was still operational but that employees would be restricted to office work. (Reuters)

10

Israel’s Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert expressed hope that the Gaza withdrawal would lead to a resumption of peace talks and rejected allegations that the plan was a ploy to strengthen Israel’s grip on the West Bank. Speaking to foreign reporters in Jerusalem, he said the fate of the West Bank was still subject to negotiations. When asked about the apparent contradiction between his comments and those of Prime Minister Sharon, Mr. Olmert said: “What I say is the policy of Israel ... This is the policy of the Prime Minister of Israel.” He also urged Palestinians to “rise to this opportunity” and “understand that this is a significant move that must be responded to equally by the Palestinians”. “The Israeli Government voluntarily decided, without any outside pressure, to pull out from these territories for the sake of one thing: to lay out the foundations for the beginning of a meaningful dialogue between us and the Palestinians,” Mr. Olmert said. (AP)

Residents of the “Homesh” settlement in the West Bank began handing over their weapons to security officers on Wednesday as part of an effort to prevent violence during Israel’s upcoming withdrawal from the area. (AP)

Senior IDF and Israeli police officers indicated that the number of anti-disengagement activists who had infiltrated the “Gush Katif” settlement block had risen to 2,700. (Ha’aretz)

PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat said Israel’s upcoming withdrawal from Gaza entailed no commitments on the part of the PA. In a lecture to the Association of International Affairs in Amman published today, Mr. Erakat said the Israeli pullout was a unilateral move not coordinated with the Palestinians. He stressed that the PA would not accept provisional borders for the future Palestinian State and would not “negotiate on Gaza’s final borders without the West Bank because it is a matter for final settlement negotiations”. “We are ready now for the choice of the two States, as stipulated by the [Road Map](#), which calls for establishing a Palestinian State in the territories captured by Israel in 1967,” Mr. Erakat further said. He also accused Israel of seeking to modify realities on the ground through the construction of the wall and new settlements in the West Bank. (UPI)

Israel Radio reported that Israel and the PA agreed in principle on the issue of demolishing settlers’ homes in the settlements to be evacuated from the Gaza Strip and the northern West Bank. A PA statement said Israel would carry out the first stage of the demolition, and the second would be completed with help from Egypt and financed by the World Bank. According to the statement, the process of demolition would include 2,800 settler

houses and 26 synagogues in the 25 settlements, 21 in the Gaza Strip and 4 in the northern West Bank. Palestinian security sources said that the meeting in Jerusalem between PA Civil Affairs Minister Mohamed Dahlan and Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz, attended also by the Quartet envoy James Wolfensohn, started late on 9 August and ended the next morning. The radio said Mr. Mofaz handed Mr. Dahlan a list of the buildings that Israel would demolish in the settlements. Some of the rubble would be reused and the rest would be buried in the Gaza Strip and Egyptian territories near the border. Hazardous materials are to be transferred to Israel for supervised burial. However, a source close to Mr. Dahlan told *AFP* that "No agreement has been reached with the Israelis. We have insisted that the Israeli side takes responsibility for not only the demolitions but also for clearing the rubble in accordance with international law". (*AFP, DPA, Xinhua*)

PA Interior Minister Nasser Yousef expressed his protest to US security envoy Lt. Gen. William Ward against Israel's intentions not to hand over to the Palestinian security forces the areas in the northern West Bank that Israel would evacuate. The protest came after Israeli Deputy Chief of Staff Gen. Moshe Kaplanski informed PA Deputy Interior Minister Gen. Jamal Abu Zayed that the IDF would remain in the four settlements in the West Bank that would be evacuated. Mr. Yousef clarified that he agreed with the Israeli side on a plan to deploy Palestinian troops in the coming days to fill the vacuum that would be caused after the Israeli pullout. (*Xinhua*)

Prime Minister Sharon said in a TV interview that, "The settlement blocks will continue to exist. I will not negotiate on the subject of Jerusalem. The blocks will remain territorially linked to the State of Israel ... At the same time, there will be no return of 1948 Palestinian refugees to Israel." Mr. Sharon said he had conveyed this point "in the clearest terms possible" to President Bush and European leaders. (*AFP*)

Lebanon's President Emile Lahoud stressed that Palestine refugees should have the right to return to their homeland and have a country of their own, during a meeting with Abbas Zaki, a member of the Fatah Central Committee. (*Xinhua*)

A spokesperson for European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy Benita Ferrero-Waldner said the Commission would target €60 million for projects in the Gaza Strip after Israel's withdrawal. The aid is aimed at building and rehabilitating infrastructure and strengthening Palestinian institutions. (*AFP*)

II

Palestinians fired at IDF troops along the Gaza Strip-Egypt border. No casualties were reported. (*Ha'aretz*)

IDF troops entered Nablus, Qalqilya and Tulkarm and clashed with a group of militants, wounding Fadi Qeshta, 30, a leader of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, and arresting several Palestinians. (*IPC, Wafa*)

A military court sentenced IDF soldier Wahid Taysir to 8 years in prison for the fatal shooting of British activist Tom Hurndall in the Gaza Strip in April 2003. (*Ha'aretz*)

Palestinians opened fire at Israeli troops near the "Neve Dekalim" settlement in the southern Gaza Strip, causing no casualties. Also, Israeli troops found and safely detonated a 25-kg bomb in the northern Gaza Strip. (*Ha'aretz*)

Israeli soldiers set up two checkpoints at the northern entrance of Azzun village, east of Qalqilya, and held dozens of residents and vehicles for several hours. Also, Israeli soldiers backed by military vehicles, stormed the Nur Shams refugee camp, east of Tulkarm, firing live ammunition and grenades at dozens of homes. Soldiers arrested a 27-year-old Palestinian in the camp after punching and clubbing him. An 18-year-old university student was hospitalized after Israeli soldiers severely punched and clubbed him while trying to cross the Beit Eeba checkpoint. (*PA International Press Centre*)

IDF troops and Israeli police completed their final evacuation simulation drill before the disengagement. (*Ha'aretz*)

Egypt's *Al-Ahram* newspaper quoted unidentified official sources as saying the negotiations with Israel to finalize the agreement on deploying Egyptian troops along the Egypt-Gaza Strip border had been completed. Egypt and the PA would share full control over the Rafah border crossing.

Egypt had proposed that the Multinational Force and Observers deployed in Sinai should take part in securing the border. (*Ha'aretz, UPI*)

PA President Abbas has asked US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to pressure Israel to evacuate the Rafah crossing, the PA Interior Ministry said. In their phone conversation, Mr. Abbas also briefed Ms. Rice on the latest PA preparations for the Gaza Strip withdrawal and the coordination meetings between the two sides. (*Xinhua*)

The PA and Hamas had agreed on setting up a joint committee of all the national and Islamic factions to monitor the Israeli pullout from the Gaza Strip, PA security sources reported. (*Xinhua*)

A joint Israeli-Palestinian security operations room to monitor the Israeli pullout and the deployment of PA security forces had started work, the PA Interior Ministry said in a statement. (*Ha'aretz*)

Opponents of the Israeli pullout from the Gaza Strip are to conduct a mass rally in Tel Aviv. The "Regional Councils of Judea, Samaria and Gaza Strip (Yesha)" settler organization predicts a turnout of around 100,000 people. (*AFP*)

12

The Israeli army said Palestinians opened fire at an army post guarding the "Gadid" settlement in the southern Gaza Strip, causing no injuries or damage. The army arrested nine Islamic Jihad members in Arraba village, south-west of Jenin, and another in Kalil village, south of Nablus. (*www.idf.il*)

Palestinians opened fire at Israeli troops near the "Neve Dekalim" settlement in the southern Gaza Strip, causing no casualties. (*Ha'aretz*)

Nine Israelis, including a female soldier, and three foreign nationals were arrested during a protest against the construction of the wall in Bil'in village, west of Ramallah. Protesters said one female demonstrator had been wounded in the head. (*Ha'aretz*)

Hamas leaders said the group would not disarm despite Israel's planned withdrawal. "Arms are a holy issue. It is impossible for us to abandon our arms even if we all get killed. The issue of arms is not one for discussion," Ahmed Al-Ghandour, head of the group's armed wing, Izz ad-Din Al-Qassam Brigades, told reporters in the northern Gaza Strip. Mr. Al-Ghandour also said Hamas would not join Palestinian security agencies despite PA President Abbas' efforts to coax the group to do so. "We will preserve our structure and increase our force," he said. "This army will continue to defend our homeland as long as one inch of Palestine remains occupied," senior Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar told reporters, after attending a training session for about 1,000 Brigades members simulating the storming of settlements and attacks on Israeli troops. (*AFP, Reuters*)

The Israeli Defence Ministry said in a statement that it planned to complete the disengagement process by 4 September rather than in mid-September, as originally targeted. Security officials said the target date had been modified because 55,000 soldiers and police would be involved in the process, about 10,000 more than originally planned. (*AP*)

Yossi Beilin, head of the Yahad Party, said his Economic Cooperation Foundation had bought about 90 per cent of the green houses in the Gaza Strip for US\$14 million and would hand them over to the Palestinians after Israel's withdrawal. Mr. Beilin said the funds had come from private donations, including US\$500,000 from Quartet Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement James Wolfensohn. (*AP, Ha'aretz, Reuters*)

Asked in an interview with the *Yediot Ahronot* newspaper whether Israel would eventually pull out of several small West Bank settlements beyond four to be dismantled as part of the disengagement plan, Prime Minister Sharon said, "Not everything will be there. The issue will be raised during the final status talks with the Palestinians." He reiterated, however, that Israel would keep major settlement blocks in any peace deal. (*AP*)

Some 25 armed settlers from the "Einav settlement" marched through Palestinian villages in Area A in an attempt to reach the "Sa-Nur" and "Homesh" settlements, north of Nablus, both of which were to be evacuated as part of the disengagement plan. Nine of them were detained by

police and the rest were subsequently tracked down by security forces. (*Ha'aretz*)

UNICEF Executive Director Ann M. Veneman [warned](#) that if Israel's disengagement did not proceed peacefully, children could be in particular danger, noting that children under 18 made up about half of the Palestinian population in the Gaza Strip and that there were also hundreds of children among the Israeli settlers. Between September 2000 and 31 July 2005, 829 children under the age of 18 had been killed in the conflict, 713 of those Palestinian, UNICEF said. (*Reuters*, www.unicef.org)

13

PA President Abbas approved amendments to the Basic Law which stipulate that a PA President would be elected every four years and can run for only two consecutive terms. The amendments also limited the term of the PLC to four years after which new elections would be held. (*DPA*)

PA Deputy Prime Minister Nabil Sha'ath announced that the PA would start reconstructing the partially destroyed Gaza International Airport immediately after the Israeli withdrawal. (*Xinhua*)

In the statement entitled "Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land," adopted by a 668-269 vote, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America denounced the West Bank separation barrier, saying that Israeli policy throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory had brought "extreme hardship" to Palestinians. (*AP*)

Hamas' founders and top political leaders held a press conference in Gaza City. "Hamas remains committed to the choice of resistance as a strategic choice. Hamas remains committed to its military wing and its right to possess weapons," said Ismail Haniya, a Hamas leader. "Hamas rejects the idea of allowing any single party to monopolize the decision-making process," he added. (*AP*)

14

Palestinian militants opened fire on the settlement of "Kfar Darom" in the Gaza Strip. IDF troops fired tank shells towards the source of fire, hitting an IDF vehicle and wounding five soldiers. (*Ha'aretz*, *Xinhua*)

Israeli settlers clashed with IDF troops near a northern West Bank settlement slated to be evacuated. An IDF officer was taken to a hospital and one settler was also wounded. The IDF detained three protesters. (*Ha'aretz*)

IDF soldiers lowered a road barrier sealing the Gaza Strip to Israeli civilians at midnight. (*AP*)

A senior PA official announced that leaders of Hamas and Islamic Jihad would attend the meeting of the PLO Executive Committee the following day. (*Xinhua*)

15

Palestinians fired two mortar shells which landed in the central Gaza Strip settlement of "Gadid". (*Ha'aretz*)

IDF troops fired in the air to keep back hundreds of Palestinians, including a few dozen masked gunmen, who marched towards the Gaza Strip "Gush Katif" settlement block in celebration of the impending withdrawal. The crowd burned a cardboard model of an Israeli settlement. (*AP*)

Israeli police arrested three Israeli right-wing extremists trying to break into Al-Haram Al-Sharif in East Jerusalem. (*Ha'aretz*)

Israel Radio said that an Israeli woman was lightly wounded by stone-throwers near Nablus. (*Ha'aretz*)

Thousands of IDF troops delivered 48-hour eviction notices in Gaza Strip settlements, encountering resistance, particularly in the "Gush Katif" block.

Maj. Gen. Dan Harel, Israel's commander over the Gaza region, said the operation, with some 50,000 security forces involved, was going as anticipated. "Our estimation is that by tomorrow night most of the residents will agree to leave," he said. Although many of Gaza's 8,500 residents had already left, the IDF estimated that thousands remained, including some 5,000 protestors, mostly teenagers, who had infiltrated the Gaza Strip to resist the pullout. Soldiers were also giving eviction notices in the four northern West Bank settlements slated for evacuation. (*AP*, *Ha'aretz*)

The evacuation of the northern West Bank settlements of "Ganim" and "Kadin" had been completed. Residents of the two settlements had been gradually moving out in recent weeks. Security forces handed evacuation orders to the nine families which remained in the settlements, and they all agreed to leave peacefully. Eight families left the settlements during the day, and the last family was evacuated from "Ganim" during the night hours. Before their departure, the residents of "Kadin" held a ceremony and vowed to return to the location. The IDF took position in both settlements, which will not be razed until after the Government's vote next week. (*Ha'aretz*)

PA President Abbas issued a statement in which he said, "The Israeli withdrawal, which starts today, is a very important and historical step, but it is an initial step that should take place not only in Gaza, but in the West Bank and East Jerusalem." (*AP*)

The following statement was issued by the spokesman for Secretary-General Kofi Annan:

The Secretary-General is following attentively the process of Israeli disengagement from Gaza and the northern West Bank, which begins today and is expected to last into the month of October. This is to be the first Israeli withdrawal from occupied Palestinian territory. He is hopeful that it will be executed in a peaceful and smooth manner, building on the coordination efforts of James Wolfensohn, the Quartet Special Envoy for Disengagement.

Quartet members have been briefed by Mr. Wolfensohn about the progress achieved in the past two months and the considerable work that remains ahead. They have been discussing the role of the international community in promoting a revitalization of the peace process on the basis of the [Road Map](#). They will meet in mid-September to assess matters jointly.

The Secretary-General believes this is a moment of promise and hope. Success will demand statesmanship of the highest order, on a sustained basis, on the part of all concerned.

(*UN press release SG/SM/10044*)

PA Minister of Civil Affairs Mohammed Dahlan announced that the Israeli withdrawal process was going smoothly and according to schedule. Mr. Dahlan said that PA security forces had begun deploying around the Israeli settlements and that the withdrawal process may take two weeks. He rejected the assertion by Israel's Defense Minister Mofaz that the Rafah Crossing on the border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt would be under joint Israeli, Palestinian and Egyptian control. (*WAFA*, *Xinhua*)

"The settlement blocks in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) and the Jordan valley will remain under Israeli control," Israel's Defence Minister Mofaz told *Israel Army Radio*. "If Israel wants peace, it must choose between peace or the settlements. They can't have both at the same time," PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat said. "I ask the Israeli Government to stop making these statements, return to the peace process to continue the final negotiations and implement the [Road Map](#) to end the occupation that began in 1967," he added. (*AFP*)

PA President Abbas had scheduled 21 January 2006 as the date for legislative elections, during a meeting of the PLO Executive Committee, said PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat. He said Mr. Abbas would issue a formal decree on 16 or 17 August. (*AP*)

Israel and Egypt had reached agreement on the protocol for the deployment of some 750 Egyptian border guards along the Salah al-Din ("Philadelphia") route on the border with Gaza, *Israel Radio* reported. Under the protocol, Israel would withdraw from the 12 kilometre-long route, created to

prevent arms smuggling into the Gaza Strip, during the disengagement or shortly after it. The radio reported that the signing of the agreement had been made possible after all the differences had been settled between the sides. The agreement had been reached during a visit to Cairo by the head of the IDF's Operations Branch, Maj. Gen. Yisrael Ziv. Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz said that Israel hoped to pull out from the Salah al-Din ("Philadelphia") route by the end of the year. (*Ha'aretz*)

Addressing Israelis in a televised speech, Prime Minister Sharon said that the dispute over the disengagement had caused deep scars in Israeli society.

He said that Israel could not expect to hold on to Gaza forever and that the unilateral pullout was Israel's answer to the current reality. "It is no secret that I, like many others, believed and hoped that we would be able to hold onto 'Netzarim' and 'Kfar Darom' forever," Mr. Sharon said. "The changing reality in the country, the region, and the world required a different assessment and a change in [my] position." He vowed the "harshest response ever" to any attack by Palestinian militants after the pullout. "This act is essential for Israel," Mr. Sharon said, adding, "We cannot hold onto Gaza forever; more than a million Palestinians live there... crowded in refugee camps, poverty and hotbeds of hatred, with no hope on the horizon." He continued by saying, "We are reducing the daily friction between the victims of both sides; the IDF will redeploy in defence lines behind the security fence. Those who continue to fight us will be met by the IDF and the security forces in their full force... the world is waiting for the Palestinian response -- a hand stretched out to peace or the fire of terror. To an outstretched hand we will respond with an olive branch." (*Ha'aretz*)

Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations, Dan Gillerman, said that the Gaza pullout should mark an end to UN hostility against Israel and urged the world body to support the withdrawal as a historic move toward peace. "It is time for the United Nations to acknowledge Israel's actions," Mr. Gillerman told a news conference. "We hope that in the United Nations there will be no more business as usual as far as the Middle East is concerned ... No more Israel-bashing, no more ongoing resolutions which keep repeating themselves time after time. We hope we will see a more positive and a less combative General Assembly, recognizing that something dramatic, historic has happened," said Mr. Gillerman. He also called for Secretary-General Kofi Annan to support Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. (*Ha'aretz, Reuters*)

"Russia welcomes the withdrawal as an important event in Palestinian-Israeli relations," Russia's Foreign Ministry said in a statement. "Israel's pullout from Gaza and part of the West Bank ... must give an additional impetus to the revival of the peace process and the advance towards a fair Palestinian-Israeli settlement within the 'Road Map' framework," the statement said. "The ultimate goal is the creation of an independent Palestinian State living side-by-side with Israel in peace and security." Turkey's Foreign Ministry said in a statement: "Israel has initiated its unilateral pullout from the Gaza Strip and partial withdrawal from the West Bank as of today. We expect such a development to create a peace dynamic that could prompt the parties to resume talks with the aim of finding a final solution on the basis of the Road Map... Radical circles who are opposed to the vision of a two-State solution could resort to violence once again to hamper the pullout process. Therefore, to preserve common sense is of vital importance for both sides." The Organization of the Islamic Conference said in a statement: "The withdrawal of the Israeli army and settlers from Gaza Strip was a positive step which will enable the Palestinian people to regain their national rights... The withdrawal should be neat and total from all Gaza Strip territories, including land, sea and air crossings and should preserve the geographical unity of the Palestinian territories in the Gaza Strip and West Bank." (*AP, www.mid.ru, www.oic-oci.org, Xinhua*)

The United States was planning to send assessment teams to Israel to help decide how much new US economic aid might be provided to help develop the Galilee and Negev regions. Already the biggest recipient of US aid at US\$2.3 billion a year, Israel is believed to be asking for another \$2.2 billion to develop the areas where many of the 8,500 Jewish settlers leaving Gaza would be relocated. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said that the Administration had made no commitment. The State Department also was looking ahead. "What is crucial is that the Israelis and the Palestinians work together to make the withdrawal a success," McCormack said, adding, "to make sure that the withdrawal takes place in an atmosphere of calm. That cooperation can lead to a building of trust between the two sides" and re-energizes the [Road Map](#) designed to produce a negotiated accord that includes the establishment of a Palestinian State. Meanwhile, the US indicated that it considered the pullout from Gaza and four isolated West Bank settlements as only the first step in a larger withdrawal. Mr. McCormack called the Gaza pullout "potentially historic" and said there should be "a further political horizon to this process." Mr. McCormack went on to say that "the Palestinian Authority and President Abbas understand that they have an obligation to dismantle terrorist networks." (*AP*)

Arab Governments expressed the hope that Israel's pullout from the Gaza Strip would be followed by the evacuation of other occupied Palestinian lands and the establishment of a Palestinian State. PA President Mahmoud Abbas acknowledged the "historic and important" nature of the Israeli pullout from the Gaza Strip after 38 years but denounced Israel's insistence to hold onto West Bank settlement blocks. Saudi Arabia said in a statement that it "looks forward to the Israeli pullout from the Gaza Strip being a step followed by other steps towards withdrawal from all occupied Palestinian territories so the Palestinian people can build their State, with Jerusalem as its capital." The statement also announced the Kingdom's commitment to the peace initiative put forward at the Arab summit held in Beirut in 2002. Lebanese President Emile Lahoud told President Abbas in a telephone conversation he "hoped the withdrawal from Gaza constitutes the beginning of the recovery of all the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people," the *ANI* State news agency said. The two Lebanese Shiite groups, Amal and Hezbollah, issued a joint statement saying, "the routing of the Israeli enemy of Gaza is a high point in the long struggle of the Palestinian resistance." Jordan's King Abdullah reacted by urging Palestinians to pull together to prevent anyone from "hampering" Israel's withdrawal, an official statement quoted him as saying to President Abbas. In Kuwait, a statement cited by the official *KUNA* news agency said Kuwait also looked forward to the Gaza withdrawal leading to the revival of peace efforts on the basis of the [Road Map](#). Bahrain's King Hamad congratulated President Abbas in a telephone call saying he hoped the pullout was "a step on the road to the establishment of a Palestinian State," with Jerusalem as its capital, the *BNA* news agency reported. Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh expressed the hope that Israel would evacuate all occupied Palestinian and Arab territories and that an independent Palestinian State would be set up, Yemen's *SABA* news agency said. (*AFP*)

France's Foreign Ministry condemned the kidnapping in Gaza City of a French television sound technician, Mohamed Ouathi, and called for his release. (*AFP*)

UNRWA decided to pull all non-essential international staff out of the Gaza Strip until further notice after a spate of kidnappings. (*AFP*)

16

Three Gaza settlements and two West Bank communities were vacated by midday, while five other Gaza settlements were rapidly thinning out, Israeli media reported. But people in several communities appeared to be digging in for a fight. Israel's Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz said he expected at least half of Gaza's 8,500 residents to be out by midnight. He said that he was determined to enforce the law and to complete the withdrawal "in as little time as possible." He said it would be decided later in which order the settlements would be dismantled. Mr. Mofaz also told the Palestinians that it was too early to celebrate. He said that after the last settler was evacuated, it would take at least another month before Israel handed the settlement areas to the Palestinians. (*AFP, AP*)

Israeli soldiers fired warning shots at Palestinian children from Khan Yunis who came to place a Hamas flag on a wall of a nearby settlement.

Palestinian police struggled to keep the children away from the wall. A Hamas rally in southern Gaza had gathered some 2,000 Palestinians, most of them children and teens, who marched through town to celebrate Israel's pullout from Gaza. About 200 masked gunmen carrying rocket launchers and machine guns were among the marchers. The PA had deployed 7,500 security forces to prevent attacks on Israelis during the pullout and promised to maintain law and order after the withdrawal. (AP)

Israeli troops arrested at least 50 persons who opposed the Israeli withdrawal. Protestors threw stones and eggs and torched garbage containers. Arrests made were mostly in the Gaza Strip settlement of "Neve Dekalim." (AP)

Palestinian security sources said Israeli troops backed by bulldozers and armoured vehicles went out from the vacant "Dugit" settlement in northern Gaza Strip and moved into the Palestinian village of al-Attatra near the town of Beit Lahiya. Witnesses said that Israeli soldiers besieged the home of Mustafa Zendah, a Palestinian farmer, and forced him and his family to evacuate the house. Meanwhile, another Israeli army force stormed the village of Wadi el-Salqa, east of Deir al-Balah. The Head of the village, Abdel Hadi Abu Maghaseeb, told reporters that dozens of Israeli soldiers in jeeps moved 500 metres into the village and searched several houses. (Xinhua)

In its weekly report, the Palestine Red Crescent Society said in its weekly report that the Israeli Army continued to violate international humanitarian law and fundamental human rights by restricting freedom of movement to Palestine Red Crescent Society ambulances and its medical teams, which resulted in two deaths and seven injuries in the West Bank and Gaza. "These practices constitute a breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the First Additional Protocol to the Geneva Convention, which are legally applicable to the Occupied Palestinian Territory", the report added.

(Wafa)

PA Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia and other Palestinian leaders began a campaign to clean up Gaza's streets under the slogan, "Gaza Clean and Beautiful." Mr. Qureia wore a t-shirt saying, "Today Gaza. Tomorrow the West Bank and Jerusalem." (AP)

On the Gaza disengagement, US President George Bush said he "supports Prime Minister Sharon on this bold initiative and believes this will strengthen Israel," according to White House spokesperson Dana Perino. (Xinhua)

Malaysia's Foreign Minister, Syed Hamid Albar, described the Gaza pullout as a "first small step" that would give momentum to peace in the Middle East and to the establishment of a Palestinian State. "We must make sure that the [Road Map](#) can be followed. I think the Israelis ... have accepted they are in occupied territories and I hope there will be a continued process," Mr. Syed Hamid said. (AP)

In a surprise visit to the Gaza Strip, US Assistant Secretary of State David Welch told Palestinian security officials that they must coordinate and cooperate with Israeli forces during the Israeli withdrawal. Lt. Gen. William Ward, US Security Coordinator in the Middle East, accompanied Mr. Welch. The visit was the first by a senior US official after an 18-month ban on travel following an attack on a US diplomatic convoy. Israel's overall Gaza Strip Commander, Maj. Gen. Dan Harel, said the level of rockets attacks from Palestinian militants had fallen sharply since the withdrawal began. (Ha'aretz)

Jordan's King Abdullah II vowed to oppose settling more Palestinian refugees in his country. In an impromptu meeting with members of Parliament, Cabinet and former Prime Ministers, he said, "I know and do appreciate the fears of some of you that plans may exist to redraw the map of the region and to settle some historic issues at the expense of Jordan." King Abdullah's remarks had been aimed at Jordanians, who had been increasingly suspicious of Israel's peace intentions. The King urged Jordanians to confront any plan aiming to "deprive Palestinians of their right to return to their homeland or establish their independent State on Palestinian soil and nowhere else. If such a plan exists, it is a plot against the Palestinian people as much as it is a plot against Jordan," he said. (AP)

Jordanian Prime Minister Adnan Badran applauded the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and reiterated Jordan's continued support for the Palestinian cause. Mr. Badran called for international assistance in rebuilding the Gaza Strip and constructing Palestine's economic system, adding that Jordan would help train Palestinian security staff. (Xinhua)

Speaking to a delegation of the Israeli Labour Party in Cairo, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said he hoped the pullout from the Gaza Strip and the northern West Bank would end peacefully, adding that disengagement would favourably affect not only relations between Israel and the Palestinians, but also Israel's relations with the international community. The delegation included former Prime Minister Ehud Barak and MKs Danny Yatom and Colette Avital. Mr. Mubarak asked the delegation to ease restrictions on the daily life for the Palestinians, and said that a Gaza port would help strengthen PA President Mahmoud Abbas. (Ha'aretz)

17

Four Palestinians were killed in the West Bank when a settler grabbed a gun from an Israeli guard and opened fire on Palestinian workers in an industrial area of the "Shilo" settlement, some 10 kilometres south of Nablus. Two Palestinians were wounded. The settler, from the nearby "Shvut Raheel" settlement, was arrested. (CNN)

Israeli troops found a 10-kg explosives belt hidden in a water tank during a raid on the town of Mawasi in the Gaza Strip. Four Palestinians, allegedly members of Islamic Jihad, were arrested, the army said in a statement. (AP, Reuters)

Palestinians fired a mortar shell at an Israeli army post near the "Morag" settlement where troops were taking part in the evacuation of settlers, according to military sources. There were no reports of injuries. Shortly afterwards, Palestinian gunmen and Israeli troops traded fire near the "Kfar Darom" settlement in the central Gaza Strip, *Israel Radio* reported. (AFP)

The Israeli army said a mortar shell fired by Palestinians had landed near kibbutz Nir-Am in Israel, causing no injuries or damage. Three Islamic Jihad members were arrested in Qabatiya village, south of Jenin. At the Huwara checkpoint, south of Nablus, soldiers detained a 17-year-old Palestinian carrying an explosive device and bullets. In the Gaza Strip, Palestinian gunmen opened fire at an army post guarding the "Neve Dekalim" settlement, causing no injuries or damage. (www.idf.il)

Two Palestinians, aged 20 and 26, were reportedly sent to a hospital after they were severely beaten by Israeli soldiers in Bal'a village, north-east of Tulkarm. (Wafa)

Israeli troops had begun an operation to evict settlers from the Gaza Strip settlements after a deadline for them to leave had expired. Hundreds of troops, escorted by bulldozers, marched into the "Neveh Dekalim" settlement, where protestors were carried away onto buses. In "Kfar Darom," youths blocked all access to the centre and fortified the settlement's synagogue. It was reported that the Gaza Strip settlements of "Dugit," "Peat Sadeh," and "Rafiah Yam" were now empty, while others were thinning out. Troops had moved into "Morag," "Bedolah," and "Ganei Tal." (BBC News, Ha'aretz)

The evacuation of the settlers in the Gaza Strip had gone faster than anticipated, such that all settlements could be vacant by early next week and the demolition of settler homes to begin a few days later, according to the Israeli army. "The struggle against the evacuation has passed from the broad-based to the individual," said Maj. Gen. Yisrael Ziv, commander of the army's Operation Branch. The IDF Southern Command and the Disengagement Administration said that more than half the settlers in the Gaza Strip – 832 families of the 1,550 registered as residents – had left their houses by midnight of the previous. The evacuation of the settlers in the Gaza Strip had gone faster than anticipated, such that all settlements could be vacant by early next week and the demolition of settler homes to begin a few days later, according to the Israeli army. "The struggle against the evacuation has passed from the broad-based to the individual," said Maj. Gen. Yisrael Ziv, commander of the army's Operation Branch. The IDF

Southern Command and the Disengagement Administration said that more than half the settlers in the Gaza Strip – 832 families out of the 1,550 registered as residents – had left their houses by midnight of the previous day. (*Ha'aretz*)

The Israeli army announced that the evacuation of five “Gush Katif” settlements, “Morag,” “Tel Katifa,” “Bedolah,” “Ganei Ta’ and “Karem Atzmona,” had been completed. A soldier was slightly wounded during the evacuation of “Morag” when she was stabbed by an Israeli protestor with a syringe. (www.idf.il)

Prime Minister Sharon praised troops for showing “great sensitivity” in the operation. He said, “I want to appeal to everyone not to attack the police and ... soldiers and not to blame them or make things difficult for them. Attack me. I am responsible for this.” Mr. Sharon also said, “There is no doubt that the Palestinians are making efforts for the withdrawal to take place in a calm fashion.” He added that, “settlement is a serious programme that will continue and develop.” (*AFP, BBC News, Ha'aretz*)

PA President Abbas condemned the killing of four Palestinians near the “Shiloh” settlement by an Israeli settler, but urged Palestinians to show “restraint and not be dragged into further crimes,” PA spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeina said. (*AFP*)

Prime Minister Sharon’s office said in a [statement](http://www.pmo.gov.il) on the killing of four Palestinians near the “Shiloh” settlement: “[Prime Minister Sharon] views with utmost gravity this act of Jewish terrorism, which was directed at innocent Palestinians in the warped desire to thereby stop the Disengagement Plan.” The statement also said that Mr. Sharon had instructed the Defence Minister, IDF Chief of Staff, Police Commissioner and Shin Bet Chief to “treat with utmost seriousness any attempt to attack innocent people.” (www.pmo.gov.il)

PA President Abbas began to coordinate the takeover of the settlements once the Israelis had left, which would include representatives of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad. Sources said that Mr. Abbas had called for serious changes and decisions after the Israeli withdrawal, decisions aimed at ensuring the rule of law and encouraging the reconstruction process. He would also choose new advisers eager to work for the public.

Meanwhile, Mr. Abbas approved the establishment of a national committee to supervise the Israeli withdrawal. Ibrahim Abu Al-Naja, Chief of the Follow-up Committee for Islamic and National parties, said that the national committee was part of the follow-up committee and would include representatives of 13 Palestinian political factions. (*BBC News, Xinhua*)

Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar said that Israel’s non-violent pullout was appreciated by all sides. He added that Palestinian resistance would grow if Israel continued to expand settlements in the West Bank. He said the calmness deal would expire by the end of this year. He told reporters that although Palestinian factions, mainly Hamas, honoured the agreement, Israel had not shown commitment to the ceasefire. (*BBC News, Xinhua*)

Hundreds of Egyptian troops arrived in the Sinai Peninsula to be deployed along the border with the Gaza Strip, an Egyptian intelligence official said. (*AP*)

PA Minister of Higher Education Naim Abu Al-Humous met in Ramallah with the representative of Norway and signed the “Norwegian Emergency Support Project.” The project, worth approximately US\$2.5 million, is aimed at creating a safe education environment and enhancing the economy through job creation. (*Wafa*)

In an [interview](#) with *The New York Times*, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said on the Israeli withdrawal, “Everyone empathizes with what the Israelis are facing,” adding, “It cannot be Gaza only.” She insisted Israel must take further steps soon after the Gaza withdrawal, including loosening travel restrictions in the West Bank and withdrawing from more Palestinian cities. (*The New York Times*)

The EU Presidency held by the UK condemned in a [statement](http://www.eu2005.gov.uk) the killing of four Palestinians near the “Shiloh” settlement. (www.eu2005.gov.uk)

The European Union welcomed Israel’s withdrawal from the Gaza Strip as an important step on the road to enacting the [Road Map](#), according to an EU Commission spokesperson in Brussels. The EU hoped that the Gaza pullout would “be as orderly as possible” and called on Israelis and Palestinians to work together to fully implement the Road Map. (*DPA*)

EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana said in a [statement](#): “Three days into Disengagement, I am pleased to note the orderly conduct of the withdrawal operations so far. ... I hope that the evident signs of restraint on both sides will be maintained throughout. Against this background, I strongly condemn the attack on Palestinian civilians near the northern West Bank settlement of Shiloh”. (*Reuters, http://ue.eu.int*)

Former United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Terje Rød-Larsen, the Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559, said that Israel’s withdrawal could be a historic “tipping point” if followed by negotiations on a final peace agreement, but warned: “If this is the first step and the last step, I’m afraid that within months, we will be back into a situation where violence and terrorism will prevail again and the living conditions of the citizens of Gaza will continue to deteriorate.” (*AP*)

18

Palestinians fired two mortar bombs at the “Gadid” settlement in the southern Gaza Strip, causing no injuries or damage, according to the Israeli army. (*Reuters*)

Palestinians fired three mortar shells at the evacuated “Morag” settlement in the “Gush Katif” block, causing no casualties. (*AP*)

Palestinian gunmen opened fire on Israeli troops manning the Huwara checkpoint, south of Nablus. The troops returned fire, and a brief gun battle erupted. No injuries were reported. (*AP*)

The Israeli army said Palestinians had opened fire at an army force guarding the “Neve Dekalim” settlement, causing no injuries or damage. (www.idf.il)

An Israeli soldier was slightly injured in a Qassam rocket attack on the “Netzarim” settlement in the central Gaza Strip. (*Ha'aretz*)

Israeli forces stationed at the entrance of Beit Hanoun in the northern Gaza Strip shot and seriously wounded a 28-year-old Palestinian in the abdomen. (*Wafa*)

The Israeli army said Palestinian gunmen had opened fire at an army force on the “Karni-Netzarim route” in the northern Gaza Strip, slightly wounding a soldier. Also, a mortar shell fired by Palestinians landed near the “Kissufim” crossing between the southern Gaza Strip and Israel.

Palestinian gunmen shot at an army post near Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip. In the West Bank, Palestinian gunmen opened fire at an Israeli vehicle near the "Beracha" settlement. There were no injuries or damage in those four incidents. (www.idf.il)

Israeli security forces completed the evacuation of the "Netzer Hazani" settlement in the "Gush Katif" block in the Gaza Strip. The security forces also completed the evacuation of three other settlements: "Shirat Hayam", "Kfar Yam" and "Gan Or", after protesters were forcibly removed. (*Ha'aretz*, *The Jerusalem Post*, www.idf.il)

Israeli security forces removed protesters from the rooftop of a synagogue in the "Kfar Darom" settlement in the "Gush Katif" block, completing the evacuation of the settlement. Around 58 people were injured, among them at least 27 police officers, 3 soldiers and 14 protesters. In the "Neve Dekalim" settlement in "Gush Katif," military and police forces removed about 1,500 protesters from synagogues, completing the evacuation after a two-day standoff. (*AP*, *Ha'aretz*)

More than 100 armed settlers from "Sanur," north of Nablus, which is to be evacuated as part of the disengagement plan, burst into a petrol station in nearby Jaba village, damaged property and attacked and looted a Palestinian house, according to security sources and witnesses. (*AFP*)

Israeli soldiers, backed by armoured vehicles and tanks, entered Tammun town and the Far'a refugee camp, north-east of Nablus, and arrested two Palestinians after a house-to-house search. Also, Israeli troops thrust into the centre of Tulkarm, firing sound grenades at houses, breaking into some of them, and arresting three Palestinians. In Mawasi town in the Gaza Strip, Israeli soldiers conducted a house-to-house search and arrested one Palestinian. (*Wafa*)

The following statement was issued by the spokesman for Secretary-General Kofi Annan:

If there is to be peace in the Middle East, it will require leadership, vision and the willingness of leaders on both sides to make sacrifices for the greater good.

In this context, the Secretary-General commends the courageous decision of Prime Minister Sharon to carry through with the painful process of disengagement from the Gaza Strip and part of the northern West Bank. The Secretary-General hopes that both Palestinians and Israelis will exercise restraint in this challenging period. He condemns the terror attack of 17 August against Palestinian civilians, and sends his condolences to the families of the victims and to the Palestinian Authority.

The Secretary-General believes that a successful disengagement should be the first step towards a resumption of the peace process, in accordance with the [Road Map](#). He notes that it is an important opportunity for the Palestinian Authority to demonstrate its commitment to peace and security by establishing the rule of law in Gaza following the withdrawal.

(*UN press release SG/SM/10051*)

In an interview with the Kuwaiti daily *Al-Rai Al-Aam*, Israel's Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom said, "The Gaza Strip will not become a prison," and said it would be open to Egypt and humanitarian missions and goods would be allowed to cross from the West Bank. "It depends on how things go after the Gaza example and whether it will succeed, so that we don't move to another failure. ... If Gaza turns into a base for shooting missiles at Israel and increasing Palestinian attacks, it will be impossible to move on to another step and take a new risk," Mr. Shalom said. (*AP*)

In a telephone conversation with PA President Abbas, Russian Federation President Putin expressed satisfaction with the continuing dialogue between Israel and the Palestinians and stressed the importance of Mr. Abbas' appeal to the Palestinian population to refrain from provocations during the Israeli pullout. "Practical aspects concerning foreign aid to the Palestinian Authority, including Russian plans in this area, were addressed during the conversation," the Kremlin said in a statement. (*AFP*)

19

Palestinians opened fire at an Israeli army post guarding the "Gadid" settlement, causing no injury or damage. (www.idf.il)

Israeli security forces completed the evacuation of the "Gadid" settlement in the "Gush Katif" block, after removing dozens of young protesters who had barricaded themselves on rooftops. Four more settlements were left in the Gaza Strip to be evacuated next week: "Atzmona," "Elei Sinai," "Katif" and "Netzarim." (*BBC*, *Ha'aretz*)

Demolition of settler homes in the Gaza Strip had started as Israeli bulldozers crushed several homes in the "Kerem Atzmona" settlement.

According to an agreement between Israel and the PA, the Israeli Defence Ministry would be responsible for tearing down house walls, and Egyptian and Palestinian companies contracted by the World Bank would finish the demolition work after Israel had completed its withdrawal. (*Ha'aretz*)

An Israeli security source said Israel would begin on 23 August, after completing the withdrawal of all settlers from the Gaza Strip, the forced evacuation of the "Sanur" and "Homesh" settlements, the last of the four West Bank settlements to be evacuated under the disengagement plan. All residents of the other two settlements, "Ganim" and "Kadim," have left voluntarily. (*Ha'aretz*, *Reuters*)

In an interview with *Yediot Ahronot*, Prime Minister Sharon said, "No other disengagement is expected. Instead, a return to the implementation of the [Road Map](#) is expected. The burden of proof now rests on the Palestinian side." (*AP*)

PA President Abbas said Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip was the result of Palestinian "sacrifices" and "patience" and promised to rebuild houses destroyed by Israel in the Gaza Strip. He regarded the pullout as a "first step." He also promised that the airport would be rebuilt. (*Ha'aretz*)

Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak praised Prime Minister Sharon as a "courageous and daring" leader who could bring peace to the Middle East.

Australian Prime Minister John Howard welcomed the Israeli pullout from the Gaza Strip settlements and described it as a courageous move towards peace. German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer said the "Israeli decision to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and four colonies in the West Bank is a historic step and a mark of great courage."

Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar welcomed the pullout as the right move towards the creation of an independent Palestinian State. Philippine Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo said, "While this is an important step towards peace, it is our hope that Israel carry out other actions that will eventually lead to an independent Palestinian State." Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei described the Israeli withdrawal as a "very important event" owing to the long-time struggle of the Palestinians, the official *IRNA* news agency reported. "It is interesting to know that this withdrawal was not a choice. ... It was due to the resistance of the Palestinian people," he said.

(*AFP*, *Xinhua*)

20

PA President Abbas said that Israel could only prove it was serious [about making peace] if it stopped its West Bank settlement programme. Mr. Abbas said the settlement of "Netzarim" would eventually form part of a seaport for the Gaza Strip, and thousands of public housing units would be built in "Morag." (*AFP*, *BBC*)

21

Palestinians shot at an IDF position near "Neve Dekalim," lightly wounding a soldier. Mortar shells were also fired at the Egypt-Gaza Strip border

fence. No casualties were reported. (AFP, Ha'aretz)

Fatah members, armed with assault rifles, converged on the Palestinian Legislative Council building in the Gaza Strip to demand jobs in a protest. Their spokesman, Abu Jihad, said, "We are here only to send a message that Fatah fighters should be treated fairly. Jobs should be secured for those who made dear sacrifices." The protestors came close to scuffles with police before commanders on both sides ordered calm. The protestors then dispersed. (Ha'aretz)

The IDF and police had completed the evacuations of settlers from "Slav," "Katif," "Dugit," "Elei Sinai," "Atsmona," and "Neve Dekalim." The IDF and police had completed the evacuations of settlers from "Slav," "Katif," "Dugit," "Elei Sinai," "Atsmona," and "Neve Dekalim." (AFP, BBC News, Ha'aretz)

The Israeli Cabinet gave the final approval for the evacuation of three small settlements in the northern Gaza Strip and four settlements in the northern West Bank. (AFP, BBC News)

PA President Ahmed Qureia arrived in Damascus for talks with the Syrian leadership concerning the Israeli withdrawal. Mr. Qureia said his visit "comes within the framework of continuous cooperation, coordination and consultation with our brothers in Syria." (Xinhua)

Senior US State Department Envoy David Welch after meeting with PA President Abbas in the Gaza Strip said the pullout could "re-energize" the [Road Map](#). At a joint news conference with Mr. Welch, Mr. Abbas said the US had pledged an additional US\$30 million to support Palestinian water projects. He said Mr. Welch had indicated the United States' "concern with what is happening here and the future of the region." Mr. Abbas said, "We have to reach the moment when the vision of President Bush to have two states for the Israelis and the Palestinians is implemented." Mr. Welch said their discussions had revolved around security in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, adding that the PA "has a good economic reform programme to revive Gaza's economy, as well as the West Bank's." (AFP, UPI)

The *Al-Ayyam* daily reported that James Wolfensohn, the Middle East Quartet's Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement, had finalized plans for the Gaza Strip after the Israeli withdrawal. Mr. Wolfensohn was helping the Palestinians and the Israelis reach an agreement that would determine responsibilities of each party after the pullout. The agreement would involve the issue of settlers' homes, terminals and passages. (Xinhua)

PA Minister of Civilian Affairs Mohamed Dahlan said the PA was holding intensive contacts with Israel over control of the Gaza Strip passages. He added that the two sides were holding meetings to avoid any contradiction on issues of crossings. (Xinhua)

Daniel Barenboim and the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, the youth orchestra he founded in 1998 together with Edward Said comprising musicians from Israel, Lebanon and Syria, gave a concert at the Cultural Palace in Ramallah. To travel to Ramallah, each musician was issued a diplomatic passport by the Spanish Government (the orchestra's summer training camps are based in Seville). At the end of the concert PA Information Minister Nabil Sha'ath praised Mr. Barenboim as "a humanist and a peacemaker". (The Guardian)

22

The remaining settlers in the Gaza Strip left the settlement of "Netzarim" after a farewell march behind Torah scrolls and a massive menorah and then boarding armoured buses to take them out of the Gaza Strip. At the time of the evacuation, there were 100 families, about 500 persons in all.

The settlers had reportedly agreed to relocate as a group to the West Bank settlement of "Ariel," where they would be housed in dormitories. (AP, BBC News, Ha'aretz)

IDF troops arrested 87 settlers en route to the settlements of "Sanur" and "Homesh" in the northern West Bank. Meanwhile, more than 5,000 troops headed to the two settlements slated for evacuation. (Ha'aretz)

Hamas members said they were involved in 54 per cent of the approximately 400 attacks on Israeli targets in the Gaza Strip during the past five years.

Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades were responsible for 22 attacks, or 5.5 per cent of the total. Islamic Jihad carried out 34 attacks, or 8.5 per cent of the total, according to a Hamas web site. Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhuri said the truce would be in force until the end of the year. (AP)

French journalist Mohamed Ouathi, who had been abducted more than a week earlier, had been freed. (AP, Ha'aretz)

Political prepositioning among Palestinian groups such as Fatah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad over the future control of Gaza's towns intensified as Israel completed the evacuation of settlers from the Gaza Strip. Islamic Jihad and Hamas members staged marches in Rafah in southern Gaza and in Nablus in the West Bank, burning cardboard models of Israeli settlements and tanks as crowds cheered. About 10,000 Palestinians attended the Hamas rally in Gaza City. A Hamas leader, Ismail Haniyeh, said the group deserved a share of power, and there could not be just one decision-maker. PA President Abbas, speaking to hundreds of disabled Palestinians, many wounded in fighting, said, "Today we are getting part of the payoff, of your sacrifice, by seeing the last settlers leaving Gaza; the credit for the evacuation is for you and for the martyrs who sacrificed themselves and gave their lives for the homeland." Former Palestinian Cabinet Minister Ziad Abu Amr, a mediator between Hamas and the PA, said the Palestinians have so far handled themselves well during the Israeli pullout, but he was increasingly worried about the growing competition among militants. (AP)

An official in Mr. Sharon's office said, "The President of the Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas telephoned the Prime Minister to express his congratulations about the withdrawal from Gaza which he described as a courageous and historic decision," adding that Mr. Abbas had expressed hope that the withdrawal would enable the opening of a new chapter in relations between the two people and underlined "the necessity to work together towards peace, for the future of both peoples and for the region". Mr. Sharon's office said that the two leaders had agreed to meet again "soon" although no date has been fixed. Mr. Abbas' spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeina confirmed the telephone conversation. (AFP)

A senior Government official, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed a *Jerusalem Post* report quoting Prime Minister Sharon as saying that Israel would continue to build in the West Bank. The newspaper quoted Mr. Sharon as saying that the "Ariel" settlement block "will remain a part of Israel forever, connected territorially to Israel." The "Ma'aleh Adumim" block outside Jerusalem, he said, "will continue to grow and be connected to Jerusalem." (AP)

PA Minister for Civil Affairs Mohammad Dahlan commented on Mr. Sharon's plan for settlement expansion by saying, "This is the same Sharon who, a month before announcing the disengagement, declared that "Netzarim" and Tel Aviv are the same. It's clear to us that a deep change has occurred in the perception of Israel's political leadership and public in regards to the settlements." However, Mr. Dahlan warned that if Israel continued to expand West Bank settlements and reinforce existing ones, "it will lead both peoples to more losses and defeats." He also said, "We made it clear to the international community that it would be yet another strategic mistake by the Israelis that would undermine the peace process and place both peoples before even greater dangers." (Palestine Media Center)

PA Minister of Foreign Affairs Nasser Al-Kidwa said the international community must maintain the legal status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory after the Israeli withdrawal. He also said reconstructing what the Israelis had destroyed needed international support based on Palestinian priorities.

He said Palestinians rejected the establishment of a State within temporary borders or to turn the Gaza Strip into a big prison, stressing the necessity that Palestinians must control the crossing points and have a geographical contiguity with the West Bank. (Wafa)

Israel and Egypt have concluded the drafting of an agreement entitled "Agreed arrangement regarding the deployment of a designated force of border guards along the border in the Rafah area." The agreement had yet to be presented to the Israeli Cabinet and the Knesset for approval. Israel demands that Egypt undertake not to transfer arms and ammunition to the PA in the Gaza Strip. The agreement covers the prevention of terror, smuggling and infiltrations in the area. The Egyptian Border Guard Force would number 750 troops and administrative officials. In addition, 30

members of the Egyptian Navy would be entrusted with guarding the coastline. (*Ha'aretz*)

The Israeli army had allowed more than 500 journalists, one for every three settler families, into the Gaza Strip to cover the withdrawal. They were provided with shuttle buses and refreshments. Journalists were in almost every settler home, embedded with military units and broadcasting live.

(*AP*)

At a press conference organized by the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee (PARC) and the Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center (JLAC) at the Palestinian Media Center in Al-Bireh, Azmi Bishara, Knesset Member and chairman of the National Democratic Assembly Party, said that during the Israeli pullout from the Gaza Strip, Israel had launched the construction of 3,951 settlement units, including thousands of buildings, in the West Bank. Mr. Bishara said Prime Minister Sharon made it clear that he was continuing the expansion of settlements in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, when the Israeli Government took a number of decisions in July to enhance settlements in the Jordan Valley and Jerusalem. Mr. Bishara urged Palestinians, the Arabs and the international community not to be misled by the settlers' "melodrama" in Gaza and to pay very close attention to the facts on the ground and the ongoing settlement activities, especially in the Jordan Valley. Fathi Khderat from PARC said the Israeli authorities had issued ultimatums to 300 Palestinian families in the Jordan Valley on 18 August to evacuate their homes that were to be destroyed. Mr. Khderat also criticized the neglect of all concerned parties to offer basic services and infrastructure to the Palestinians that could help them survive and resist the Israeli aggressive measures in the Jordan Valley. (*Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee*)

Addressing veterans in Salt Lake City, US President George W. Bush welcomed Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip as a historic step that would help the efforts towards peace in the Middle East. "In the heart of the Middle East, a hopeful story is unfolding," Mr. Bush said, adding, "Peace is within reach in the Holy Land." (*Reuters*)

23

Three Palestinians, including Jihad member Zihad Zakarneh, who had opened fire at an IDF post, were wounded in return of fire by the Israeli soldiers in the Qabatya area, around 15 kilometres (9 miles) from the settlements of "Sanur" and "Homesh", sources on both sides said. (*AFP*)

The Israeli army and police completed the evacuations of all 21 Gaza settlements and four in the northern West Bank. (*Ha'aretz*)

Following up on Prime Minister Sharon's pledge to enlarge the settlements in the West Bank, Israel began implementing its largest ever settlement expansion plan and confiscated an area larger than the Gaza Strip to enlarge the settlement of "Ma'ale Adumim". Palestinian lawyer Mohammad Dahlah told *Al-Ayyam* that the new project was an expansion of the so-called E-1 plan to expand "Ma'ale Adumim", making its radius double that of Tel Aviv. The plan would preclude the territorial and political contiguity of the West Bank by separating Jerusalem from the West Bank as well as separating the southern part of the West Bank from its northern part. The plan rules out any possibility for the creation of a viable Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, as envisaged by the [Road Map](#), Mr. Dahlah said. The new plan would dig 14 kilometres deep into the West Bank in an area where the width of the West Bank was only 30 kilometres, he said. The IDF had already handed new military orders to Palestinians to confiscate 62,000 dunums of Palestinian land, in addition to 1,585 dunums of privately-owned Palestinian land in the villages of Attour, Aza'yyem, Eastern Sawahira and East Jerusalem, which were confiscated to build the separation wall in the same area. Mr. Dahlah, who represents the Palestinians whose land had been confiscated, said he would challenge the Israeli military orders before the Israeli courts. (*Palestine Media Center*)

About 10,000 Israeli troops had been mobilized to evacuate the settlements of "Sanur" and "Homesh" amidst resistance from 1,600 Israeli protestors, mainly from outside the settlements, who barricaded themselves in houses, synagogues and inside an old British fortress in "Sanur". Police commander Meir Ben-Yishai then declared the evacuation of "Sanur" over and predicted both settlements would be emptied by the end of the day. The military's Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz, said violence was "less than expected." Maj. Gen. Yair Naveh, the West Bank commander, said rabbis took control of various groups that might have otherwise offered stiffer resistance. (*AP*)

IDF Chief of Staff Dan Halutz said the demolition of vacant settler homes would be finished in 10 days and the military pullout from the Gaza Strip "will be accomplished during September ... I believe close to the end of September". Speaking at a news conference hours after the end of evacuation, Mr. Halutz said that some 15,000 Israelis had left by their own will or were ousted from the enclaves during the week-long evacuation, reflecting the large numbers of non-resident protesters who infiltrated the settlements, whose resident population was close to 9,000. He added that the next stages of the disengagement plan required the army to clear out the settlers' personal belongings, raze their homes, and evacuate the army. Mr. Halutz said the destruction of settler homes was expected to last up to 10 days. (*Ha'aretz*)

PA President Abbas called Israel's President Moshe Katzav to praise the withdrawal. (*AP*)

Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said Israel was supposed to hand over all evacuated Gaza settlements to the Palestinian Authority by the beginning of October. (*Xinhua*)

The Russian Federation hailed Israel and the Palestinians for the calm withdrawal from the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Foreign Ministry spokesman Mikhail Kamynin said. "Moscow is determined to furnish continued support for efforts to stabilize the situation in the region and start a meaningful dialogue," Mr. Kamynin was quoted by the *ITAR-TASS* news agency. Mr. Kamynin believed that Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and part of the West Bank "must be included in the [Road Map](#)", carried out in coordination with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and become the first step towards the ultimate end of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories." (*Xinhua*, www.mid.ru)

Rafiq Hussein, PA President Abbas' Chief of Staff, said Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip presented a historic opportunity for the Palestinians and could form the cornerstone of a future State. "This is a momentous and very important point in history for us, but now we want to start building," he said. Rafiq Hussein, PA President Abbas' Chief of Staff, said Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip presented a historic opportunity for the Palestinians and could form the cornerstone of a future state. "This is a momentous and very important point in history for us, but now we want to start building," he said. Mr. Hussein said it was crucial that the Palestinians create a viable Government in Gaza after the Israeli withdrawal was complete and that the withdrawal presented the Palestinians the opportunity to focus on nation-building. "But mostly what we have to do is create jobs for people and this is what the Government is bent on doing, giving people hope for the future and giving them some economic prosperity for the future," he said. (*AP*)

Khaled Al-Batsh, an Islamic Jihad leader, said his movement "totally rejects" holding any direct or indirect contacts with Israel in the future. Mr. Al-Batsh told reporters that his movement still considered Israel as an occupying State and the Palestinian people as occupied. However, he said that the movement had no objection to any Israeli attempt to hold dialogues with other Palestinian factions. (*Xinhua*)

Israel's High Court of Justice determined during a debate on the demolition of Gaza synagogues that those located in the former "Tel Katifa" and "Slav" settlements in the southern Gaza Strip would be moved to Israel. (*Ha'aretz*)

PA President Abbas passed through the Rafah crossing, the only Gaza Strip gateway to the outside world, as he headed to a meeting with Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak. Accompanied by Mohammed Dahlan, PA Minister for Civilian Affairs, Mr. Abbas called on Arab leaders to hold their next summit in Gaza, a symbolic gesture to bring the Gaza Strip to the attention of Arab countries. "The Israeli pullout from Gaza Strip is now completed, but there are still some Israeli forces in control of the crossings and the airport, and we are cooperating with the Israelis to reopen the airport soon," Mr. Abbas told reporters at the crossing. (*AP*)

President Bush congratulated Prime Minister Sharon for making a very tough decision. During a visit to Idaho, he said, "We have got Jim Wolfensohn, the former head of the World Bank, on the ground, helping President Abbas develop a Government that responds to the will of the folks in Gaza. In other words, this is step one in the development of a democracy". He said that what must take place next was the establishment of a working Government in Gaza, "a Government that responds to the people. President Abbas has made a commitment to fight off the violence, because he understands a democracy can't exist with terrorist groups trying to take the law into their own hands". President Bush went on to say, "Along these lines, we've also got Gen. Ward on the ground, helping the Palestinians consolidate their security forces". President Bush said, "Of course you want to get back to the [Road Map](#). But I understand that in order for this process to go forward, there must be confidence – confidence that the Palestinian people will have in their own Government to perform, confidence with the Israelis that they'll see a peaceful State emerging. And therefore it's very important for the world to stay focused on Gaza, and helping Gaza – helping the Gaza economy get going, helping rebuild the settlements for Gaza – for the people of Gaza." He said this was a very hopeful period. He applauded Prime Minister Sharon for making a decision that has provided hope for the Palestinian people. "My vision, my hope is that one day we'll see two States -- two democratic States living side by side in peace". ([The White House](#))

Israel and Egypt had come to an understanding over the details of the "Philadelphi agreement," according to which Egypt would deploy border police in Rafah on its side of the border with the Gaza Strip, IDF sources said. Both sides have also agreed on a signing date once the agreement had been brought before the Government and the Knesset. Israel delayed a final agreement after demanding that Egypt promise not to provide weapons and ammunition to the PA. According to the agreement, entitled "Agreed Arrangement in the Matter of Deployment of a Task Force of the Border Guards Along the Length of Border in the Rafah Region," 750 Egyptian border police would man the area from the coast to the Negev border town of Kerem Shalom. The Egyptians would be equipped with police-style armoured personnel carriers, light arms, and rocket-propelled grenade launchers. In addition, the Egyptians plan to build unfortified observation posts. The task force was meant to prevent weapons smuggling, terror attacks and cross-border infiltration. Egypt would also deploy a small naval unit to patrol the maritime border with the Gaza Strip. An official close to Egypt's President Mubarak said that no final deal on the deployment of Egyptian guards had yet been agreed upon. (AP, AFP, Ha'aretz)

24

Israeli soldiers killed five Palestinians in an arrest raid on the Tulkarm refugee camp. The operation was aimed at arresting wanted Islamic Jihad members. When undercover soldiers called on two wanted men to surrender, a gun battle broke out. Other Palestinians also opened fire at the soldiers and threw firebombs. Four of the Palestinians were killed on the spot and the fifth later died in a hospital. The Israeli army said the two wanted men were among the dead and all five had been involved in the gun and bomb attack on the soldiers. The Shin Bet believed one of those killed was involved in a suicide bombing at a Tel Aviv night club in February 2005. Palestinian witnesses said three of the dead were unarmed teenagers and two were militants, one from Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades and the other from Islamic Jihad. (AFP, AP, BBC, Ha'aretz, Reuters, [www.idf.il](#))

A 21-year-old ultra-Orthodox student from Britain was killed in a stabbing attack in Jerusalem's Old City. A 20-year-old student from the United States was also wounded in the attack, according to the Israeli Foreign Ministry. Police said the assailant, who was still being sought, was a young Palestinian. (AFP, AP, Ha'aretz, Reuters)

PA President Abbas said a "big struggle" is awaiting Palestinians in Gaza following the Israeli withdrawal, notably reconstruction. "The biggest jihad is that of construction after ending the Israeli occupation in Gaza and part of the West Bank," Mr. Abbas told reporters in Cairo after meeting President Mubarak. He said after the withdrawal was completed, the PA would seek the full implementation of agreements reached in Sharm el-Sheikh with Israel. Mr. Abbas said that the issue of passages between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, as well as Egypt, had not yet been settled. (UPI)

Israel and the Palestinians had reached an agreement on disposing the rubble from the evacuated settlers' homes that had been demolished by Israel, officials from both sides said. Under the deal, brokered by James Wolfensohn, the Quartet's Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement, Israel was to demolish all homes in the empty settlements and remove asbestos and any other hazardous materials to sites in Israel. The Palestinians were to dispose of the remaining rubble, keeping reusable materials for themselves to build a seaport and other houses, and to transfer the remainder to a third party, most likely companies in neighbouring Egypt. Israel was to pay the estimated US\$30 million bill and was expected to complete the demolitions by early September. Diana Buttu, a PA legal adviser, predicted it would take up to a year to clear the rubble. (AP)

Israel was ready to make more concessions in the West Bank, Foreign Ministry spokesman Mark Regev said, stressing that Israel would not give up its large settlement blocks in the West Bank. Palestinian fears that the evacuation of the Gaza Strip would be Israel's first and last withdrawals were baseless, he added. "We want to advance with the [Road Map](#), which also mentions the West Bank," he said. However, he said that future Israeli steps would depend on the ability of the PA to rule the Gaza Strip once the Israeli evacuation plan was completed. (DPA)

In Cairo, visiting PA President Abbas announced that Egypt's intelligence chief, Gen. Omar Suleiman, would visit the PA on 29 August to take part in talks on the future of the Rafah Gaza strip border crossing. He said, "The resolution of this question will determine whether Gaza becomes a prison or not," adding that the pullout was expected to be completed by 4 October. President Mubarak's spokesman, Suleiman Awwad, said the idea of the European Union acting as a third party at the terminal had been floating but there had been no agreement. (<http://english.aljazeera.net>)

Israel had issued orders to seize Palestinian-owned land to build a section of its separation barrier around the settlement of "Ma'aleh Adumim" in the West Bank, the Justice Ministry said. Amos Gil, executive director of Ir Amim, an Israeli settlement monitoring group, said the "Ma'aleh Adumim" confiscation would seize about 60 square kilometres (23 square miles) of land. Attorney General Meni Mazuz approved the order after a legal review, the Justice Ministry said. The orders were posted on 22 August in part of the territory to be seized, a desert area inhabited mostly by Bedouin farmers, Mr. Gil said, adding that more expropriation Israel had issued orders to seize Palestinian-owned land to build a section of its separation barrier around the settlement of "Ma'aleh Adumim" in the West Bank, the Justice Ministry said. Amos Gil, executive director of Ir Amim, an Israeli settlement monitoring group, said the "Ma'aleh Adumim" confiscation would seize about 60 square kilometres (23 sq. m.) of land. Attorney General Meni Mazuz approved the order after a legal review, the Justice Ministry said. The orders were posted on 22 August in part of the territory to be seized, a desert area inhabited mostly by Bedouin farmers, Mr. Gil said, adding that more expropriation orders were expected to be issued in the coming days or weeks. Hind Khouri, the PA Minister for Jerusalem, said that in total, expropriation orders had been issued for 1,588 dunums in the area of Al-Azzariyeh, Abu Dis and Sawhira al-Sharkiyeh. Moreover, she said, the planned route would leave grazing grounds, olive groves and some 250 wells that serve the Palestinian population on the Israeli side of the fence. PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat said, "Such decisions will only serve to undermine any efforts to resume negotiations," adding, "This will destroy President Bush's vision of a two-State solution." (AP, Ha'aretz)

Israeli Defence Ministry officials said Israel had proposed a dual crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt to allow for free exit from the Strip and

control over persons and goods entering the territory. Under the plan, approved in a meeting chaired by Defence Minister Mofaz, the current Rafah crossing would become a one-way exit for people and goods, with no Israeli supervision, and a new crossing would be opened near Kerem Shalom, an Israeli farming village at the point where the Egyptian, Israeli and Gaza borders come together, for incoming people and goods. Israel would maintain supervision over goods imported into Gaza in accordance with the "customs envelope" agreement. PA Minister of Economic Affairs Mazen Sonokrot rejected the proposal, saying, "Any Israeli control of goods and people into and out of Gaza will diminish Palestinian Authority sovereignty." (AP)

US officials signed over to PA Finance Minister Salam Fayyad US\$50 million in aid, which had been announced by President Bush after a meeting with PA President Abbas at the White House in May 2005. (AFP)

In a meeting with EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process Marc Otte in Ramallah, Yasser Abed Rabbo, a member of the PLO Executive Committee, called on the European Union to take a firm stand against Israel's plans to move evacuated Gaza settlers into West Bank settlements and to work with the other Quartet members to stop the expansion of the "Ma'ale Adumim" settlement. Mr. Otte said the EU opposed any "steps that would obstruct the establishment of a contiguous and sovereign Palestinian State," in particular, settlement expansion plans, the relocation of Gaza settlers to the West Bank and isolation of the Gaza Strip. (Palestine Media Centre)

Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs Ibrahim Gambari [briefed](#) the Security Council. (UN press release SC/8479)
The following statement was released by the President of the Security Council:

The members of the Security Council welcome the beginning of the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the northern West Bank and they commend the ongoing implementation of this process.

The members of the Security Council appreciate the coordination between the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority before and during the disengagement. They commend the assistance of James Wolfensohn, the Quartet Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement, in ensuring the smooth and successful implementation of the process and an orderly assumption of responsibilities by the Palestinian Authority. They call for further cooperation between both sides in the forthcoming period.

The members of the Security Council underline the importance of full and complete disengagement in a manner consistent with the [Road Map](#).

The members of the Security Council believe that successful disengagement can be the first step toward a resumption of the peace process. They reiterate their call upon both parties, in close cooperation with the Quartet, to ensure continued progress in the full implementation of the Road Map and relevant Security Council resolutions towards the creation of an independent, viable, democratic and sovereign State of Palestine living side by side with Israel in peace and security.

(UN press release SC/8480)

PaTrade, the Palestinian company in charge of running the greenhouses that the Palestinians would take over from Gaza evacuees, recently signed its first export agreement for the produce that was expected to be grown there. The produce would be marketed via the Israeli firm Agrexco, which handles most of Israel's agricultural exports. Palestinian farmers in the Gaza Strip already export produce under a special brand name that Agrexco launched for this purpose and this brand might be used for the new venture. (Ha'aretz)

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During an anti-wall march in Ar Amadin village, south-west of Hebron, two Palestinians, aged 20 and 28, suffered fractures when they were beaten by Israeli soldiers. (Wafa)

The Israeli military said Palestinians had opened fire at an army post near the evacuated "Gadim" settlement in the northern West Bank. No injuries or damage were reported. (www.idf.il)
Shots were fired, in two separate incidents, at an Israeli army post along the "Karni-Netzarim" road in the northern Gaza Strip. There were no injuries. (The Jerusalem Post)

The Israeli army said Palestinians had opened fire at an army post near the evacuated "Neve Dekalim" settlement in the southern Gaza Strip, causing no injuries or damage. (www.idf.il)

A Qassam rocket fired by Palestinians from the Gaza Strip landed in an open area near the southern Israeli town of Sderot, causing no casualties. The armed wing of Popular Resistance Committee, Salah ad-Din Brigades, claimed responsibility, saying the attack had been in retaliation for the killing of five Palestinians in Tulkarm the previous day. (Ha'aretz, Reuters, Xinhua)

Israeli forces arrested two Palestinians in Qalqilya, one in the Dheisha refugee camp in Bethlehem and another in Tubas. (Wafa)

PA President Abbas condemned the killing of five Palestinians in Tulkarm the previous day and accused Israel of trying to "renew a cycle of violence" to dodge talks based on the [Road Map](#). (Ha'aretz)

About 700 members of Palestinian security forces headed to Jenin where they were to be given Israeli clearance to locate around the evacuated settlements of "Homesh," "Sanur," "Ganim" and "Kadim." "This force will ensure security around the settlements. They will prevent anyone from entering the settlements and carry out searches," said Deyab Al-Ali, a senior security official in Jenin. (AFP)

A spokesman for the IDF's "Civil Administration" said Israel would build a new police headquarters in recently expropriated land in "Area E1" between Jerusalem and the "Ma'ale Adumim" settlement. "The construction project for a police headquarters and an access road has obtained all the necessary authorizations and will begin shortly. ... The headquarters will be built on public land. It will be the first building built in sector E-1," the spokesman said. (AFP, Ha'aretz)

PA Foreign Minister Al-Kidwa [met](#) with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov in Moscow. Mr. Lavrov said after the meeting, "Having emphasized the significance of Israel's withdrawal from Gaza, we expressed our common opinion that this withdrawal should be completed in all its aspects in order to secure the possibility for existence of the Gaza Strip and part of the West Bank under Palestinian administration. ... We are discussing what Russia can do with this goal, both as a member of the Quartet and in bilateral relations with the Palestinians." Mr. Lavrov also said he had accepted Mr. Al-Kidwa's invitation to visit the Occupied Palestinian Territory. (AP, www.mid.ru)

The Presidency of the European Union, held by the UK, released a [statement](#) welcoming the disengagement. (www.eu2005.gov.uk)

The following is an excerpt from a [statement](#) issued by the European Commission welcoming the disengagement: "In support of disengagement and the peace process, the Commission is preparing a specific package to accompany disengagement. This is designed to provide support for new projects particularly in the field of customs administration, transport and energy supply, infrastructure and health and social services. Selection of specific projects will be done together with the Palestinian Authority and in close coordination with member States and the Quartet's Special Envoy, Mr. Wolfensohn. These measures come on top of a €20 million package announced previously for social support to refugees in the Gaza Strip." (<http://europa.eu.int>)

The Secretary-General [appointed](#) Filippo Grandi of Italy as Deputy Commissioner-General of UNRWA. Mr. Grandi had been serving as Deputy Representative of the Secretary-General responsible for political affairs in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan since May 2004. (*UN press release SG/A/940*)

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The Israeli army said Palestinians had opened fire at its force patrolling near the village of Deir Abu Da'if, east of Jenin, causing no injuries or damage. (www.idf.il)

A mortar shell fired from the Gaza Strip landed near an army base in southern Israel. No injuries or damage were reported in the attack, the army said. (*AP*)

A Palestinian stabbed an Israeli border police officer in the neck at an army checkpoint near the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron, slightly wounding him. Police arrested the man. (*AFP, Ha'aretz, Reuters*)

In a poll published in *Yediot Ahronot*, 54 per cent of respondents said they agreed to resume the peace process. Around 42 per cent disagreed with the proposition that Israel must be willing to evacuate more settlements beyond the already evacuated 25. The study was conducted by an independent institute on a representative sample of 500 people and had a margin of error of 4.5 per cent. (*AFP, Reuters*)

The population of West Bank settlements grew by 12,800 people over the past year, bringing the total to 246,000, a spokesman for Israel's Interior Ministry said. "Israel's insistence on expanding settlements represents a declaration of war against the Palestinians because it aims to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian State by reinforcing and prolonging the occupation," PA Minister of Planning Ghassan Khatib said. (*Ha'aretz, Reuters*)

27

Israeli officials urged the PA to crack down on militant groups following the release of a videotape by Muhammad Deif, a fugitive Hamas military commander. (*AP*)

PA President Abbas held talks with the head of the Labour Party's Knesset faction, Efraim Sneh. "We discussed the implementation of the [Road Map](#) after the disengagement plan and support for the peace process," Mr. Sneh told reporters after the talks. (*AFP*)

President Bush said in his radio address: "Now that Israel has withdrawn, the way forward is clear. The Palestinians must show the world that they will fight terrorism and govern in a peaceful way. We will continue to help the Palestinians to prepare for self-government and to defeat the terrorists who attack Israel and oppose the establishment of a peaceful Palestinian State... We demand an end to terrorism and violence in every form because we know that progress depends on ending terror. And we will continue working for the day when the map of the Middle East shows two democratic States - Israel and Palestine - living side by side in peace and security." (*Reuters, www.whitehouse.gov*)

28

A suicide bomber blew himself up and critically wounded two guards at a bus station in Beersheba in the south of Israel. Islamic Jihad and Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades said they had sent the bomber, 25-year-old Ayman Za'ariq. However, according to family members and Israeli security sources, the alleged bomber was in Israeli detention at the time. PA President Abbas denounced the "anti-civilian terrorist operation." In an official statement, Mr. Abbas stressed the necessity of calmness and restraint despite Israeli provocations, including the assassination of five Palestinians in Tulkarm. He also called on the Israeli side to end the assassinations and incursions in the Palestinian territories. (*AFP, AP, Ha'aretz, Wafa*) Israel's Cabinet approved the agreement for deploying 750 Egyptian border guards near the border area between Egypt and the Gaza Strip. The contingent will be reinforced by four coast guard boats, as well as eight unarmed helicopters. (*Ha'aretz*)

29

A Palestinian boy carrying three pipe bombs was arrested by IDF soldiers at a checkpoint near Nablus. An IDF soldier was lightly wounded when Palestinians opened fire on the car in which he was driving in the Gaza Strip. Shots were fired at an IDF outpost near the evacuated settlement of "Neve Dekalim." The PFLP claimed responsibility for the second shooting. (*Ha'aretz*)

IDF forces arrested three Palestinians in the West Bank cities of Hebron and Bethlehem. (*Wafa*)

Israeli troops uncovered a 20-metre-long smuggling tunnel at the border between Egypt and the Gaza Strip. (*Ha'aretz*)

Palestinian security sources reported that the IDF had finished demolishing two northern West Bank settlements, "Kadim" and "Ganim." (*Xinhua*) The Israeli authorities were planning to evacuate 15 settler families squatting in buildings in an Arab market in the West Bank town of Hebron, *Ma'ariv* reported. (*AFP*)

In an interview with *Channel 10*, Prime Minister Sharon said, "Not all the settlements of today in Judea and Samaria will remain," but he insisted that all of the main settlement blocks in the West Bank would remain under Israeli sovereignty. He also said there would be no "second stage of disengagement," either unilateral or coordinated. (*AFP, AP, The Jerusalem Post*)

Senior Israeli and Palestinian security officials met at the Beit Hanoun (Erez) crossing to discuss the Israeli army's pullout from the Gaza Strip and security control handover to PA troops expected to commence in mid-September. It was agreed that the army would hand over one position at a time to the PA. The Israeli side was represented by IDF Brig. Gen. Aviv Kochavi and Col. Yoav Mordechai, and the Palestinian side was represented by PA national security commander Col. Jamal Kayed and other senior security officials. (*Ha'aretz, Wafa*)

Egypt's Security Chief Omar Suleiman met PA and Palestinian factions leaders to discuss the continuation of an informal truce and the status of the Rafah border crossing. PA Prime Minister Qureia, who attended the talks, told reporters: "The question of the terminal will be dealt with in the coming days. There is one specific [issue] still to be ironed out and General Suleiman will address it with Israeli officials... There is no doubt that the truce remains in place and that everyone respects it, including Islamic Jihad," he said. (*AFP, Ha'aretz*)

EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana met with Israeli leaders, including Prime Minister Sharon,

Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz, Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom and Vice Premier Shimon Peres. "It would be a tremendous mistake not to use the positive energy generated by the pullout in order to move forward towards the implementation of the [Road Map](#)," Mr. Solana said before meeting Mr. Sharon. "No party should take any measures that could break this encouraging momentum," he added. From his part Mr. Silvan Shalom said after meeting Mr. Solana, "We cannot have a return to the Road Map unless the terrorist organizations are dismantled. Sunday morning's suicide attack in Beersheba shows clearly that the security fence should be completed as soon as possible... If [the disengagement] fails and will allow missiles to hit Israeli towns ..., Israel reserves the right to retaliate ... and I think this would have international backing." Mr. Solana later met with PA President Abbas and Prime Minister Qureia in Gaza City. (AFP, Ha'aretz)

30

The Israeli army said Palestinians had opened fire south of Jenin. No injuries were reported, but a vehicle was damaged in the incident. ([www.idf.il](#))

A Palestinian woman attempted to stab two Israeli security guards at the King Hussein (Allenby) border crossing between the West Bank and Jordan.

The woman was apprehended by the guards. No injuries were reported. (Ha'aretz, The Jerusalem Post)

Israeli soldiers severely beat up and wounded three Palestinians in Hebron. One of the three suffered a fracture in the hand. Also, armed settlers set fire to grape and olive fields in Hebron owned by Palestinian farmers and dozens of trees were completely burned, according to witnesses. (Wafa)

Israeli forces arrested two children in the northern Gaza Strip. An Israeli military source said the children had entered the evacuated "Dugit" settlement. (IPC, Wafa)

Israeli forces stormed Tulkarm, Bardala village in the northern Jordan Valley and Anzeh village in Jenin province, raiding houses. In Tulkarm, a 28-year-old Palestinian fell from a building while being chased by Israeli soldiers and suffered a severe brain hemorrhage. In Funduq town near Qalqilya, Israeli forces demolished a house completely without giving the resident a chance to remove any property. Also, Israeli forces arrested three Palestinians in Beit Liqya, south-west of Ramallah, one near Nablus and another near Jenin. (IPC)

Addressing the Palestinian Legislative Council in Gaza City in the name of President Mubarak, Egyptian intelligence chief Omar Suleiman said that the borders of a future Palestinian State should include the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and that Egypt supported a full Israeli withdrawal and "the full end of occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and the land of 1967." Mr. Suleiman also met separately with leaders of Fatah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad in an effort to bolster a ceasefire with Israel. Hamas leader Mahmud Zahar said his faction would reserve the right to retaliate to any Israeli attack, saying, "We have emerged victors in this battle and any aggression against the Palestinian people, wherever it takes place, will be responded to." Islamic Jihad leader Nafez Azzam said, "We will not see it as a complete withdrawal should a single Israeli soldier remain at the crossing points." Stressing that any truce should be "reciprocal" with Israel, Mr. Azzam also said, "Israeli aggressions would incite the Palestinian people to respond." Mr. Suleiman was also expected to meet with representatives of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. (AFP, AP)

A representative of settlers from "Tene Omarim" near Hebron told *Israel Radio* that 80 per cent of the residents had signed a letter to Prime Minister Sharon requesting they receive State compensation if they left the settlement. (AFP, AP)

Lt. Col. Baruch Persky of the Israeli military's Gaza liaison division said Israel would raise the quota of Palestinian labourers from the Gaza Strip allowed into Israel after the completion of the Israeli withdrawal from the territory, from the present 10,000 to 15,000 in 2006. After that, however, the number would be reduced until Palestinian labour in Israel ended in 2008 in accordance with government goals, according to Mr. Persky. (AP)

The PA Interior Ministry released a statement reiterating it would not allow armed groups and private armies to contest the sole legitimacy of the Palestinian Authority and operate in the Gaza Strip after Israel's withdrawal, but it would welcome all to be incorporated into its forces. (Palestine Media Centre)

During a meeting with Meretz-Yahad Party leader Yossi Beilin in Jerusalem, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana said only an agreement between Israel and the Palestinians regarding control over land, air and sea passages in the Gaza Strip would permit the international community to acknowledge the end of Israel's occupation in the territory. (Ynet)

The Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People issued a [statement](#) on the removal of Israeli settlements from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank. (UN press release GA/PAL/990)

31

The Israeli army said Palestinians had fired at its post west of Tulkarm, causing no injuries or damage. Palestinians fired an anti-tank missile at an Israeli force patrolling near the border fence along the northern Gaza Strip, causing no injuries or damage. ([www.idf.il](#))

Israeli troops broke into several houses in Baqa al-Sharqiya, north of Tulkarm, and arrested four Palestinians. (Wafa)

Israeli forces, backed by armoured vehicles, stormed the Aida refugee camp, north of Bethlehem, and arrested two Palestinians, aged 19 and 20, after conducting a house-to-house search. (IPC, Wafa)

The Palestinian National Information Centre published a report indicating that Israeli forces had killed 5, wounded 16 and arrested 34 Palestinians between 23 and 29 August. (IPC)

PA Deputy Prime Minister Nabil Sha'ath said the Israeli proposal to continue to run the Rafah crossing between Egypt and the Gaza Strip for six more months had been rejected. (Xinhua)

PA President Abbas reiterated that all Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory were illegal and should be removed. (Wafa) Egypt's intelligence chief Omar Suleiman met with Prime Minister Sharon and Defence Minister Mofaz to discuss the details of the deployment of Egyptian forces to the Egypt-Gaza border. Mr. Suleiman said he expected both sides to sign a deployment agreement this week, *Israel Army Radio* reported. (AFP, AP)

Addressing a meeting of the Russian-Arab Business Council in Moscow, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said increased business ties between Russia and Arab countries would help development in the Middle East, adding, "This issue may be discussed at a high-level meeting on the Middle East problem to be held in Moscow at the end of this year." Details on the meeting were not available. (AP)

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