

Division for Palestinian Rights

Chronological Review of Events Relating to the Question of Palestine

Monthly media monitoring review

April 2013

Monthly highlights

- Hamas leaders re-elect Khaled Mashaal as Political Bureau Chief ([1 April](#))
- UNRWA suspends food distribution in Gaza after protesters storm its compound ([4 April](#))
- US Secretary of State Kerry meets with Israeli and Palestinian leaders on reviving peace talks ([7 April](#))
- Palestinian leaders reject revising Arab Peace Initiative as suggested by US Secretary of State Kerry ([9 April](#))
- UNRWA resumes distributing food aid to refugees in Gaza ([9 April](#))
- Al-Haq, in a new report, accused Israel of "water apartheid", depriving Palestinians of their "rightful water supply" ([11 April](#))
- Palestinian Prime Minister Fayyad resigns ([13 April](#))
- Israeli Government extends ban on Palestinian family unification requests for an additional year ([14 April](#))
- Former senior European officials call on EU to change its policy on the Middle East peace process in favour of a more aggressive approach ([19 April](#))
- Participants at special meeting of Palestinian Rights Committee held in Caracas adopt Declaration in Solidarity with the Palestinian People and the State of Palestine ([19 April](#))
- President Abbas meets US Secretary of State Kerry in Istanbul ([21 April](#))
- Israel and the Palestinians agree on renewed UNESCO involvement in the Old City of Jerusalem ([23 April](#))
- League of Arab States acknowledges possibility of "comparable", mutually agreed and "minor" land swaps between Israelis and Palestinians ([30 April](#))
- UN International Meeting on the Question of Palestine ends two-day meeting in Addis Ababa ([30 April](#))

1

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas received US Consul General in Jerusalem Michael Ratney in Ramallah. They discussed the outcomes of President Barack Obama's recent visit to Palestine and the region. (Wafa)

After meeting with US Consul General Michael Ratney and other foreign delegations in Jerusalem, Saeb Erakat, Executive Committee member of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), in a statement, said that the Israeli occupation, settlement activities and attempts to impose facts on the ground, particularly in East Jerusalem, were the real danger that threatened security, stability and peace in the region. (Wafa)

In Cairo, Hamas leaders re-elected Khaled Mashaal as Political Bureau Chief for the fourth time. Sources said that the mandate of Mr. Mashaal was likely to be renewed despite his announcement that he would not be running. Ismail Haniyeh was elected as one of the three deputy heads of the Political Bureau. (Ma'an News Agency, Egypt Independent)

A Palestinian farmer sustained bruises when he fled from an armed group of settlers that attacked and chased him from his land near Hebron. Settlers also reportedly attacked a group of shepherds in the same area. (Ma'an News Agency)

President Abbas said that he will attend a Qatari-proposed mini summit of the League of Arab States in Cairo if he was invited as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. He added, "Elections will be held in three months," noting that the Central Elections Commission had almost completed its preparations.

"There are no differences between us that require all these efforts to reconcile," he said, adding that Fatah and Hamas had agreed in earlier Egyptian and Qatari-brokered deals on forming a transitional Government and holding elections. "Let's go straight and form the Government," Mr. Abbas said. Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri was reported as saying: "One side is using its relationships to impose itself while the other side, who won legitimacy through elections, is not enjoying that legitimacy." (globaltimes.com, Ma'an News Agency)

According to the father of a 16-year-old boy from the East Jerusalem area of Silwan, the boy was on his way to school when he was attacked and beaten by 12 settlers near the Al-Maghariba gate. (Wafa)

According to Yousef al-Faqeh, a Palestinian official, the Israeli authorities had cut off water pumped to 10 villages located north-west of Jerusalem. He said that students in schools had particularly been suffering from the situation. (Wafa)

2

Israeli police injured a number of protesters and arrested nine Palestinians while suppressing a demonstration in Jerusalem condemning the death of prisoner Maysara Abu Hamdiyah. The protestors hurled stones towards the police, who fired tear gas canisters and used batons to disperse them in return. In Beit Ummar, north of Hebron, several people suffered from suffocation in clashes that erupted with Israeli forces over Abu Hamdiyah's death. (Wafa)

Israeli forces raided several areas in Nablus, leading to clashes with residents, and set up a flying checkpoint. (Wafa)

Israeli forces arrested eight Palestinians from the West Bank towns of Bethlehem, Hebron and Jenin. (petra.gov.jo)

Five Israelis from the settlement outpost of "Esh Kodesh" near Nablus were arrested on suspicion of shooting and wounding two Palestinians in February, *Israeli Army Radio* reported. The suspects, who were from the "Esh Kodesh" settlement near Nablus, were believed to have shot two men from the neighbouring Palestinian village of Qusra during a confrontation, the radio said. The police reportedly found a weapons cache at the outpost during an overnight raid. (uk.news.yahoo)

A Palestinian was convicted by the Ofer Military Court of murdering a settler and his 1-year-old son in a stone-throwing attack that caused the Israeli to lose control of his vehicle in the West Bank settlement of "Kiryat Arba" in September 2011. (Haaretz)

Palestinian officials accused Israel of not providing adequate medical care at the Eshel Prison for Palestinian prisoner Hamdiyah who died of cancer. Palestinian prisoners protested following news of his death and prison guards fired tear gas to quell disturbances in cell blocks. Three prisoners and six guards were evacuated for medical treatment after inhaling tear gas. (AP)

Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad said that the "policy of medical negligence" was the central reason for the death of Abu Hamdiyah and demanded that Israeli prisons be opened to international regulation, monitoring and scrutiny. (Ynetnews)

Hamas leaders called for a third intifada to support prisoners at mass rallies across the Gaza Strip after the death of Abu Hamdiyah in Israeli custody. In Gaza City, thousands of protesters marched to a mourning tent in Al-Saraya square, chanting slogans calling on factions to support prisoners and free them from Israel. Similar marches were held north of the Gaza Strip and in Rafah. (Ma'an News Agency)

Abdulnasser Farwana, a Palestinian researcher specializing in prisoners' cases, reported that Israel had arrested 1,070 Palestinians since the start of the year, including 234 children. During the past three months, 234 children had been arrested, while 200 were arrested during the same period of time the previous year.

An 8.4 per cent rise in the rate of Israeli arrests of Palestinians had been recorded in the first quarter of the year compared to the previous quarter. (Palestine News Network)

3

Palestinian militants launched several rockets into southern Israel, as Israeli aircraft struck targets in the Gaza Strip in the heaviest exchange of fire between the sides since the ceasefire in November. In a statement, Israeli Minister of Defense Moshe Ya'alon said, "We will not allow shooting of any sort (even sporadic) towards our citizens and our forces". But just around the time Mr. Ya'alon was speaking, two more rockets exploded in the Israeli border town of Sderot, according to police. The Israeli military said that a total of five rockets had been fired in the last 24 hours, including two that exploded prematurely inside Gaza. No casualties had been reported as a result of all the strikes. (AP)

Israeli troops shot dead two Palestinian teenagers in a clash in Tulkarm in the northern West Bank. The Israeli army said that troops had opened fire on rioters hurling fire bombs at a military post there. According to Palestinian security officials, Amer Nassar, 16, was hit by a bullet in the head, and the body of his 17-year-old cousin, Naji Balbisi, was discovered near an army checkpoint, with wounds to the chest. (AFP)

Israeli soldiers fired tear gas and rubber bullets at dozens of Palestinian youths who participated in demonstrations near the Ofer Prison near Ramallah protesting the death of Abu Hamdiyah, injuring seven of them. (Ma'an News Agency)

An Israeli military spokeswoman said that Israeli forces had detained 20 Palestinians in pre-dawn raids across the West Bank. (Ma'an News Agency)

In a [statement](#), United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Robert Serri, following the most recent firing of rockets from Gaza, appealed for calm saying that he was "worried" that tensions could threaten the informal truce. "It is of paramount importance to refrain from violence in this tense atmosphere and for parties to work constructively in addressing the underlying issues," he said. (unesco.org)

Robert Turner, Director of Operations for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in Gaza praised the "quick and generous donation of \$15.6 million by the Saudi Fund for Development. In a statement, he said, "Over 7,000 refugee families in Gaza will receive financial support from UNRWA to repair and reconstruct homes damaged during the November conflict. ... We have never before been able to provide this scale of support for war-damaged refugees." (unrwa.org)

Israeli police launched an investigation into an assault on an 80-year-old Palestinian shepherd who was severely beaten near the "Avnei Hefetz" settlement. He suffered multiple fractures and lost consciousness. (Haaretz)

An autopsy on the body of Palestinian prisoner Hamdiyah was conducted at the Abu Dis Institute of Forensic Medicine in Tel Aviv on orders of PA Attorney General Abdul Ghani Oweisi. The autopsy, done in the presence of Palestinian and Arab doctors, found that he had indeed died of cancer. (Ma'an News Agency, The Jerusalem Post)

Some 4,600 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails started a three-day hunger strike following the death of Abu Hamdiyah that the PA blamed on Israeli medical negligence. (The Jerusalem Post)

Palestinian liaison officials secured the release of two boys, aged 14, from Israeli custody, who had been arrested on suspicion of throwing stones. (Ma'an News Agency)

Palestine must join the International Criminal Court (ICC) to stop Israel from committing crimes against Palestinian prisoners, PA Minister for Prisoners' Affairs Issa Qaraqe said. Mr. Qaraqe said that Israel did not abide by international and humanitarian principles, and that Palestine must head to the ICC to protect Palestinians from Israel's "continuous crimes against humanity". (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli authorities informed a Palestinian farmer from the village of Nahalin, west of Bethlehem, of their intention to take over his land for settlement expansion, according to a local activist. The land had recently been rehabilitated and planted with olive and almond trees. The notice, he said, gave the farmer 45 days to file a petition at Israeli courts. (Wafa)

The Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Council and the Arab Association for Human Rights issued a statement on the death of prisoner Abu Hamdiyah demanding that UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon immediately intervene and form an international committee to investigate the circumstances surrounding the health of and medical care provided to Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli custody, as well as the circumstances in the death of prisoner Hamdiyah, and intervene to secure the release of all sick prisoners. (addameer.ps)

4

Several rockets were fired at Israel from Gaza, and one exploded in Israel, causing no injuries. (AP)

A UK Foreign Office spokesperson, speaking in reaction to the deaths of two Palestinian teenagers in the West Bank, [said](#), "We are deeply concerned about the deaths of two Palestinian teenagers in the West Bank and reports of the Israeli military being attacked with firebombs. It is a tragedy when any young person's life is cut short. We urge the parties to take steps towards de-escalation and to exercise restraint. We expect a full investigation into the incident". (www.gov.uk)

Israel's military response to protests in the West Bank was failing to respect the human rights of Palestinians, *Amnesty International* said, as the number of Palestinian civilians killed by Israeli fire in the area since the beginning of 2013 reached eight. (www.amnesty.org)

Israel bears full responsibility for the current tensions in the West Bank because of its use of lethal force against demonstrators, Palestinian President Abbas said. (The Jerusalem Post)

Following the death of Palestinians during the funeral of Palestinian prisoner Maysara Abu Hamdiyah, clashes continued across the West Bank. A *Ma'an News Agency* reporter said that a *CNN* cameraman had been shot and injured by a live bullet during the clashes. Additionally, 21 Palestinians had been hit by rubber-coated bullets, while dozens had suffered from tear gas inhalation. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli forces detained a Palestinian north of Ramallah. (Ma'an News Agency)

A Palestinian official, speaking on conditions of anonymity, reportedly said that President Abbas would temporarily refrain from unilateral actions in order to give

US-brokered efforts to jumpstart peace talks a "sufficient chance to succeed". (AFP, Ynetnews)

Bolivian President Evo Morales met with the Palestinian Monetary Authority Governor Jihad Al-Wazir in La Paz and expressed support for Palestinian President Abbas. (Ma'an News Agency)

Speaking at a conference in Cairo, newly re-elected Hamas leader Mashaal pledged to work to end the rift between Hamas and Fatah. (AFP)

Acting President of Tunisia Moncef Marzouki, during his meeting with a delegation of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, stressed the importance of achieving Palestinian reconciliation, adding that Tunisia was ready to play an "active" role in the reconciliation efforts. (TAP)

The European Union made a contribution to the payment of the March salaries and pensions of about 76,000 Palestinian civil servants and pensioners in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Approximately €11.75 million had been channelled by the European Commission through the European mechanism for support to Palestinians (PEGASE). (ReliefWeb)

Ahead of Palestinian Children's Day, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics said that children under the age of 18 made up almost 2 million of a total 4.29 million Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. (Wafa)

The Israeli military handed a Palestinian in Hebron a notice to demolish two water wells and uproot trees on his land. (Haaretz)

A Palestinian prisoner who suffered serious physical and psychological injury following alleged torture by Shin Bet 18 months ago had filed a petition at Israel's High Court asking that the military prosecution be instructed to intervene in the case. (Haaretz)

Commenting on the escalation and demonstrators breaking into an UNRWA compound, Director of UNRWA Operations in Gaza Robert Turner [said](#) that all relief and distribution centres will consequently remain closed until guarantees are given by all relevant groups that UNRWA operations can continue unhindered. (www.unrwa.org, Reuters)

Israel's Permanent Representative to the UN Ron Prosor called on the Security Council to condemn the recent rocket fire from the Gaza Strip into southern Israel. (The Jerusalem Post)

5

After a preliminary probing into the killing of two Palestinians in the West Bank, the Israel Defense Forces said that the shooting was according to protocol and soldiers had followed rules of engagement, adding that the commander of a unit opened live fire when he felt that his life had been in danger. (Haaretz, Ynetnews)

Hamas leaders had reportedly urged UNRWA to reconsider its suspension of food aid for Palestine refugees that had been imposed after protesters stormed one of the UNRWA distribution centres in Gaza. (Middle East Online)

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People [discussed](#) political development and the West Bank unrest and its upcoming meeting in Caracas. Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the UN, told the Committee that it was "a critical time for Member States to put pressure on Israel to comply with international law in order to open the door to a meaningful political process that would lead to a two-State solution." (UN press release GA/PAL/1261)

6

The IDF arrested 3 Palestinians, including a 10-year-old child, in Hebron, and 1 Palestinian in Bethlehem (IMEMC)

A rocket fired from the Gaza Strip into southern Israel landed in an open area. No injuries or damage were reported in the attack. (The Jerusalem Post)

Canadian Minister for Foreign Affairs John Baird met in Ramallah with Palestinian President Abbas, Prime Minister Fayyad, and Minister for Foreign Affairs Riad Malki to discuss regional developments. At a news conference in Ramallah, Mr. Baird said that Canada would see the funding agreement through to the end but hedged on whether it would be renewed. "We have some profound difference of opinion on the way forward," he said. (AP, Reuters, The Canadian Press)

Palestinian Ambassador to Lebanon Ashraf Dabour said that some 160,000 Palestinians lived below the poverty line in refugee camps in Lebanon. (Ma'an News Agency)

Gaza-based human rights organizations issued a letter to UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace process Serry expressing concern at a number of recent statements he had made, pointing out "his failure" to condemn Israeli violations of the ceasefire agreement and the harsh punitive measures taken by Israeli authorities against the Gaza Strip. (Reliefweb)

7

The IDF stopped a Palestinian near Bethlehem with three homemade bombs and four Molotov cocktails. (The Jerusalem Post)

Two Palestinians were critically injured during clashes with Israeli soldiers in the town of Al-Khadr, south of Bethlehem. (Wafa)

President Abbas met with US Secretary of State John Kerry to discuss reviving Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. According to Palestinian officials, Mr. Kerry offered to ensure Israel does not withhold Palestinian tax revenue in the future, to extend PA jurisdiction in Area C, and to allow Palestinians to build more freely in Area C.

President Abbas responded that Israel must stop illegal settlement building and release Palestinian prisoners first, according to the officials. (Ma'an News Agency, Reuters)

Prime Minister Netanyahu and other senior Israeli officials met with Secretary of State Kerry. Mr. Kerry also met privately with Palestinian Prime Minister Fayyad and Israeli President Shimon Peres. (Ynetnews)

Palestinian National Economy Minister Jawad Naji Awad Hirzallah said that the 2013 domestic economy was on track for 5 to 6 per cent growth for the year as a shortfall in international aid continued to take its toll. The forecast was far below the average growth rate in 2010 and 2011, which stood at around 11 per cent. (Al Arabiya)

A group of settlers sprayed racist graffiti on the walls of two mosques, east of Bethlehem, and slashed several tires of Palestinian-owned cars. (Wafa)

An Israeli court ordered Israeli settlers to return land to Palestinian owners. The judge had deemed that the sale of 100 dunums within the "Alfei Menashe" settlement was fraudulent. (Haaretz)

Hundreds of Israeli websites came under attack from hackers said to be affiliated with the group "Anonymous". Dozens of Government and private websites were disrupted. (The Wall Street Journal)

8

US Secretary of State Kerry said that he was trying to break down mistrust between Israelis and Palestinians and would not rush into a new peace process. (Reuters)

US Secretary of State Kerry said that he was hoping to use the economic development of Palestinian areas in the West Bank as a means to build support for a new set of Middle East peace negotiations. He said that moving on the economic front could change perceptions and realities on the ground, "all of which can contribute to forward momentum". (The New York Times)

The League of Arab State's Middle East Peace Follow-up Committee met in Doha to discuss ways to revive the stalled peace process and will send a mission to Washington, D.C. The Committee, chaired by Qatar, is composed of Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen.

Secretary-General Nabil Elaraby said, "This meeting was to discuss the mission of the Arab delegation that will visit Washington" later during the month. (AFP, Morocco World News)

Israeli authorities barred two Members of the Moroccan Parliament accompanying parliamentarians from the European Union from crossing into the West Bank to meet Palestinian officials. (AFP)

At the Palestinian Legislative Council in Ramallah, journalists and human rights groups met with members of the Middle East Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) that included briefings on the status quo of Palestinian prisoners and Israeli violations of the rights of journalists to free movement and access to information. PACE members announced that they would prepare a report on administrative detention. (Palestine News Network)

Israeli authorities closed the Kerem Shalom crossing located south-east of Rafah, the only terminal through which goods, humanitarian aid and fuel enter the Gaza Strip. (Wafa)

Hundreds of Gazan fishermen took part in a nautical protest against the restrictions placed on them by Israel. (Middle East Monitor)

The residents of Sebastia celebrated the success of their campaign that aimed at shutting off a pipe that was pumping raw sewage onto their land from the nearby settlement "Shave Shomron." (IMEMC)

Gisha, the Legal Centre for the Freedom of Movement issued a statement in response to the IDF's closing of the Kerem Shalom border passage between Israel and Gaza and questioned the effectiveness of closing crossings to stop rocket fire into Israel. Gisha essentially implied that such policy strengthened Hamas. (The

According to witnesses, Israeli forces crossed the Gaza border, entering 300 metres into eastern Khan Yunis. Four Israeli tanks and three army bulldozers also raided and razed agricultural land while shooting in all directions. (Wafa)

An Israeli border policeman was convicted of robbing a Palestinian store in the West Bank. (Haaretz)

In a statement, the Palestinian Ministry for Prisoners' Affairs said that Fadi Abu al-Asal, 20, and his brother, were arrested after an Israeli force raided his home in Anabta in the West Bank. Mr. Abu al-Asal was wounded a week earlier when Israeli soldiers opened fire on Palestinians near a checkpoint in Tulkarm, killing two.

The IDF also raided the Shweikeh neighbourhood of Tulkarm, arresting two Palestinians. (Ma'an News agency)

The Israeli army arrested nine Palestinians in the West Bank. (Wafa)

According to Palestinian officials, the IDF uprooted 100 olive trees and 250 almond trees from a land owned by two brothers in south Dahriya in the Hebron district. (Wafa)

Palestinian President Abbas, who had attended the meeting of the Middle East Peace Follow-up Committee in Doha the previous day, met with the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, and discussed Palestinian reconciliation. (Wafa)

US Secretary of State Kerry's suggestion to revive the Arab Peace Initiative by revising it, as raised during his visit to Ramallah on 7 April, was rejected by Palestinian leaders. Palestinian Chief Negotiator Erakat said, "Kerry asked us to change a few words in the Arab Peace Initiative but we refused." A senior State Department official said that Mr. Kerry wanted the plan "enhanced". (AP)

Palestinian Minister for Foreign Affairs Malki said that the delegation of the Middle East Peace Follow-up Committee to Washington, D.C., will meet with President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry. (AFP)

Secretary of State Kerry and Prime Minister Netanyahu met and claimed progress in preparing for possible new peace talks. "We were pleased with the substance of the discussion and agreed each of us to do some homework," Mr. Kerry said about their meeting during the day and their working dinner the previous day. (The Washington Post)

Wafa reported that the IDF had informed eight Bedouin families of Ein el-Hilweh in the northern Jordan Valley that they had until 30 April to evacuate their shacks.

The head of the Al-Maleh local council, Aref Daraghme, said that the shacks and tents had been on the land for several years. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israel's Minister of Housing, Uri Ariel, said that 50 new homes would be built in the East Talpote area of East Jerusalem to house Holocaust survivors. (www.naharnet.com/)

Israeli bulldozers demolished shelters and water well in the Al-Duryat area near Hebron, saying that the area was a closed military zone. In the Jericho area, Israeli forces ordered eight families to demolish their homes. (Ma'an News Agency)

Survivors of the Israeli raid in 2010 on the *MV Mavi Marmara* said that Israel's apology to Turkey over the killing of nine Turks aboard the ship that had been part of a flotilla to Gaza had not gone far enough and that Israeli soldiers would be pursued in court. (Reuters)

Turkish-Israeli reconciliation talks had been postponed to 22 April at Turkey's request. Meetings were to take place on 11 April between Turkish officials and National Security Council head Yaakov Amidror regarding compensation to the families of the victims of the flotilla raid. (Ynetnews.com)

After days of closure due to protests against aid cuts, UNRWA will resume distributing food aid to refugees in the Gaza Strip. In a statement, the Agency said, "UNRWA respects the right to protest peacefully, but employees must be secure and safe." (Ma'an News Agency)

10

Israeli forces crossed the border with Gaza into the eastern part of Khan Yunis for the second day in a row, razing agricultural land and firing in all directions. (Wafa)

Guatemala had recognized Palestine as a State that it believed would help bring about a peace agreement with Israel, the Office of the President said. (The Jerusalem Post)

A Palestinian delegation headed by the Minister of Religious Affairs, Mahmoud Al-Habbash, met with Sri Lanka's President, Mahinda Rajapaksa, to discuss issues such as the importance of religious tolerance, Palestinian politics and the stalled Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Sri Lanka had supported the GA resolution that granted Palestine non-Member Observer State status in November 2012. (News360)

Palestinian Prime Minister Fayyad offered his resignation following a rift with President Abbas over his Government policy but reports were contradictory. (AP, Haaretz, Reuters)

Fatah's Azzam Al-Ahmed and Hamas' Musa Abu Marzouk held talks in Cairo to discuss the implementation of previous reconciliation agreements signed between the two parties. Mr. Al-Ahmed said that President Abbas was scheduled to meet with Hamas leader Mashaal in the coming days to discuss issues pertaining to a unity government as well as presidential and parliamentary elections. (The Jerusalem Post)

UK International Development Minister Alan Duncan [announced](#) during a visit to the Occupied Palestinian Territory a new £15 million programme that would help Palestinian firms develop new products and target new markets. He also said that the Department for International Development would implement a series of programmes aimed at harnessing Palestinian youth power to activate their role in their society and create a better future. (www.gov.uk, Wafa)

The Popular Committee Against the Siege said that Israel was holding up 1,000 truckloads of goods at the Kerem Shalom crossing that had been closed since 8 April. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israel kept the Gaza Strip's only commercial crossing point, Kerem Shalom, closed for the third day in a row due to security concerns. (Xinhua)

Israeli settlers set fire to 10 olive trees east of Yatta near Hebron. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli forces rearrested former hunger striker Thaer Halahla in Ramallah. He held a 77-day hunger strike the previous year to protest his detention without charge and was released after reaching a deal with the Israeli prison authorities. The Israeli army arrested 22 other Palestinians in the West Bank. (IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency)

The coordinator of a non-violent group called Youth Against Settlements, Issa Amro, had been detained by Israeli troops and was reportedly charged with incitement to terrorism. (IMEMC)

The UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, James W. Rawley, [expressed](#) serious concern regarding the impact of Israel's new series of heightened restrictions on the movement of people and goods to and from the Gaza Strip, including closures of the Kerem Shalom crossing, and on the Gaza fishing zone. (www.ochaopt.org)

The International Federation of Journalists condemned the shooting of a Palestinian photographer in the Aida refugee camp, north of Bethlehem, by Israeli soldiers. The Federation also called for disciplinary action against the individuals involved in the shooting. (KUNA)

11

A physically disabled Palestinian man was wounded after he was shot by Israeli soldiers in the southern part of Hebron. Two IDF soldiers were also slightly wounded. (Press TV)

A Palestinian was shot in the leg after he attempted to wrest a rifle from IDF soldiers who were to arrest him in Hebron. (The Jerusalem Post, The Times of Israel)

The IDF entered the town of Burin, south of Nablus, and detained 10 Palestinians after raiding their houses. Six had been released. (Ma'an News Agency)

The US Administration had intensified its contacts with the Palestinian leadership to prevent President Abbas from approving Prime Minister Fayyad's resignation, a Palestinian source said. (The Jerusalem Post, Xinhua)

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon met with President Obama in the White House. During the meeting, President Obama said that there is "a window of opportunity" to restart peace talks. "We explored how the United States, as a strong friend of Israel and a supporter of a Palestinian State, can work with the UN and other multilateral bodies to try to move that process forward," he said. Mr. Ban said that more needs to be done "to fully utilize the generated momentum by President Obama's visit so that a two-State solution can be successfully implemented as soon as possible." (AFP, Xinhua)

G-8 Ministers for Foreign Affairs, in a meeting in London, [agreed](#) on the urgent need to make progress on the peace process and underscored the need for a major international effort involving all relevant parties, including the Quartet, to drive the peace process forward. ([www.state.gov](#))

At a meeting between President Abbas and Bahrain's Minister for Foreign Affairs Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa in Amman, the parties discussed the latest developments in the peace process, the outcomes of the Arab Peace Initiative Follow-up Committee meeting recently, that was held in Qatar, and Palestinian national reconciliation. (*Bahrain News Agency*)

Canada's Minister for Foreign Affairs John Baird broke an international taboo by meeting with Israel's Minister of Justice, Tzipi Livni, in her office at the Ministry of Justice in East Jerusalem. A source said that Mr. Baird "recognizes the sensitivity, but wants to set a precedent". The United States and European Union member States refuse to let their officials meet Israeli officials in East Jerusalem. (*Haaretz*)

Israel rejected US Secretary of State Kerry's proposal for renewing talks with the PA. (*Haaretz*)

Israel will open the Kerem Shalom crossing for four hours to allow food and gas into the Gaza Strip, Palestinian officials said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In a statement, Hamas expressed strong opposition to a proposal that 120,000 Arabs, who had fled Israel when it was formed, be absorbed by Canada. President Peres had recalled past proposals to that effect during his meeting during the week with Canada's Minister for Foreign Affairs Baird. Hamas said, "The right of return of Palestinian refugees to towns and villages from which they were deported due to the occupation and the crimes of the occupation is a sacred right and nobody in the world has the authority to cancel or waive it." ([www.israelnationalnews.com](#))

A violent confrontation broke out between Palestinians and settlers from the "Netzah Binyamin" settlement near the village of Silwad that resulted in the hospitalization of a Palestinian who was seriously injured. (*Haaretz*)

Settlers cut down 47 olive trees and 55 grape vines in a private Palestinian plot of land near Beit Ummar, north of Hebron, according to a local activist. (*WAFA*)

Palestinians and settlers clashed near the settlement of "Ofra" in the West Bank, *Army Radio* reported. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The Spokesman for South Africa's Department of Trade and Industry, Sidwell Medupe, said that new rules had been introduced that would require special labels on goods imported from settlements such as West Bank-Israeli goods or East Jerusalem-Israeli goods. (*AFP*)

Israeli forces arrested 2 Palestinians in Idhna, west of Hebron, 2 in Nablus and another in al-Khader, south of Bethlehem, a military spokeswoman said. Also arrested were 4 Palestinians from the Aida refugee camp, north of Bethlehem, and the cities of Tulkarm and Hebron. (*Ma'an News Agency; Palestine News Network*)

The Palestinian Network of Non-governmental Organizations, together with human rights organizations, called on the Gaza de-facto authorities to end the application of Education Law 1/2013 that, according to them, should have been approved by the Palestinian Legislative Council. The law provides for gender segregation in schools and the establishment of female-only schools, without male teachers. (*Palestine News Network*)

The Palestinian human rights group Al-Haq released a new [report](#) entitled, "Water for one people only: Discriminatory access and water-apartheid in the Occupied Palestinian Territories" in which it accused Israel of practicing "water apartheid" and depriving Palestinians of their "rightful water supply". (*The Jerusalem Post*)

12

Security forces in the Gaza Strip will begin arresting Palestinians accused of collaborating with Israel, Hamas said a day after a campaign calling for collaborators to turn themselves over to authorities in exchange for amnesty had ended. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Some 90 trees were damaged on a Palestinian agricultural plot near Bethlehem and "price-tag" graffiti was found in the area. (*Ynetnews*)

13

The IDF arrested a Palestinian on his way to commit a shooting attack at the Eliyahu checkpoint near Qalqilya. The man had a makeshift gun, ammunition and photographs of the checkpoint, the IDF said. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Palestinian Prime Minister Fayyad had resigned and President Abbas accepted his resignation but had asked him to stay until a new Government could be formed, according to Palestinian officials. (*AFP, The New York Times*)

Israeli activists who attempted to visit Palestinian prisoner Samer Issawi, who was on hunger strike, were ejected from the hospital where Mr. Issawi had been confined and were detained by Israeli police. (*Haaretz*)

Several Israeli authors and scholars including Amos Oz and A.B. Yehoshua issued a public appeal Palestinian prisoner Issawi asking him to put an end to his months-long hunger strike because his death would "add another facet of tragedy and desperation" to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. (*Haaretz*)

14

Israeli forces assaulted a Palestinian volunteer at the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem, while on a work mission in the town of Al-Khader, south of Bethlehem, confiscated his camera and deleted all the photos he had taken. The Coordinator of the Popular Committee against Settlements and the Apartheid Wall in Al-Khader reported that four Israeli troops had raided the town, stopped pedestrians and checked their identity cards. (*WAFA*)

Israeli forces detained six Palestinians overnight across the occupied West Bank, local residents and an army official said. The soldiers had been looking for stone-throwing youths, according to residents. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In a statement, the PA Ministry for Foreign Affairs said that it had summoned Canada's envoy, Katherine Verrier-Frechette, "to express its strong dissatisfaction over the meeting between Canadian Minister for Foreign Affairs Baird and Israeli Minister of Justice Livni in East Jerusalem on 9 April." The League of Arab States, in a press statement, "expressed strong dissatisfaction and considered it a move to legitimize Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem". (*AFP, WAFA, www.naharnet.com*)

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan confirmed his intention to visit Gaza in late May while reiterating that his country will not send an ambassador back to Israel until the blockade on the Gaza Strip was lifted. ([www.todayzaman.com](#))

Following the deaths of two Palestinians in Israeli detention, Israel's Government Press Office had taken the unusual step of inviting foreign reporters for an inside look at the Ofer Prison, a facility near Ramallah that housed some 700 inmates. (*The Washington Post*)

The Israeli Government extended the ban on Palestinian family unification requests for an additional year. Palestinian Chief Negotiator Erakat criticized Israel's decision to extend the law that prohibited granting residency or citizenship to Palestinians from the occupied territories married to citizens of Israel. He called on the international community to "seriously examine the pattern of Israeli policies contributing to a situation of apartheid and to look into the wider effects and implications of the Israeli Government's precondition of being recognized as a Jewish State". Human Rights Watch said, "The law violates Israel's obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which applies not only to race but also to national or ethnic origin." (*Ma'an News Agency*)

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Israeli forces opened fire on farmers east of the Al-Bureij refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip. Meanwhile, Israeli soldiers opened fire on a Palestinian liaison crew accompanying sick people to Israel via the Erez crossing in northern Gaza. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Haaretz journalist Gideon Levi accused the Israeli military of deliberately executing two Palestinians who were shot on 3 April by the army at the Ennab roadblock, east of Anabta, near the West Bank city of Tulkarm. (*IMEMC*)

Palestinian President Abbas accepted the credentials of the Ambassadors of Argentina, Brazil, Switzerland and Turkey at his headquarters in Ramallah. (*WAFA*)

President Abbas made the first visit by a Palestinian leader to Kuwait in more than two decades. Mr. Abbas attended the opening of the Palestinian Embassy in Kuwait. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Hamas Spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said that Hamas was ready to implement the 2011 reconciliation deal in its entirety. Also, senior leader of Islamic Jihad Khalid al-Batsh said that Prime Minister Fayyad's resignation presented an opportunity to begin forming a unity Government headed by President Abbas. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Israeli authorities decided to close the Kerem Shalom crossing for two days for Independence Day celebrations. (*Qatar News Agency*)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia concluded a training programme for 30 Palestinians in the field of microfinance. The training took place in Amman

from 12 to 15 April. (www.thejakartaglobe.com)

Settlers attacked and injured three Palestinians near Nablus. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Palestinian Ministry for Prisoners' Affairs said that up to 20 per cent of the Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory had experienced detention by Israel since 1967. (*KUNA*)

The Israeli military had closed probes into more than 60 allegations of misconduct during its Gaza campaign in November 2012, including a strike that had killed 12 Palestinians, among them 5 women and 5 children. The army said in a report: "[The Military Advocate General] reviewed the factual findings, as far as they existed, with respect to approximately 65 incidents, and did not find a basis for opening a criminal investigation in those cases." (*AFP*)

United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Serry issued a [statement](#) on Prime Minister Fayyad's resignation, saying, "The United Nations recognizes that Prime Minister Fayyad had to contend with circumstances that kept constraining the success of the State-building agenda he led together with President Abbas and which is now – in the absence of a credible political horizon – at serious risk." (*UN News Centre*, www.unsco.org)

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Israeli soldiers in a watchtower at the border with the Gaza Strip shot a 34-year-old Palestinian in the chest near the Al-Bureij refugee camp, according to Ministry of Health of Hamas. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

IDF Chief of Staff Benny Gantz told *Israel Radio* that the continued quiet on the Gaza front was a testament to the success of Operation Pillar of Defense in November 2012, adding that if firing of rockets resumed, the IDF will resume its operations in the Gaza Strip and extend them. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Israeli forces arrested 10 Palestinians from Hebron, Nablus, Bethlehem and Tubas. Five Palestinians were arrested by Israeli soldiers in Jerusalem during a march to commemorate the plight of the Palestinian people. (*Petra*)

The US Consul General in Jerusalem, Michael Ratney, in a video conference organized by Palthink for Strategic Studies, asserted that the two-State solution was the only acceptable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He emphasized that US policy towards Israeli settlement building had not changed, and underscored the continuing US commitment to assist Palestinians in both the West Bank and Gaza. (*Palestine News Network*)

Kuwait granted \$15 million to UNRWA for Palestine refugees inside Syria. (*KUNA*)

In a [statement](#), the UN Secretary-General expressed appreciation for Salam Fayyad's strong efforts during his tenure as Prime Minister, commending him for his leadership and commitment to improve the lives of all Palestinians. He also reaffirmed the commitment of the United Nations to continue working with the Palestinian leadership to achieve the two-State solution. (www.un.org)

Seven Palestinians were killed at the Handarat refugee camp in Aleppo in Syria. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel detained and interrogated five Palestinians for raising Palestinian flags over their cars in Jerusalem. Two of those were released on bail of 5,000 shekels (\$1,378). Eight others were pulled over by traffic police and fined 250 shekels for having Palestinian flags on their cars. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Settlers uprooted 20 olive trees belonging to a Palestinian farmer in Hebron. (*Wafa*)

During an Independence Day event, Israeli Minister of Housing Uri Ariel said that Israel will allow construction companies to start work in the "E-1" area. "We will fulfil our right and our obligation to build there. In another year and a half, apartments will be built in 'E-1'," he said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Palestinian detainees wrote to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu demanding to be recognized as prisoners of war within 45 days. Qadura Fares, head of the Palestinian Prisoners Society, said that the demand had been made in light of Palestine's admission to the United Nations as a non-member State. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Jawad Al Amawi, in charge of legal affairs at the Palestinian Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs, said that the Ministry will no longer pay fines imposed by Israeli military courts on Palestinian prisoners effective 1 June. "The Israeli military courts collect 50 million shekels annually from the Palestinian detainees and prisoners and have ended up financially self efficient institutions that do not stand in need of any Israeli finance," he said. (*GulfNews*)

The Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People issued a [statement](#) on the occasion of the Palestinian Prisoners' Day which would be commemorated the following day, expressing its concern about the plight of the Palestinians in Israeli prisons and detention centres. (*UN News Centre*)

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A Palestinian youth was shot and injured in the head with a rubber-coated bullet during clashes with the Israeli army in Beit Ummar near Hebron. (*IMEMC*)

Militants in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula fired at least two rockets at Israel's southern resort town of Eilat. No one was hurt in the attack, according to police, although one rocket exploded near the courtyard of a house. A shadowy hard-line group, likely based in the Gaza Strip, claimed responsibility for the attack. (*AP*)

Israeli soldiers raided the Zaboba village, west of Jenin. (*Wafa*)

Two explosives were thrown in the direction of Rachel's Tomb injuring a female tourist. Some 150 Palestinians had been clashing with security forces in the area following an announcement by Shin Bet of the arrest of a Palestinian man from Nablus who had been released from an Israeli prison in 2011 as part of the Gilad Shalit exchange. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

In a farewell speech broadcast on local radio, outgoing Palestinian Prime Minister Fayyad urged for new elections, saying that was the only way to heal the rift between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. (*AP*)

US Secretary of State Kerry underlined the difficulty he would face in trying to chart a path towards Middle East peace. He told the House Foreign Affairs Committee: "I can guarantee you that I am committed to this because I believe the window for a two-State solution is shutting. I think we have some period of time – a year to year-and-a-half to two years, or it's over. ... So there is urgency to this, in my mind, and I intend on behalf of the President's instructions to honour that urgency and see what we can do to move forward." (*AP*)

British Prime Minister David Cameron urged Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu to reopen peace talks with the Palestinians as they met at the funeral of the former British leader Margaret Thatcher. "The Prime Minister emphasized the importance of efforts to restart the Israeli-Palestinian peace process for the future of Israel and the Palestinians and the region", stated a read-out of the meeting issued by Mr. Cameron's office. Mr. Cameron also stressed the need to improve the economic and security situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as well as ensure Israel's security from rocket attacks. (*AFP*)

Venezuela's Minister for Foreign Affairs Elias Jaua said that Venezuela supported the State of Palestine in its bid to become a full member of the United Nations, during his meeting with his Palestinian counterpart, Riad Malki, in Caracas. Earlier in the day, the Venezuelan Ministry of Foreign Affairs established a committee aimed at defending the rights of the Palestinian people. (*Xinhua*)

Israel reopened the Karam Abu Salem/Kerem Shalom crossing after having closed it for two days for Jewish holidays. (*Wafa*)

Israeli forces arrested two students from the University of Hebron. Also, Israeli soldiers detained two Palestinians at a checkpoint near East Jerusalem. (*Wafa*)

In a letter to European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton, Palestinian Chief Negotiator Erakat said that the EU must take "immediate and concrete steps" to secure the release of a Palestinian prisoner in an Israeli jail who had been refusing food for almost nine months and was in a critical condition. "The fate of Mr. [Samer] Issawi is being followed very closely by millions of Palestinians, Arabs and supporters of justice worldwide. The situation is potentially explosive and any harm that comes to him will undoubtedly lead to a serious eruption of violence that will make any sort of political progress unlikely," Mr. Erakat wrote. Some 3,000 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails had refused meals to mark Palestinian Prisoners Day. (*The Guardian*)

The Palestinian Prisoners' Club, in a report issued on the occasion of the Palestinian Prisoners Day, said that there were 4,900 Palestinians in Israeli jails, 168 of whom were under administrative detention without charge or trial, and 235 were children. (*Wafa*)

An Israeli military court sentenced a 14-year-old Palestinian-American teenager to two weeks in prison for throwing rocks at Israeli forces. (*AP*)

Israeli forces arrested a Palestinian man from Nablus on suspicion of plotting to carry out a terrorist attack, according to a statement by Shin Bet. The man had allegedly been recruited by a Palestinian released in the Shalit prisoner swap, to carry out attack on Israelis. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The Prisoners Centre for Studies said that the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs had sent diplomatic letters to EU Member States demanding that they do not receive the former Palestinian prisoner and football player Mahmoud al-Sarsak, who was released after a long hunger strike in Israeli jails. (www.middleeastmonitor.com)

Gisha - Legal Center for the Freedom of Movement, said that Israel was preventing 22 Palestinian runners from the Gaza Strip from participating in the first Palestinian West Bank marathon scheduled for 21 April in Bethlehem, on claims that the runners did not meet the criteria for passage between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. *(The Jerusalem Post)*

A special meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People opened in Caracas, at the invitation of the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. *(Division for Palestinian Rights)*

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Two missiles were fired from Gaza into southern Israel and landed in open areas, causing no injuries. *(Haaretz)*

During a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization in Ramallah, Palestinian President Abbas said that he would start discussions to form a new Government soon. In Gaza, representatives of 12 Palestinian factions also convened to discuss the aftermath of the resignation of Prime Minister Fayyad. The factions said that President Abbas should immediately start forming a Palestinian unity Government of technocrats to be sworn in within three weeks.

(Ma'an News Agency, Xinhua)

Palestinian President Abbas met with Italian General Consul in Jerusalem Davide La Cecilia at the Presidential headquarters in Ramallah. They discussed possible ways of enhancing Palestinian-Italian relations. *(Wafa)*

The Jerusalem Prosecutor's office indicted five residents of East Jerusalem accused of establishing a terror cell and planning to kidnap an Israeli and carry out attacks near the Temple Mount area. *(Haaretz)*

Israel released a Palestinian prisoner, Muhammad Al-Taj, after a serious deterioration in his health. Mr. Al-Taj had served two-thirds of a 14-year sentence, and was transferred to a hospital in Ramallah. *(AFP, Ma'an News Agency)*

Israeli forces arrested 11 Palestinians from Hebron, Jenin and Tubas. *(Wafa)*

Some two dozen international aid agencies operating in Gaza suspended the travel of their local employees to Israel and the West Bank as a result of new, more extensive and detailed exit permit application forms and interview requirements. *(International Herald Tribune)*

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In a letter to European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Ashton, a group of former senior European officials that included Ms. Ashton's predecessor, Javier Solana, former Italian Prime Minister Giuliano Amato, former French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin and former EU Middle East envoy Miguel Moratinos, called on the EU to change its policy on the Middle East peace process in favour of a more aggressive approach, to demand a full moratorium on Israeli settlement construction in the West Bank and to define Israel as an occupying State, legally responsible for everything that happens in the West Bank. *(The Times of Israel)*

Hamas leader Haniyeh arrived in Qatar to meet with the group's Political Bureau Chief, Khaled Meshaal, to discuss a possible reconciliation with Fatah. Mr. Haniyeh would also meet with the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, to discuss Palestinian reconciliation and reconstruction projects in Gaza. *(Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency)*

Israeli Attorney General Yehuda Weinstein had issued a directive that the social welfare rights of Jerusalem Palestinians holding Israeli identification cards should not be harmed even if they lived outside the city's municipal borders, as long as they resided on the western side of the separation barrier. *(Haaretz)*

At the conclusion of the special meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, held in Caracas, the participants adopted, by acclamation, a Declaration in Solidarity with the Palestinian People and the State of Palestine. *(Division for Palestinian Rights)*

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Palestinian President Abbas met with Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs José Manuel García-Margallo to discuss bilateral relations, the political process and regional developments. *(Wafa)*

An Israeli central court in Jerusalem suspended a legal case filed by the Israeli municipal council of Jerusalem seeking to confiscate private land owned by a Palestinian family in the Beit Safafa neighbourhood. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

21

The IDF detained the three sons of a local Hamas leader, Gamal al-Hajja, in the northern West Bank city of Jenin. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

The League of Arab States condemned the decision by the British National Library to grant Israel permission to exhibit the original copy of the Balfour Declaration in a museum in Tel Aviv. *(Ahram Online)*

The Crown Prince of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, announced, during a meeting in Doha with Hamas leader Haniyeh, that Qatar will donate \$11 million to Hamas to build new law courts in the Gaza Strip. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

President Abbas met with US Secretary of State Kerry in Istanbul. The Palestinian Ambassador to Turkey, Nabil Maarouf, commented that the Abbas-Kerry meeting failed to make any progress on Palestinian conditions to restart talks with Israel. However, he said that the Mr. Kerry had promised to help economic development and investment in the West Bank and also set a timeline for peace negotiations to resume by the end of May. While in Istanbul, President Abbas also met with the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Egypt and Jordan to address regional developments and Palestinian national reconciliation issues. *(Wafa, Ma'an News Agency)*

The IDF used rubber bullets and gas bombs to control a protest staged by Palestinian prisoners in the Ashkelon prison, south of Israel. *(KUNA)*

The Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) and Bimkom (Planners for Planning Rights) submitted to the Jerusalem Administrative Court a petition against the "Jerusalem 2000 Outline Plan". ACRI Spokesperson Ronit Sela said that the Plan made obtaining building permits "nearly impossible" for Palestinians. *(The Jerusalem Post)*

Hundreds of people took part in the West Bank's first marathon, looping around Bethlehem on a course limited by Israel's separation Wall. *(AP)*

22

According to witnesses, Israeli soldiers raided the town of Abu Dis near Jerusalem and clashed with the residents in an attempt to stop a rally in solidarity with the prisoners in Israeli jails. They said that Israeli soldiers fired live and rubber bullets, sound bombs and tear gas at the residents to disperse them, leading to several injuries. *(Wafa)*

The IDF arrested 10 Palestinians from Jenin and Bethlehem and summoned 6 others for interrogation. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

The Palestinian Government rejected a request by Israel to bolster its troop presence in the Umm Rukba area of the Al-Khadr town in the Bethlehem Governorate.

The request followed clashes that erupted between residents and soldiers over the past week, leaving dozens injured. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

Hamas officials had been holding a series of closed-door meetings in Doha over the past days to distribute positions on the new members of its Politburo and talk about national reconciliation. Senior Hamas leader Ahmed Yousef said the meetings also focused on convincing European countries to remove Hamas from their lists of terrorist organizations. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan confirmed his plans to visit the Gaza Strip later in May despite attempts by President Abbas and US Secretary of State Kerry to bring about the cancellation of the trip. *(Hurriyet Daily News, Ma'ariv)*

President Abbas met with his Turkish counterpart, Abdullah Gül, in Istanbul, and briefed him on the progress of the Palestinian national reconciliation and the efforts to revive the stalled peace process. *(Palestine News Network)*

Fatah official Jamal Muhissen said that Egypt remained the sole sponsor of the Palestinian national reconciliation, reacting to Egyptian media reports stating that President Abbas intended to bring Turkey as mediator. *(Xinhua)*

The former Attorney General of Israel, Michael Ben-Yair, stated that "the settlement movement is a political act by a State against another people and as such is the most evil and immoral act since the end of World War II". *(Yediot Ahronot)*

"We are pursuing efforts to ensure correct labelling of settlement goods as tasked by the [European] Council," a European Union spokesperson said. Minister for Foreign Affairs from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and the UK had written to EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Ashton applauding the work on the legal guidelines. *(The Jerusalem Post)*

Israel opened the Kerem Shalom crossing for the limited transfer of building materials for projects under construction. Goods for other sectors and cooking gas will also be among the goods that will be allowed delivery into the Gaza Strip. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

Shireen Issawi, sister of long-term hunger striker Issawi, was assaulted by Israeli police as she tried to enter the Kaplan hospital to attend a court hearing for her brother. Mr. Issawi had been on hunger strike for over 270 days. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

Palestinian officials said that Palestinian prisoner Issawi had agreed to end an on-off hunger strike which lasted for more than eight months, agreeing to a deal

brokered by Israeli and Palestinian officials to serve eight more months for allegedly violating bail conditions, after which he would be freed to his Jerusalem home, Qadura Fares, head of the Palestinian Prisoners Society, said. (*Reuters*)

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EU Representative to the West Bank, Gaza Strip and UNRWA John Gatt-Rutter and Palestinian Minister of Foreign Affairs Malki presented the "2012 European Neighbourhood Policy" progress [report](#) for Palestine, highlighting steady progress in cooperation despite challenges. (*European External Action Service*)
Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs Garcia-Margallo told Israel's President Peres that President Abbas had asked him to convey the message that he would like to see confidence-building measures. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

An informed source told *Asharq Al-Awsat* that President Abbas intends to wait for the outcome of the reconciliation efforts between Fatah and Hamas before forming a new Government. However, if an agreement becomes unlikely, he will form a Government, the source said. (www.aqawsat.net)
Israelis and Palestinians agreed to renewed involvement by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the Old City of Jerusalem. UNESCO's inspectors will visit the Old City on 19 May to inspect renovation and rehabilitation projects, but will not visit the Al-Haram Al-Sharif/Temple Mount. As part of the arrangement, Palestinians agreed to postpone five resolutions critical of Israel that were pending before UNESCO. (*The New York Times, Haaretz*)

Israel opened the Kerem Shalom crossing for the export of one truckload of herbs and spices to Europe. Some 350 trucks loaded with goods and cement and building materials for international projects entered the Strip. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The European Union contributed \$2 million under the Palestinian Government's "Private Sector Reconstruction in Gaza" programme. (*European External Action Service*)

Israeli authorities demolished several agricultural structures and tents in the northern Jordan Valley area of the West Bank. (*Wafa*)

Israeli soldiers destroyed olive trees planted the previous year by the Palestinian residents of Susiya village, in the south Hebron Hill, according to witnesses and international activists. (*Wafa*)

Settlers from "Ofra" torched 10 cars in the village of Deir Jarir, east of Ramallah, according to witnesses. (*Wafa*)

UNRWA will start distributing food aid to refugees in Gaza the following day, a spokesman said. The agency had suspended food aid after protesters stormed a depot on 4 April demanding the reinstatement of cash allowances. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

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The IDF raided at dawn the Halima al-Sa'deya mosque and a family house in Jenin. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The IDF arrested at dawn two brothers, aged 16 and 18, in the town of Tako', east of Bethlehem. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Israeli navy opened fire on a number of Palestinian fishing boats off the Gaza coast, forcing them to go back to the shore. (*Palestine News Network*)

Undercover Israeli forces shot a Palestinian man and detained three others in the Issawiya neighbourhood in East Jerusalem. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Waal al-Arja, a Palestinian who, in September 2011, hurled stones at [a settler's] car causing it to crash and killing [the settler] and his son, was convicted of murder and sentenced to 98 years in prison. (*Haaretz*)

Knesset member Orit Strock demanded a law amendment to let Israeli settlers defend their property with live fire. (*Haaretz*)

The IDF demolished several residential and commercial buildings in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of At-Tur under the pretext that they lacked construction permits. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The IDF, accompanied by border guards, staff from the Israeli planning and building committee, the Civil Administration and heavy machinery, demolished three Palestinian-owned houses in the Arroub refugee camp, north of Hebron, and bulldozed several olive, fig, and grape trees. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Popular Committees Coordinator Raleb al-Jbour said that the IDF had handed down a stop work order to halt the construction of a rehabilitation centre in the Susiya village in Area C. Also in the same Hebron area, four demolition orders had been delivered to residents of the nearby Qawawes in Yatta. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

IDF forces with bulldozers and tanks entered 300 metres into an area of land used for farming east of Beit Hanoun in the Gaza Strip. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Lebanese security officials said that a grenade left behind from the 2007 fighting in the Nahr el-Bared Palestine refugee camp in northern Lebanon exploded and wounded seven schoolchildren. (*AP*)

UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman briefed the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, saying "There is now an opening to develop a meaningful initiative to achieve the negotiated two-State solution that will best serve the interests, rights, and aspirations of Israelis and Palestinians." A critical point was approaching for the viability of the peace process. "Whether that prospect solidifies or vanishes will depend on the direction that leaders on both sides chose to take," he said, as well as on the level of regional and international support for new efforts. ([UN press release SC/10985](#))

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon had rejected the comments made by UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 Richard Falk concerning the Boston bombing. A UN spokesperson said: "The Secretary-General is hopeful that Special Rapporteurs such as Mr. Falk understand that while they have independent status, their public comments can undermine the credibility and the work of the United Nations." (*UN News Centre*)

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Palestinians in Gaza said that Israeli military forces entered farmland east of Khan Yunis with eight bulldozers accompanied by tanks. No clashes were reported. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A local official said that the Israeli navy had opened fire on Palestinian fishing boats off the Gaza coast as they approached the 3 mile limit. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A 17-year-old student was hit by a bullet in his foot during clashes with Israeli soldiers in Abu Dis, east of Jerusalem, according to local sources. (*Wafa*)

Israeli forces were deployed at the Arroub refugee camp, north of Hebron, after three Molotov cocktails were thrown at an IDF post nearby, and raided several houses. Stones were also thrown at settlers' cars passing by the "Gush Etzion" settlement block, west of Bethlehem, and Israeli forces carried out a search campaign at the area. They handed three Palestinians notices to report for interrogation. (*Palestine News Network*)

According to Palestinian sources, the IDF arrested eight Palestinians from Jerusalem, Jenin and Hebron after raiding their homes. (*Wafa*)

According to US sources, the US Administration was planning to convene a four-way Middle East peace summit in which President Obama, Prime Minister Netanyahu, President Abbas and Jordan's King Abdullah will participate. The Summit was slated to convene in Washington, D.C., in June with the possible participation of Turkey, Egypt and other Arab countries. However, a State Department spokesman said: "We have seen the media reports of a planned Middle East summit in Washington. These reports are not true... I can confirm that the Secretary [of State] looks forward to meeting with the ministerial delegation representing the Arab Peace Initiative Follow-up Committee in Washington... [on] 29 April. Qatari Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Hamad bin Jassim... will lead the visiting delegation." (*Haaretz, www.state.gov*)

A Palestinian senior official said that President Abbas and members of the Palestinian leadership were disappointed with the futility of US Secretary of State Kerry's efforts to revive peace talks. Another Palestinian official in Ramallah said that "The question is not if Kerry fails, but when." (*The Times of Israel*)

Senior sources in the US and Israel said that the Obama Administration was preparing a multi-billion-dollar economic initiative that would bring international businesses and major infrastructure projects to the West Bank. Secretary of State Kerry had already secured approval in principle from Prime Minister Netanyahu, President Abbas, the head of Coca-Cola and other major international companies. Quartet Representative Tony Blair was also involved in an advisory capacity.

Mr. Netanyahu was reportedly against the release of Area C land, the exploitation of natural gas fields off the coast of Gaza, and the opening of an international airport controlled by the Palestinians. Mr. Kerry had assured the Palestinians that the economic projects will not come at the expense of diplomatic issues. (*The Times of Israel*)

Raed Fattouh, a Palestinian liaison official, said that Israeli authorities had opened the Kerem Shalom goods crossing into Gaza for the export of goods to Europe.

Israel had also permitted the entry of 320 trucks loaded with goods for various sectors in Gaza as well as limited quantities of cooking gas. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Hamas condemned a reported decision by the PA to postpone five UNESCO resolutions following US intervention. "This step is like a reward to the occupation for

its crimes and violations," Hamas Spokesman Fawzi Barhoum said. "It is a contribution to erasing the Arabic and Islamic identity of Jerusalem, and it encourages the occupation to continue its Judaization programme." (*Ma'an News Agency*)

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Israel said that it was phasing out white phosphorus smokescreen munitions whose use during its 2008-2009 offensives in Gaza drew war crimes allegations. (*Reuters*)

Israeli soldiers fired tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse some 500 Palestinian villagers from Deir Jarir, near Ramallah, marching towards a settlement outpost.

The procession, preceded by a group of stone-throwing youths, followed charges by Palestinians that settlers had attacked them twice this week. (*Haaretz*)

Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs Garcia-Margallo had rescinded a plan to establish an honorary consular office in Gaza. (*PRNewswire*)

The European Union expressed "serious concern" regarding the demolition of 22 Palestinian structures in eight locations across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The EU [statement](#) said that the demolitions had displaced 28 Palestinians, including 18 children, and that some of the demolished structures had been funded by EU member States. (*European External Action Service*)

Israel was expected to continue the construction of the wall around a convent near Beit Jala, after the convent lost a seven-year legal battle. It would separate a small community of elderly nuns from 75 per cent of their land. The playground of a school run by the nuns will be bordered on three sides by the wall. More than 50 Palestinian families would lose free access to their agricultural land. The campaign against the barrier at the site had been taken up by UK Foreign Secretary William Hague and the Archbishop of Westminster. (*The Guardian*)

Israel must release a Palestinian activist held without charge for two years, Amnesty International urged after his administrative detention had been extended for the sixth time without justification. Amnesty International believed that Ahmed Qatamesh, a 62-year-old academic, was being detained to deter political activities by other Palestinian left-wing activists. (www.amnesty.org)

UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 Falk declared the two-State solution "presently obsolete".

Speaking in Beirut, he said that it "continues the global mirage of a negotiation ... [and] is essentially a bridge to nowhere." (*The Daily Star*)

A recent report on social media found that 40 per cent of the Palestinian population were active on social media, most notably Facebook, the highest in the Middle East. (*Al Monitor*)

27

President Abbas announced the start of talks on forming a national unity Government, specifying that the consultations would take place "in accordance with the Doha Declaration and the timetable set up by the Palestinian leadership in meetings in Cairo on the reactivation of the PLO" in February. Hamas Spokesperson Abu Zuhri said that his party had not been contacted on this matter so far. (*AFP, Wafa*)

Israeli settlers torched at least 9 UN-owned vehicles, 1 Palestinian-owned car and 3 orchards in a southern Jerusalem neighbourhood, a local radio station reported.

(*Bahrain News Agency*)

Egyptian security forces detained eight Palestinian tunnel smugglers in a border area near the Gaza Strip. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

28

A mortar shell fired from the Gaza Strip fell in an open area in southern Israel. No injuries or damage were reported. (*Ynetnews*)

Israeli air strikes targeted different parts of the Gaza Strip at dawn. Reports said that they aimed at a Hamas-run military facility and two weapons storage facilities. (*IMEMC*)

Israeli's Minister of Finance Yair Lapid and Minister of Economy and Trade Naftali Bennett were pushing for the Government to pass a Basic Law requiring a referendum on any peace treaty with the Palestinians. Minister of Justice Minister Livni adamantly opposed the idea. (*The Jerusalem Post, Ynetnews*)

Governor Tarso Genro said that Brazil's southernmost state, Rio Grande Do Sul, will donate 11,500 tons of rice to Palestine refugees through UNRWA. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Developers of the first modern Palestinian city, Rawabi, said that the \$1 billion project was in jeopardy because of Israel's refusal to authorize a permanent access road for construction crews and residents to reach the city. (*The Wall Street Journal*)

Senior Palestinian officials warned that if Israel began construction in the E-1 area, President Abbas would go to the International Criminal Court and seek indictments of Israeli military officials on war crimes charges. (*The Media Line, Ynetnews*)

Israeli settlers violently attacked a 60-year-old Palestinian man in Hebron. He sustained cuts and bruises and had been moved to a local hospital. The IDF also detained three Palestinian children. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Israeli Supreme Court granted a request by the Israeli Government and postponed until 15 July the evacuation of the "Amona" outpost, established on privately owned Palestinian property near Ramallah. (*Haaretz, IMEMC*)

Palestinian human rights groups criticized a programme run by Hamas to teach schoolboys how to fire Kalashnikovs, throw grenades and plant improvised explosive devices. (*The Telegraph*)

UNRWA denied reports that it was closing its offices in Gaza after Palestinian refugees protested against the reduction in its aid service. (*Wafa*)

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An explosive charge detonated in front of the home of Fatah official Monther Al-Bardaweel, in Rafah in the Gaza Strip, leading to excessive damage to his car and home. (*IMEMC*)

Chinese Special Envoy to the Middle East Wu Sike said that China was willing to exert efforts for the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks after holding separate meetings in Jerusalem with Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Ze'ev Elkin and Minister of Justice Livni. Mr. Wu said that one of the purposes of his visit was to make preparations for the upcoming visits to China of Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas, both set for early May. (*Xinhua*)

Palestinian importers and exporters began a strike at the Allenby Bridge crossing and cut off the transfer of goods at the bridge until 11.00 a.m. (*Ynetnews*)

Hundreds of truckloads of food and goods remained stranded on the Israeli side of the Kerem Shalom crossing. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli *News One* reported that the Ministry of Housing had approved the construction of an additional 120 units in "Givat Ze'ev" in Jerusalem. (*IMEMC*)

A Palestinian official said that Israeli settlers had planted trees on private Palestinian land near Nablus. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli settlers seized land in the eastern part of Yatta, south of Hebron, while the IDF demolished a well in the Al-Fawwar refugee camp, also south of Hebron.

(*Wafa*)

Israeli soldiers evicted several hundred Bedouins from a village in the West Bank after the army had declared the area a live-fire training zone. (*Reuters*)

Minister of Justice Livni met twice in recent weeks with prominent Israeli settler leaders to discuss "price-tag" attacks against Palestinians and their property in the West Bank. She said that Israel will take tougher measures against perpetrators. (*Haaretz*)

The Israeli municipality demolished three Palestinian homes in the Jerusalem neighbourhood of al-Tur under the pretext that they had been built without permit.

(*Wafa*)

The Red Cross reported that Israel had cancelled visits by Gaza families to their relatives in Israeli prisons. (*Wafa*)

The European Parliament Delegation for relations with the Palestinian Legislative Council called, in the aftermath of the "Freedom and Dignity" International Conference, for the freeing of Palestinian political prisoners from Israeli jails. (*Wafa*)

The IDF announced that a military court had convicted senior Hamas official Muhammed Haruyash of both involvement in and attempts to carry out terror attacks, sentencing him to 24 years in prison. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The UN International [Meeting](#) on the Question of Palestine "African solidarity with the Palestinian people for the achievement of its inalienable rights, including the sovereignty and independence of the State of Palestine" opened in Addis Ababa. Carlos Lopes, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa and Representative of the Secretary-General; Abdou Salam Diallo, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and Taysir Khaled, member of the Executive Committee of the PLO and Representative of the State of Palestine, opened the meeting. (*UN press release GA/PAL/1267*)

Welcoming renewed international engagement in the peace process, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, in his message to the UN International Meeting on the Question of Palestine in Addis Ababa that building on that support required Israeli and Palestinian political leaders to "move beyond words" and tackle final status issues in a

A Palestinian was killed in an Israeli missile strike in Gaza. The Israeli military described the target as a "key terror figure" who manufactured rockets and explosive devices. Palestinian officials said that he was a police officer. (The New York Times)

A settler from "Yizhar" was stabbed to death by a Palestinian who then grabbed the settler's firearm and fired at security forces who shot and wounded the assailant. Dozens of settlers then threw stones at Palestinian vehicles, said Israeli police Spokesman Micky Rosenfeld. A bus driver was injured by glass and five settlers were arrested. There were also reports that Palestinian fields were set ablaze. (The New York Times)

Israeli forces closed down the Hawara and Zatara checkpoints after hundreds of settlers marched towards the Zatara checkpoint where a settler had been stabbed to death. PA settlement affairs official Ghassan Daghlis said that settlers set fire to over seven acres of olive fields in the Awarta village east of Nablus. (Ma'an News Agency)

Violent clashes erupted between young Palestinians and Israeli troops after settlers attacked a mosque in Nablus. An Israeli military spokeswoman said that some 40 Israelis had hurled rocks at Palestinian vehicles, wounding three Palestinians. Israeli soldiers dispersed the riot, she said. (Ma'an News Agency)

British Foreign Office Minister for the Middle East, Alistair Burt, commenting on the violence in the West Bank and Gaza, said that at this critical time for the two-State solution, "we need dialogue, not violence". He also condemned the rocket attacks from Gaza, the killing of an Israeli settler in the West Bank and expressed deep concern about the recent spate of violent attacks by extremist settlers. (www.gov.uk)

The Palestinian Government called on the Israeli Government to curb settlers' attacks against the Palestinian people in the West Bank. (Xinhua)

Israeli forces arrested six Palestinians from Bethlehem, Nablus, and Hebron, according to local and security sources. (Wafa)

Speaking on behalf of a delegation of the League of Arab States to Washington, D.C., Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jabr Al-Thani called for an Israeli-Palestinian agreement based on the 1967 borders and cited the possibility of "comparable", mutually agreed and "minor" land swaps. He spoke after meeting with US Vice-President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Kerry to discuss the Arab Peace Initiative. Top officials from the League, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Saudi Arabia attended the meeting. (AP)

US Secretary of State Kerry said that the Arab League's acknowledgment of the possibility of a land swap between Israelis and Palestinians was "a very big step forward" adding, "We are going to continue to march forward and try to bring people to the table despite the difficulties and the disappointments of the past". (Reuters)

Israeli Minister of Justice Livni called the Arab announcement an "important message". While she indicated that she had some concerns about the plan's details, she said that Israel should respond positively. Prime Minister Netanyahu had no immediate comment. (AP)

Palestinian Chief Negotiator Erakat said that the Arab League position "is not something new". Upon Israel's unequivocal acceptance of the two-State solution on the 1967 borders, the State of Palestine, as a sovereign country, might consider minor agreed border modifications," he said. (Ma'an News Agency)

In Washington, D.C., Palestine's Minister for Foreign Affairs Malki told reporters that Palestinians had agreed to suspend their request to join the International Criminal Court and UN agencies in order to give a fair chance to US efforts to restart peace talks, on condition that Israel does not start settlement construction in area E-1 as a temporary "goodwill" gesture. He said that the Arab Ministers for Foreign Affairs were hoping for another meeting with Mr. Kerry in four to six weeks. (The Jerusalem Post, www.politico.com)

Pope Francis met with Israel's President Peres at Vatican City urging Israelis and Palestinians to resume talks and make "courageous decisions" to bring peace. The Pope also accepted an invitation to visit the Holy Land. (uk.news.yahoo.com)

Palestinian Christians from Beit Jala, near Bethlehem, had urged Pope Francis to speak out against an Israeli decision to build its separation barrier on a route that they say would cut off their community from its lands and from Jerusalem. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli Minister for Construction and Housing Uri Ariel told Prime Minister Netanyahu that if the 2013 budget does not allocate funds to the construction of settlements, the budget will not win the approval of Ariel's Jewish Home party. (Ynetnews)

According to UNRWA, Palestine refugees in Syria were being killed, injured and displaced in greater numbers than ever before as the armed conflict continued to overwhelm camps across the country. UNRWA estimated that approximately 235,000 refugees had been displaced inside Syria. (www.unrwa.org)

The UN International Meeting on the Question of Palestine ended its two-day meeting in Addis Ababa with experts urging the African Governments to share their negotiating and institution-building tactics, create a continent-wide solidarity movement, and launch a regional peace initiative to help Palestinians remove barriers to statehood. (UN press release GA/PAL/1268)
