

Division for Palestinian Rights
**Chronological Review of Events Relating to the
 Question of Palestine**
Monthly media monitoring review
 April 2010

Monthly highlights

- Israel's Deputy Prime Minister warns of new Gaza offensive unless rocket attacks cease ([2 April](#))
- Israeli military orders threaten thousands of West Bank Palestinians with deportation, rights groups say ([11 April](#))
- PA Cabinet gives green light to local elections in the West Bank in July, postpones elections in Gaza ([25 April](#))
- President Abbas bans the sale of settlement-made products, prohibits Palestinians from working in settlements ([26 April](#))

I

Palestinian sources said that the Israeli navy had opened fire at Palestinian fishermen in the Al Sudaniyya and Al Waha areas, west of Beit Lahia, causing damage to fishing boats. No injuries had been reported. Israeli tanks fired several shells at farmlands in the northern part of the Gaza Strip, with damage having been reported but no injuries. The shelling came shortly after the army had dropped leaflets warning of a nearing attack on Gaza. The leaflets had not specified the nature of the attack. (IMEMC)

Israeli forces detained five Palestinians in the Al-Bustan neighbourhood of East Jerusalem. (IMEMC)

According to IMEMC, the Palestine News Network reported that the Wadi Hilwa Media Centre in East Jerusalem had been raided by Israeli police, and several people had been injured. (IMEMC)

Reporters Without Borders [deplored](#) the routine violation by the IDF of the press freedom of Palestinian journalists by firing at them. Eight Palestinian journalists had been injured by Israeli gunfire during the month of March. (Wafa, [www.rsf.org](#))

Palestinians threw rocks at an Israeli bus that had accidentally entered an Arab neighbourhood in Hebron causing damage to it. ([www.israelnationalnews.com](#))

A source from the Russian Federation Foreign Ministry said that Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov had told Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal that Gaza rocket fire on Israel was unacceptable. Mr. Mashaal said that Hamas was not interested in escalating violence and was taking steps to prevent the missile attacks.

Mr. Lavrov also stressed the importance of Palestinian unity based on a Fatah proposal. (IsraelNN.com)

Indonesian Red Cross (PMI) Chief Jusuf Kalla presented the President of the Palestinian Red Crescent Yunis Al-Khatib with \$100,000 in humanitarian aid for the Palestinian people during Mr. Al-Khatib's visit to the PMI headquarters. (Xinhua)

Israeli settlers and soldiers attacked Palestinians when they broke into the local Ibda and Wad Helwa cultural centres in the East Jerusalem district of Silwan, detaining a 15-year-old boy, Yezen Ammar Siam. (Ma'an News Agency)

In an interview with the Lebanese *A l-Manar* television station, Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah said that Israel planned to raze Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque, adding that Israel's objective was to "turn Jerusalem into a Jewish city". (Ynetnews)

Coinciding with the Jewish holiday of Passover, some 10,000 Israelis, heavily guarded by the Israeli military, gathered at the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron.

Addressing the gathering, Likud members directed their most pointed remarks at US President Barack Obama's Administration, which had demanded a halt to Israeli settlement construction in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. (AP)

A year after Palestinian activist Bassem Abu Rahmeh had been killed by a tear gas grenade in a protest near the village of Bil'in, the Israeli military prosecution decided that it would not investigate his death. (Haaretz)

Palestinian prisoners in the Israeli Ofer prison went on hunger strike in protest over living conditions in the prison. (Xinhua)

It was announced that Palestinians in all Israeli detention centres would refuse family visits during the month of April in protest over the use of the visits by prison officials to manipulate detainees. (Ma'an News Agency)

An Israeli military judge ordered the release of the 10 Palestinians, including senior Fatah leader Abbas Zaki, detained during a protest march on Palm Sunday. (The Jordan Times)

2

The Israeli military launched several air strikes at the Gaza Strip targeting weapons storage facilities in response to the nearly 20 rockets that had been fired from Gaza at Israel during the month of March. Three children were reported to have been injured in the air strikes. (AFP, AP, BBC, [www.idf.il](#))

According to reports, Israel's Deputy Prime Minister, Silvan Shalom, warned of a new offensive in Gaza unless militant rocket attacks ceased. Meanwhile, France, the United Kingdom, the United States, and others called for restraint by all parties. (Haaretz, The Sydney Morning Herald)

US Assistant Secretary of State Philip Crowley [said](#) that while Israel had the right to self-defence, there could be no military solution to the conflict and the parties must get the proximity talks going with a view to resuming direct negotiations. (AFP, [www.state.gov](#))

Hamas reportedly held a meeting in Gaza with Islamic Jihad, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine,

focusing on reducing tensions with Israel “including rocket attacks.” Hamas indicated that it had been working hard to deter the other factions in Gaza from conducting further individual actions against Israel. A spokesman said that Hamas was trying to maintain calm in Gaza for the national interest. Urging the international community to intervene to avoid an escalation of violence, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh said that Hamas was contacting the other Palestinian factions in order to reach an internal consensus as to the measures that might be taken in order to “protect our people and strengthen our unity.” (BBC, DPA, MSNBC)

For the third Friday in a row, Palestinians, Israelis and internationals marched toward Israel’s separation wall in violation of military orders declaring the areas closed. The IDF fired tear-gas canisters and rubber-coated bullets to disperse the demonstrations. Several people were reported to have been wounded during the protests and others had been detained. (MEMC, Ma’an News Agency, The Jerusalem Post)

The West Bank village of Khirbet Hamam was reportedly closed off as dozens of settlers gathered in the area, performing what appeared to be religious ceremonies. (Ma’an News Agency)

3

An Israeli military source said that a mortar round had been fired from the Gaza Strip at southern Israel. No injuries had been reported in the attack claimed by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. (AFP)

A resident in Hawara, south of Nablus, was detained by Israeli forces. (MEMC)

All commercial crossings into Gaza had been closed since the previous day, Israeli officials said. (Ma’an News Agency)

Israeli officials said that Israel’s Defense Minister, Ehud Barak had approved the transfer of cement, shoes and clothing to the Gaza Strip as a gesture of goodwill to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The supplies would cross into the Strip over the coming week via the Karim Abu Salim (Kerem Shalom) crossing. Officials said that some of the cement would go towards the renovations underway at a United Nations-run sewage plant in the central Strip. (The Jerusalem Post)

4

Israeli soldiers detained two Palestinians at the Qalandiya roadblock near Nablus. In Hebron, a 16-year old Palestinian boy was lightly injured by Israeli soldiers near the “Kiryat Arba” settlement. (MEMC)

The Israeli army fired at two Palestinians who were approaching the Kissufim Crossing between Israel and Gaza. No casualties were reported. (MEMC, The Jerusalem Post)

Medical sources reported that a Palestinian resident from the town of Tammun suffered second degree burns after a group of fundamentalist settlers had attacked him with acid near the “Kiryat Shomeneh” settlement. (MEMC)

A Qassam rocket, fired from the Gaza Strip, exploded near a kibbutz in the Sha’ar Haneguv region. No injuries were reported. (The Jerusalem Post)

A spokesman for the Islamic Jihad said that the group had stopped firing rockets due to the need to lift the Gaza blockade and alleviate the sufferings of the Palestinians. Subsequently, a high-ranking member of the group said that the organization’s military wing would “continue to use rockets according to the circumstances on the ground.” (The Jerusalem Post)

Palestinian Authority (PA) Minister of Prisoners’ Affairs, Issa Qaraqi, said that a basic requirement for any serious peace process would be the release of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails. (Ma’an News Agency)

Ten trucks of shoes and clothes for Palestinian traders were allowed into the Gaza Strip, making it the first time since the Hamas takeover of Gaza that privately owned commercial goods were allowed into the Strip. (BBC)

An Israeli military official said that a shipment of cement to be used in a United Nations sewerage project would be allowed into the Gaza Strip in the coming days. (AFP)

In an interview with CNN, Israel’s Ambassador to the US, Michael Oren, said that throughout Israel’s 16 years of negotiations with the Palestinians, including two cases where Israeli Prime Ministers had put complete peace plans on the table, Israel’s policy on Jerusalem had remained unchanged. (Haaretz)

5

Following pressure from Hamas, four Palestinian factions in the Gaza Strip announced that they would cease rocket attacks at Israel. The factions included the Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. (Haaretz)

An Israeli military statement, released to Ma’an News Agency, revealed the results of two investigations carried out into the circumstances around the death of four Nablus residents – two men and two teenagers. Israeli Central Command Chief Major-General Avi Mizrahi called the killing of two Palestinians in the West Bank village of Iraq-Burin by Israeli soldiers last month “an unnecessary operational occurrence with dire consequences”. The report indicated that more restrictive open-fire directives for Israeli soldiers faced with stone and Molotov cocktail throwing might soon be implemented. (Ma’an News Agency, Ynetnews.com)

Israeli settlers reportedly attacked a group of protesters gathered in the neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah in East Jerusalem. Five people were reported to have been injured and one person was detained. (Ma’an News Agency)

Asharq al-Awsat reported that Egyptian officials expressed concern that the escalating tensions between Gaza and Israel could lead to another Israeli invasion, and stressed that Egypt had been making every effort to reach out to both Israel and to Palestinian factions to prevent further escalation. (Haaretz, The Jerusalem Post)

In an [interview](#) with *The Wall Street Journal*, Jordan’s King Abdullah II said that there was tremendous tension in the Middle East and the status quo was not acceptable. He said that the United States should be pressured to bring its full weight on the Israelis and the Palestinians to move the process forward. The King also said that Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu’s settlement policy in East Jerusalem had pushed Jordanian-Israeli relations to their lowest point since the late King Hussein made peace with Israel in 1994. He added that, according to discussions with Arab and Muslim leaders, the challenge was the question of US credibility concerning the peace process, which was also at an all-time low because expectations had been high. (The Wall Street Journal)

According to a statement published on the eve of Children’s Day, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics said that 1.9 million children under the age of 18 lived in the Palestinian territory in mid-2009. (www.pcbs.gov.ps)

Israeli forces were investigating the death of Ali Alayyat, 63, a Palestinian-French citizen who had died from a heart attack shortly after he had been held up waiting for hours at Al-Hanra checkpoint in the northern West Bank. (Haaretz)

The PA Ministry of Information, in a press release, condemned the Israeli plan to build a new synagogue 200 metres from the Al-Aqsa Mosque in East Jerusalem. The press release stated: “We affirm that Jerusalem is an Arab, Palestinian, and Islamic and Christian City that will remain the capital of Palestine, and the Israeli occupation attempts do not negate its existence or history” and called on the international community to interfere to stop the Israeli occupation policy against Jerusalem and the holy sites. (Wafa)

Saudi Arabian cleric Muhammad Al-Arifi, host of the TV talk show Da’ Basmatah (Have an Impact) on the Muslim theology *Iqra* satellite channel, said that his coming episodes would include visits to Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem and possibly the rest of the West Bank. Mr Al-Arifi said he was concerned that he may not be allowed access to the sites by Israeli officials. (Ma’an News Agency)

6

Hundreds of Gaza residents and international activists marched from Beit Lahia, in the northern Gaza Strip, toward the border area to plant Palestinian flags and protest the de facto confiscation of 20 per cent of the Strip’s farmland. Beit Hanoun Popular Initiative coordinator Sabir Za’nin said that Israeli soldiers opened fire at the protestors. An Israeli military spokesman confirmed that warning shots had been fired in the air, approximately 250 metres from the barbed-wire fencing, where Palestinian movement was restricted. (Ma’an News Agency)

During a visit to the West Bank village of Bil’in, Rajmohan Gandhi, the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, praised the village as a contemporary model for popular non-violent resistance. (Ma’an News Agency, Press Trust of India)

Head of the Negotiations Department of the PLO, Saeb Erakat, reiterated the call for US guarantees that Israel would not issue more tenders to build on land where the Palestinians aimed to establish a State, including East Jerusalem, prior to a resumption of negotiations. Taking note of the Israeli position, Mr. Erakat said that American efforts seemed to have reached a dead end. (Reuters)

Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman warned that any unilateral declaration of independence by the Palestinians could prompt Israel to revoke the 1990s peace agreements or annex parts of the West Bank. Mr. Liberman also criticized Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan saying that he was “slowly turning into Qaddafi or Hugo Chavez.” (AP)

The French Development Agency (AFD) signed a financial agreement with the Palestinian Authority to provide €3.2 million for the first round of the Municipal Development Programme. The funds would be allocated to 132 municipalities to improve their administrative and financial management and to develop their strategic planning. Following the signing ceremony, the French Consul General participated in the inauguration of a road in Ramallah and visited the construction site of the Al-Bireh stadium; both projects had received financial assistance from the Agency. (Wafa)

Israeli settler organizations handed court-issued eviction notices to two Sheikh Jarrah families in East Jerusalem, Hatem Abdul Qader, a PA Jerusalem Affairs official, said. The notices gave the Dajani and Dahoodi families 30 days to evacuate their homes, bringing the total number of families facing eviction to eight. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israel opened both the Karim Abu Salim (Kerem Shalom) and the Al-Muntar (Karni) border crossings with the Gaza Strip to allow limited quantities of humanitarian aid and fuel into the Strip. (Ma'an News Agency)

7

According to witnesses, Israeli tanks and bulldozers had invaded northern Gaza and destroyed farmlands. (IMEMC)

Eight Palestinians were detained by Israeli soldiers in the West Bank. Two Palestinians were reportedly injured when Israeli soldiers, driving a car with Palestinian licence plates, opened fire. The IDF reported that four Palestinians had been arrested on terrorism suspicions in the West Bank. (IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency, www.idf.il)

An 18-year old Gazan tunnel worker was killed when two tunnels collapsed near Rafah. (Arab News)

Five Palestinians were injured when mortar shells fired from northern Gaza, towards Israel, landed inside Palestinian territory and hit a house in Beit Hanoun. (DPA, IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency)

According to the Head of Settlement Affairs of the Palestinian Authority, Ghassan Daghlis, a group of Israeli settlers hurled stones at Palestinian cars and residents in Nablus. (IMEMC)

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) reported that Palestinians had hurled rocks near "Teqoa", damaging an Israeli vehicle and injuring an Israeli civilian. (www.idf.il) US officials said that a presidential peace plan for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict had long been an option for US President Obama. But they said the Administration, now locked in tense talks with Israel about making confidence-building overtures to the Palestinians, was focused on arranging indirect talks between the two sides.

They said that the notion that Mr. Obama could offer his own plan might undercut those nascent efforts, because it could lead to a backlash among Israel's supporters and encourage the Palestinians not to make any concessions to Israel. Israeli officials had long opposed the introduction of a unilateral American plan, while Arab officials had pressed hard for one, saying it is the only way to break the impasse. The basic parameters of a peace deal would probably closely resemble the "Clinton parameters", offered by former President Clinton 10 years ago. (The Washington Post)

Multiple nations would be ready to recognize a Palestinian State if it were to be declared in 2011, Palestinian Ambassador to Britain, Manuel Hassassian, said. (Ma'an News Agency)

During a meeting in Paris, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, while expressing support for the Goldstone Report, said that Israel was the "principal threat to peace" in the Middle East. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu expressed regret at Mr. Erdoğan's comments, saying that Israel was interested in having good relations with Turkey. (AFP, Haaretz)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu told reporters that differences between Israel and the US over Israeli [settlement] construction in East Jerusalem had yet to be worked out and that the negotiations had been continuing. (AP, Haaretz)

Egypt asked the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to set up a permanent mission in Jerusalem to monitor Israeli violations in the Holy City. (Egypt Today)

Two Palestinian families in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem were reported to have been given eviction notices by activists from the "Nahalat Shimon" settler group. Hours earlier, it had been announced that a delegation of Belgian civil society representatives and members of Parliament would pay a solidarity visit to the Sheikh Jarrah families on 11 April. (Arab News, IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency)

Leaders of the Palestinian Christian community called on church officials to boycott the Israeli permit system, requiring them to request permits to access the Holy City. Fatah official for religious affairs, Mike Salman, said that under international law, Jerusalem remained part of the 1967 occupied territory, which Muslims and Christians should be able to reach without permits. (Ma'an News Agency)

Hamas affiliate Muhammad Nihad Salameh Al-Hashash had been released from prison after having served a 20-year sentence for the killing of an Israeli soldier in the Al-Bureij refugee camp. (Ma'an News Agency)

The Palestinian Prisoners Club said in a statement that "more than 7,000 Palestinian male and female prisoners in 10 central Israeli prisons and three detention camps refused to receive their meals offered by the prison on Wednesday". The prisoners "will also strike on 17 and 27 April if Israeli prison authorities ignore their demands to improve their living conditions". (www.arabnews.com)

The Israeli Minister of National Infrastructures, Uzi Landau, told the *Israel Army Radio* that, unless the Palestinians stopped dumping untreated sewage, Israel would cut off the water supply to the West Bank. The head of the Palestinian Water Authority, Shaddad al-Attili, said that the Israelis had been preventing the Palestinians from building waste water treatment plants by denying them permits. (AFP)

Norman G. Finkelstein, an American political scientist, presented his new book entitled "This Time We Went Too Far, Truth & Consequences of the Gaza Invasion", saying that the 22-day military offensive in Gaza "was not a war; it was a massacre". "Israelis knew Hamas has no fighting force," he said. "How can you restore deterrence capacity against an enemy who has no fighting capacity?" He also urged the press to be cautious about wording, saying, "The Goldstone report is not controversial; it's cautious, conservative and judicious". (Xinhua)

8

Gaza militants hit an IDF patrol with at least three mortar bombs and two anti-tank projectiles during a routine operation near Kibbutz Kissufim in the western Negev.

No injuries were reported. (Haaretz)

Two Palestinians were dead in a collapsed smuggling tunnel under the border between the southern Gaza Strip and Egypt. (DPA, Ma'an News Agency)

Two Palestinians had been injured in the southern West Bank, onlookers said, when Israeli forces opened fire amid clashes with young Palestinian protesters.

Violence erupted as soldiers raided the Hebron-area village of Beit Ummar, witnesses said, firing live and rubber-coated bullets, as well as tear-gas canisters. (Ma'an News Agency)

Witnesses said that Israeli forces had entered 300 metres into Gaza north of Khan Yunis, destroying agricultural lands. Five Israeli military vehicles had entered south of Kissufim military base and canvassed the area, appearing to search for militants operating near the base, witnesses said. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli forces entered Bethlehem's Dheisheh refugee camp, shooting live and rubber-coated bullets at young men throwing stones at the troops. The IDF had detained two Palestinians and injured two others, security sources said. An Israeli military spokesman said that forces were in the area attempting to carry out the "arrest of a wanted man", when they saw a Palestinian "holding a fire bomb about 20 metres away and fired at him". (Ma'an News Agency)

One Palestinian was injured and three others were detained when Israeli Special Forces opened fire in the Beita village south of Nablus. (Ma'an News Agency)

Head of the Negotiations Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Saeb Erakat, called on the US to take the initiative and announce that it would recognize the future Palestinian State. "The Palestinians don't want to see new ideas to settle the conflict in the Middle East. They want international resolutions to be implemented," Mr. Erakat told *Voice of Palestine* radio. He explained that the Palestinians want Washington "to go to the Security Council and announce its acceptance of the international law which accepts a Palestinian statehood, with Jerusalem as its capital." (Xinhua)

The Israeli Ambassador to the UN blasted a PA decision to name the Ramallah street intended to house the future Palestinian presidential compound after "infamous Hamas strongman" Yahia Ayash. In her condemnation, which was submitted to the UN, Gabriela Shalev said that the naming of the street for Ayash was "an outrageous act which stands contrary to the spirit of the peace process." (Haaretz)

At a joint conference with Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero in Madrid, Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri urged Israel to "move ahead" towards finding a political solution with the Palestinians, accusing its Government of trying to create little wars that held up the peace process. Mr. Zapatero,

whose country holds the European Union Presidency, called on Israel to take the “necessary steps” to open a dialogue with the Palestinians as soon as possible.

(DPA)

Suffyan Abu Zaida, a member of Fatah Revolutionary Council, arrived in Gaza for a seven-day visit, an official said. Mr. Abu Zaida planned to meet with Hamas leaders, calling the trip “family related”. (Ma'an News Agency)

French Industry Minister Christian Estrosi laid the foundation stone for a Franco-Palestinian 20-hectare industrial park in Bethlehem. PA National Economy Minister Hassan Abu Libdeh represented the Palestinian side at the ceremony. The project, which was part of PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad's plan for the establishment of a Palestinian State by 2011, aimed at creating up to 1,000 jobs. France had provided €10 million (\$13.3 million) to connect the site to the water and electricity networks as well as to build access roads. (AFP)

At a press encounter with the Federal Chancellor of Austria, Werner Faymann, in Vienna, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that they had had extensive discussions on how the international community could help to facilitate the Middle East peace process. They also discussed the prospects for proximity talks between the Palestinian Authority and Israel. When asked whether he would favour the US presenting their own peace plan to overcome the stalemate instead of waiting for the proximity talks to succeed, the Secretary-General said, “At this time, I am not in a position to make any comment on such a peace plan to be prepared by the American Government because I have not been informed”, adding, “These proximity talks, I believe, in the end should lead to direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians to resolve all core issues, including borders and refugees and peace and security matters.” (UN News Centre)

Seventy per cent of refugees in Lebanon and Syria said that they were not satisfied with services provided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), a survey said. The survey had been carried out in October 2009 to coincide with the sixtieth anniversary of UNRWA by the Palestinian Return Gathering in Damascus, Palestinian Return Centre in London and the Sabet Organization for the Right of Return in Beirut and surveyed more than 1,400 refugees. (The Daily Star)

Israeli soldiers prevented medical staff from entering a village north of Bethlehem where they were headed to work at a CARE-sponsored clinic, the Health Work Committees reported. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli Government representatives said that Israel's High Court of Justice should not impose a timetable for razing a section of the separation barrier in the West Bank. The comments were made as the State filed a High Court rebuttal to a petition filed by the Yesh Din group, on behalf of the residents of the Palestinian village of Silwad, north-east of Ramallah, who had asked the Court to order the razing of a barrier built near the village. (Ynetnews)

For eight hours, students at Princeton University in New Jersey were greeted by a 16-foot wall made of wood and styrofoam, representing Israel's separation wall, local media reported. The Daily Princetonian, a college newspaper, reported that the display was a protest by the Princeton Committee on Palestine and Amnesty International against the separation wall. (Ma'an News Agency, The Daily Princetonian)

Hamas Spokesperson Sami Abu Zuhri complained in Gaza that the world was only concerned with the release of Israeli prisoner Gilad Shalit, but not bothered about the ill-treatment of Palestinians in Israeli jails. If the world carried on in the same manner, then Hamas would be forced to find “new friends” for Shalit, he said.

(Press TV)

The Division for Palestinian Rights of the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat launched a Facebook fan page. The Division planned to use this foray into new media as an outreach activity, but also in fulfilment of its information mandate. The Division hoped that this would also help better educate non-UN users about the work of the Department of Political Affairs on the question of Palestine. Facebook would be used to engage and stay in touch with a wide variety of users, including the UN community, diplomats, academics, parliamentarians, civil society, members of the press, and the general public. Fans would receive alerts about the various activities of the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, including information about international meetings and conferences, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, and the documents collection of UNISPAL (United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine), as well as updates on what civil society partners were doing on the ground, and news about other related activities and events. The fan page can be joined and viewed at: www.facebook.com/?ref=logo#!/pages/United-Nations-Division-for-Palestinian-Rights/10150109051345346?ref=pf (Division for Palestinian Rights)

9

Israeli forces detained at least 11 people south of Bethlehem, eight of whom participated in a protest against the separation wall in Safa, a village next to the “Gush Etzion” settlement. (Ma'an News Agency)

Former Israeli soldiers said in a report that the IDF had used reckless force in Gaza, resulting in needless deaths and damage. Breaking the Silence, an organization of Israeli army reservists, interviewed 26 soldiers involved in the fighting in Gaza. They said that they had demolished homes and used unnecessary firepower given the relatively light resistance. (AP)

Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri today called for a “world leadership” to force all the parties to the Middle East conflict to negotiate, describing US President Obama as the “ideal person” to head the effort. Israel did not have an “authentic interest” in reaching a wide-ranging and fair peace arrangement with the Arab world, Hariri claimed during his official visit to Spain. (Deutsche Presse-Agentur)

The United States today promised not to “surprise” key Middle Eastern players with a dramatic change in strategy, following reports that President Obama was readying a new peace plan. National Security Advisor James Jones told reporters on Air Force One that there had been “no decision” on whether to unveil a new US approach aimed at restarting stalled peacemaking. (AFP)

PA Foreign Minister Riad Malki would visit Brasilia next week to meet with leaders and representatives of the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum to seek support for peace negotiations with Israel, a Government official said. (Xinhua)

The sole power plant in the Gaza Strip had been shut down because fuel supplies ran out, with Palestinians and Israel blaming each other. (AFP)

The Director of the Jerusalem Centre for Social and Economic rights, Ziad Hammouri, said that around 165,000 Jerusalemites lived east of the wall that separated Jerusalem from the West Bank. He told Arab News that those Jerusalemites might “lose their right to reside in the city”. (www.arabnews.com)

Israeli troops escorted what locals estimated to be 6,000 settlers to a shrine in a town in the Salfit district in the West Bank. According to witnesses, the IDF shut down entrances to the town, installed checkpoints at all intersections, took positions on rooftops, imposed a curfew on residents, and watched as settlers threw stones at homes and, in one case, assaulted a civilian who tried to cross a checkpoint. (Ma'an News Agency)

10

Israeli forces clashed with several dozen Palestinian protesters in the West Bank, arresting 14 people, the army and witnesses said. The protesters, who were joined by Israeli and international peace activists at a rally near the village of Beit Umar, said that settlers from nearby “Bat Ayin” had been farming on Palestinian-owned land. (AFP)

The PA rejected US and Israeli accusations that it practised incitement against Israel. The US and Israel had strongly condemned the decision to name two streets in Ramallah after Fatah fighter Dalal al-Mughrabi and Yahia Ayash of Islamic Jihad. PA Spokesman Ghassan al-Khatib said that, according to Palestinian law, it was not the PA but “elected municipal councils that name the streets.” (Xinhua)

King Abdullah II of Jordan left Amman for Washington for talks with US President Obama, aimed at achieving a breakthrough in the peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, officials said. (DPA)

Spain aimed to revive the Middle East peace process, working with France and Egypt, in the run-up to the second Summit of the Union for the Mediterranean, to be held in Barcelona in June, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos said. (AFP)

The PA had asked the Arab League to urge Israel to release thousands of Palestinians and Arab prisoners in Israeli jails. (Bernama)

11

A recently amended military order allowing Israel to remove Palestinians from the West Bank if it did not recognize their legal status could lead to the expulsion of thousands, Israeli human rights groups warned. Jordan's Minister of State for Media Affairs and Communications Nabil Sharif, requesting clarification from Israel over the decision, said that the Israeli Foreign Ministry had denied that a military order had been issued that would remove thousands of Palestinians from their land.

(Petra, The Jordanian Times)

12

Israeli forces had surrounded a school in Azzun, east of Qalqilya so that boys accused of rock throwing could be detained, the principal said. An Israeli military

spokeswoman confirmed the incident, but said that a boy had thrown a "firebomb at an Israeli vehicle." (*Ma'an News Agency*)

US President Obama urged the Palestinians and Israel to start proximity talks. His statements came during a meeting with King Abdullah II of Jordan. Both leaders agreed that Israel and the Palestinians must refrain from any acts that could "undermine trust" and the efforts to resume the peace process. King Abdullah reportedly asked Mr. Obama to present a peace plan to be submitted to Israel and the PA, yet several US officials opposed the move and believed that the two sides must resolve all issues. (*DPA, IMEMC, Petra*)

Arab League Assistant Secretary-General for Financial and Administrative Affairs, Yousef Al Yazal, stated that the Arab League had received \$36 million from Algeria and Qatar to be transferred to the PA. (*IMEMC*)

The West Bank economy grew at a rate of 8.5 per cent in 2009 because of Palestinian economic reforms, Israel's easing of restrictions and generous international aid.

However, Gaza's economy grew by just 1 per cent in the same period, as Israel and Egypt maintained border closures, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said in a new [report](#) prepared for the upcoming Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of International Assistance to Palestinians (AHLC) meeting. ([www.imf.org](#), *AFP, The Jordan Times*)

The World Bank warned that continued economic growth in the West Bank would depend on Israel taking further steps to lift restrictions on movement. "The fiscal position of the [Palestinian Authority] remains precarious", the Bank said ahead of the [AHLC meeting] in Madrid. (*AFP*)

Jamal Nassar, a Hamas lawmaker, said that Hamas was facing a financial crisis because of Egypt's moves to seal its border and a boycott by local banks. (*AFP*)

Israel had informed the PA that aluminium and wood would be permitted entry into Gaza, officials said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Gaza Electricity Company transferred \$3 million to the PA, after Palestinian factions had met to discuss how to end the Gaza blackouts. The company said that 220,000 litres of fuel had since crossed from Israel. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

[Settlement] construction requiring the approval of Jerusalem's District Planning Committee had been on hold for more than a month all over the city due to concerns about a new crisis in Israeli ties with the US. Staff responsible for large-scale projects had been instructed to halt their work, causing a backlog. Small-scale projects have not been affected by the stoppage. (*Haaretz*)

Landowners in Silwan fear that far-right settler groups were attempting to appropriate their land in East Jerusalem, according to a report by the Jerusalem Centre for Social and Economic Rights. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

IDF Chief of General Staff Gabi Ashkenazi pledged to try to prevent the demolition of the West Bank home of an Israeli officer killed two weeks ago in Gaza. While visiting the family of the officer, he said that he would work to reverse the demolition order for their home, located in a settlement outpost. (*Haaretz*)

The Israeli High Court of Justice rejected a petition filed against the construction of a segment of the wall near the Palestinian village of Masha. The petition claimed that the fence's route was illegal as it was based not on security concerns, but rather on a political decision to expand Israeli settlements. In their ruling, the justices accepted the claim that the barrier hurt the villagers, but said re-routing the barrier would jeopardize the security of the area's settlers. (*ynetnews*)

Less than a week after an Israeli minister threatened to restrict the West Bank's water supply, Israeli authorities closed off the main water source used for agriculture in the village of Bardalah in the Jordan Valley. Mekorot, the Israeli water company, had accused villagers of stealing water, a charge denied by villagers. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The French Government said that it was "very concerned" by the Israeli decision whereby thousands of Palestinians risk being expelled from the West Bank. (*KUNA*)

The PLO said in a statement that the new Israeli military order that allows it to expel thousands of Palestinians from the West Bank was "a new Nakba for Palestinian people." ([www.arabnews.com](#))

President Bashar al-Assad of Syria underlined the need for an urgent move at both Arab and international levels to adopt a clear decision towards Israel's attempts to apply the policy of ethnic cleansing in the West Bank and expel the Palestinians out of their homeland. The remarks came during his meeting with Arab League Secretary-General Amre Moussa. (*SANA*)

Israel and Hamas had failed to conduct credible investigations of alleged war crimes during last year's Gaza war, Human Rights Watch said in a 62-page [review](#). The group urged the international community to pressure both sides to launch independent investigations before the July deadline set by the UN. (*AP*)

13

Two Palestinians had been killed and two wounded in a firefight between Islamic Jihad fighters and the Israeli army in the central Gaza Strip, medics said. The IDF announced that the army had killed four Palestinians trying to cross into Israel to plant bombs. (*AFP, Voice of Israel*)

Hamas ordered smuggling tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border closed. A senior Hamas official said that the tunnels had been closed at Egypt's request following warnings from Israel that they could be used in a plot to snatch Israelis vacationing in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. (*AP*)

According to Islamic Jihad officials, Hamas security officers had arrested and asked Islamic Jihad fighters to halt militant activity because of the existence of a "secret ceasefire agreement" between Gaza authorities and Israel. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Local sources reported that clashes took place between dozens of [Palestinian] youths and Israeli soldiers and settlers headed towards Nablus to perform prayers at Joseph's Tomb. No injuries were reported. (*IMEMC*)

Israeli soldiers invaded the village of Bil'in looking for a 16-year-old involved in anti-wall protests. (*IMEMC*)

Speaking to reporters after hosting a nuclear security summit, US President Obama voiced frustration over stalled Middle East peace efforts, saying that the Israelis and the Palestinians may not be ready to resolve their conflict no matter how much pressure Washington exerted. He said that he had little hope for swift progress towards Middle East peace; in some conflicts the United States could not impose solutions unless the participants were willing to break out of old patterns of antagonism. But Mr. Obama insisted the US would remain, "constantly present, constantly engaged". (*Reuters*)

Seventy-six US senators signed a bipartisan letter addressed to the Secretary of State urging her to do everything possible to prevent the US-Israeli tensions over settlement construction from derailing Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, and underscoring the importance of the US-Israel relationship. The letter followed a similar House letter with 333 signatures. ([www.aipac.org](#))

Turkish President Abdullah Gül said in an interview: "The Palestinian cause is very important and should be solved by establishing an independent Palestinian State. Reconciliation among Palestinians, therefore, is very important because without it, there will be a defect in the Palestinian structure". He said that his country was making efforts to help the Palestinians reach a compromise and supported the Arab initiatives in this area. "We believe that there is a possibility for Israelis, Palestinians, Syrians and Lebanese to live in peace. We want to talk to all of them to establish peace," Mr. Gül said. (*Khaleej Times*)

Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal met with Arab League Secretary-General Amre Moussa to discuss the obstacles preventing Palestinian reconciliation.

Hamas officials in Gaza said that Mr. Mashaal had told Mr. Moussa that the American veto was the central issue in reconciliation. Mr. Moussa laid out possible mechanisms of Arab League support to foster Palestinian unity, while Mr. Mashaal said that solid Arab League support for the Egyptian unity initiative would help overcome division. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

At the AHLC meeting in Madrid, chaired by Norway's Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre, and attended by Spain's Foreign Minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos, PA Prime Minister Fayyad and Quartet Representative Tony Blair, among others, Mr. Støre said: "The Middle East Quartet's reiteration of its support for Prime Minister Fayyad's State-building plan during its meeting in Moscow on 19 March confirms that there is broad international support for the plan. The AHLC meeting confirms the donors' willingness to support the detailed implementation of the plan," adding, "East Jerusalem must resume its traditional role as a key engine of the Palestinian economy, just as Gaza's borders must be opened to allow normal economic activity and access to the outside world, so that Gaza can find its rightful place in a Palestinian State". ([www.regieringen.no](#))

The dependence of Palestinians on aid was slowly easing but Israel must lift restrictions blocking their economic development, AHLC said. The Committee,

meeting in Madrid, said that this year the PA was seeking \$1.2 billion from donors, down from \$1.8 billion in 2008. PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad said that if Israel were to lift its blockade of the Gaza Strip, the need for aid would drop by \$500 million. Quartet Representative Tony Blair told a news conference: "Better governance leads to improved economic activity leads to greater self-reliance on the part of the Palestinians". (AP)

Jerusalem authorities planned to give the green light to build a new synagogue and school in East Jerusalem on land seized from Palestinians, in the "Gilo" settlement, *Israeli Army Radio* reported. (AFP)

Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat demanded recently that the city's police force renew the razing of structures in East Jerusalem against which demolition orders have been issued, *Ynetnews* learned. (Ynetnews)

"The military order that seeks to deport Palestinians and/or subject them to prosecution on the grounds of being without proper residency – this is something that in every way is illegal," including under international law, PA Prime Minister Fayyad told a news conference in Madrid. (AFP)

The Arab Lawyers Union called on the Human Rights Council to hold an emergency meeting to take necessary measures for dealing with the process of ethnic cleansing against the Palestinians. (KUNA)

During a press conference, members of Jordan's Professional Associations Council called on the Arab League to withdraw the Arab Peace Initiative and take "serious measures" against a recent Israeli decision that could pave the way for the expulsion of thousands of Palestinians from the West Bank. They said they would send a letter to Arab leaders to highlight the impact of the Israeli decision on the Kingdom. (The Jordan Times)

At the 4th Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Water, held in Barcelona, representatives of 43 member countries were prevented from approving a joint statement for guaranteeing the water resources of the whole Mediterranean basin because of a lack of agreement on how to name the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Israel's representatives did not accept the document referring to "occupied territories" and proposed the term "territories under occupation", which was not acceptable to the Arab bloc. (www.eu2010.es)

General Assembly President Ali Treki discussed the Middle East situation and the UN role in the Arab-Israeli conflict in talks with the Emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, during a tour of the region. "Both sides reaffirmed the need to strengthen the United Nations and the role it plays in resolving the Palestinian question and ending the human tragedy in the Gaza Strip," Spokesman Jean-Victor Nkolo said. (UN News Centre)

14

Three Palestinians were injured when Israeli forces opened fire towards a rally protesting Israel's no-go zone in the northern Gaza Strip. (Ma'an News Agency)

A 10-year-old Palestinian child was wounded by a rubber-coated bullet fired by the Israeli army at protesters near Beit Ummar, north of Hebron. (IMEMC)

Israeli forces detained two Palestinians in the town of Yatta near Hebron and the city of Salfit in the northern West Bank. (IMEMC)

After meeting his Israeli counterpart Avigdor Liberman, Romania's Foreign Minister, Teodor Baconschi, said, "We are taking the opportunity of this meeting to reaffirm our desire for the resumption of the peace process in the Middle East, on the basis of the Road Map and the diplomatic efforts of the Quartet." (AFP)

Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat issued orders instructing municipality engineers to demolish more Palestinian homes in Silwan in East Jerusalem. (IMEMC)

Israeli bulldozers demolished three houses in Khadr and Beit Sahur near Bethlehem and the village of Hares near Salfit. (IMEMC)

Within hours of announcing the terminal's "indefinite closure", Egyptian authorities said that Cairo had reopened the Rafah crossing into Gaza. (Ma'an News Agency)

Palestinian officials said that settlers vandalized the Bilal Ibn Rabah Mosque in the village of Hawara near Nablus. The Israeli army said that the mosque had been vandalized by "anonymous suspects". Two cars had also been set ablaze and olive trees had been uprooted. The army condemned the attack and ordered an investigation. (Reuters)

Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs B. Lynn Pascoe briefed the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, saying that while a partial restraint on settlement construction was welcome, it was insufficient and fuelled a crisis of confidence that had kept talks between the parties from resuming. In a development he described as "worrisome," Mr. Pascoe noted an Israeli military order giving the military commander the power to evict a broad category of people deemed not to be residents of the West Bank. "Implementing this order would constitute a breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention, in particular its article 49, which prohibits forcible transfers as well as deportations of protected persons, individual or mass, from the occupied territory," said Ambassador Zahir Tanin (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, who addressed the Council following Mr. Pascoe's statement. (UN News Centre)

Head of PA Civil Affairs Department Hussein al-Sheikh said that Gaza residents living in the West Bank would not be affected by Israel's deportation order which categorized Palestinians living in the West Bank without permits as "infiltrators". (Ma'an News Agency)

Asked about two Israeli military orders facilitating the expulsion of Palestinians in the West Bank without permits issued by Israeli authorities, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Andrei Nesterenko said, "Israel's possible implementation of these decisions is cause for the most serious concern. It may entail a further sharp aggravation of tension in Palestinian-Israeli relations and in the region as a whole and destabilize the situation in the Palestinian territories. The planned actions look especially provocative amid efforts by the world community, primarily through the Quartet, to facilitate resumption of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiation process with the ultimate goal of establishing an independent Palestinian State living side by side with Israel in peace and security." (www.mid.ru)

15

During an overnight raid in the Al-Far'a refugee camp in the northern West Bank, Israeli troops opened fire and moderately injured a Palestinian, who was later detained along with six others. In Nablus, Israeli forces detained three Palestinians from the Askar refugee camp. (Ma'an News Agency)

Fourteen Palestinians were detained by Israeli forces in the West Bank. (Arab News)

Palestinian sources reported that the Israeli army had obstructed efforts by Palestinian fire-fighters and rescue teams to reach burning storehouses near Jenin. (IMEMC)

A Qassam rocket fired from Gaza hit an open area in Israel. No injuries or damage were reported. (The Jerusalem Post)

Speaking at the dedication of the S. Daniel Abraham Center for Middle East Peace, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that the lack of peace between Israel and the Palestinians threatened Israel's long-term future as a secure and democratic Jewish State, and she urged Israel to accept concrete steps toward peace – both through the peace process and in the bottom-up State institution-building. (Reuters, www.state.gov)

Speaking at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, King Abdullah II of Jordan highlighted the vital role of the United States in the Middle East peace process, noting that "the two-State solution [...] is in the national security interest of the United States." (The Jordan Times)

US Consul General in Jerusalem, Daniel Rubinstein, met with local officials and businessmen in Hebron. Speaking to press, he said, "There is no doubt that the economic situation in the West Bank - including Hebron - has improved in the past two years, thanks to improvements in the security situation, the PA's economic reforms, and the easing of some of the movement and access restrictions by Israel. We also commend the efforts by President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad to build the institutions necessary for a future Palestinian State and improve the investment climate". (Wafa, Ynetnews)

Israeli authorities allowed limited quantities of wood and aluminium into the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom crossing for the first time in three years. Raed Fattouh, a Palestinian liaison official in Gaza, said that the goods were part of 112 to 122 truck loads of aid, commercial and agricultural goods. A limited quantity of fuel would also be pumped into Gaza, Mr. Fattouh said. (Ma'an News Agency)

The Israeli authorities decided to send nine Palestinian detainees to court although they had served their terms, under the pretext that they did not carry identity cards. The Palestinian Prisoners Society stated that the ruling was related to the recent Israeli decision regarding deporting Palestinians and that the nine detainees would likely receive deportation orders. (IMEMC)

16

Israeli military sources confirmed that a Palestinian gunman had been killed by Israeli gunfire at the border fence east of Gaza City. The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade said that one of its militants was missing following the fighting. (AFP)

An Israeli military spokesman said that seven Palestinians had been detained overnight in the West Bank. (Ma'an News Agency, www.idfil.com)

Over 200 protesters gathered in the village of Bil'in for the weekly protest against the separation wall. Demonstrations also took place in Ni'lin, where Israeli troops fired tear gas and rubber-coated bullets at the protesters. The IDF reported that they had responded with crowd dispersal measures to the "violent and illegal riots". (Haaretz, IMEMC, www.idfil.com)

Ma'an News Agency reported that following an anti-wall protest in Al-Walaja, Israeli border police had entered the village and surrounded the home of a detained Palestinian, trapping at least 40 people for two hours. (Ma'an News Agency)

The PA Ministry of Health and USAID announced a \$2.5 million project to rehabilitate the Jericho Government Hospital. The project will be implemented by the American Near East Refugee Aid, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health. (Wafa)

Locals reported that West Bank settlers had torched cars and sprayed graffiti on homes in the village of Jinsafut, east of Qalqilya, overnight. According to the IDF, the Hebrew word for "price tag" had been painted on one of the houses, referring to the policy of attacking Palestinians in retaliation for the Israeli Government's moratorium on settlements. (Ma'an News Agency, www.idfil.com)

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, urged Hamas not to carry out further executions of prisoners and to abolish the use of the death penalty, following the execution of two Palestinians accused of spying for Israel. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International also condemned the executions. (The Jerusalem Post, UN News Centre, www.ohchr.org)

17

Two Palestinians had been killed in what appeared to be an accidental explosion in the Gaza Strip near the border with Israel, medics said. (AFP, Ma'an News Agency)

PA Minister of Prisoners' Affairs Issa Qaraqe'i said that the death of a Palestinian in an Israeli jail brought the number of such deaths since 1967 to 202. Raed Hammad, 27, serving a 10-year term for attempted murder, had been found dead inside his cell in Be'er Sheva. Mr. Qaraqe'i said in a press statement that 50 prisoners had died due to deliberate medical negligence, and 70 due to severe torture. He added that 71 prisoners had been killed by Israeli forces after their arrest. He accused Israel of being responsible for Mr. Hammad's death because it had ignored the warnings about his health condition. (www.arabnews.com)

Fatah and Hamas marked Palestinian Prisoners' Day in Gaza. Representatives of the two factions, joined by members of smaller militant groups, relatives of prisoners and international activists, staged a sit-down protest and a 24-hour fast outside the Gaza City offices of the Red Cross. Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh made a brief visit to call for Palestinian reconciliation and urged all Palestinians to fight the Israeli occupation "by any means" and pressure Israel to free thousands of prisoners. "We must put aside anything that can harm our unity", Fatah representative Raafat Hamdouna said. (AFP, Ma'an News Agency)

18

The Israeli forces imposed a three-day closure on the West Bank before Israel's Remembrance Day and Independence Day. Entry of nearly all Palestinians from the West Bank had been barred as a security measure, the army statement said. (www.arabnews.com)

Egyptian forces discovered 10 smuggling tunnels in Rafah. (Ma'an News Agency)

UNRWA received an aid convoy from Saudi Arabian King Abdullah for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. The convoy had been stored at the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization warehouses to arrange dispatching it to Gaza. (Petra)

Jordan's Queen Rania launched an initiative to repair and develop Palestinian schools in East Jerusalem. (AFP)

Israel may transfer parts of the Jerusalem Municipality on the east side of the separation wall to PA control, Saeb Erakat, Head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO, said. He explained that Abu Dis, along with Al-Eizariya and As-Sawahra were supposed to be transferred to PA control in 1998, adding that he had learned about a renewed interest by Israel to finally make the transfer. (Ma'an News Agency)

19

A Palestinian was killed in the southern Gaza Strip when a tunnel on the border between the Strip and Egypt collapsed. (AFP)

In an interview on ABC's "Good Morning America", Prime Minister Netanyahu said he would not accept Palestinian demands that Israel stop building [settlements] in East Jerusalem. He sought to minimize differences with US President Obama over the peace process, but acknowledged that "we have some outstanding issues."

"We're trying to resolve them through diplomatic channels in the best way that we can". (AP)

At a press conference in Cairo after meeting with Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak, PA President Abbas said that he had stressed Palestinian demands that Israel stop building settlements in order to return to the negotiating table, adding that the Palestinian position was the same as that of the international community and the United States. He said that the PA had begun to act against Israel's order stipulating the expulsion from the West Bank of Palestinians without residency permits. (DPA)

Israel's Defense Minister Barak told *Israel Radio* that Prime Minister Netanyahu's Government had "done things that didn't come naturally to it", such as adopting the vision of two States and curtailing settlement construction. "But we also shouldn't delude ourselves", he added. "The growing alienation between us and the United States is not good for the State of Israel". The way to narrow that gap was to embark on an Israeli diplomatic initiative "that doesn't shy from dealing with all the core issues", he said. He dismissed talk of an imposed US solution but warned that "the world isn't willing to accept [...] the expectation that Israel will rule another people for decades more". (AP)

Negotiations to secure a prisoner swap deal and achieve Palestinian reconciliation were at a standstill, Hamas leader Salah Al-Bardawil said. (Ma'an News Agency)

US Consul General in Jerusalem Daniel Rubenstein said that the delegation composed of Palestinian business women and men, who would participate in the [Summit on Entrepreneurship](#), to be hosted by US President Obama in Washington on 26 and 27 April, was an essential element in the new Palestinian-American partnerships and were the foundations of a Palestinian State. (Wafa)

Hundreds of settlers accompanied by armed soldiers had blocked the road between Nablus and Ramallah, throwing rocks at Palestinian cars, witnesses said. (Ma'an News Agency)

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, more than 7,000 Palestinians, 270 of them under the age of 18, were in Israeli prisons; 296 were held under administrative detention without trial. It was estimated that about 9,000 Palestinians were detained every year by Israel for either armed resistance or acts of civil disobedience. (Ma'an News Agency, www.aljazeera.net)

Speaking at a refugee camp in the Syrian Arab Republic, Khaled Mashaal, Hamas Political Bureau Chief, vowed to capture more Israeli soldiers to be used in bargaining for the release of Palestinian prisoners. He accused Israel of obstructing the deal to trade Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit for Palestinian prisoners and blamed US insistence that Hamas recognized Israel for the failure of talks to reconcile Gaza and the West Bank. (AP)

"Israel has no right to deport any Palestinian, and the Palestinian Authority will not allow it and will confront it with various means", PA President Abbas said, as quoted by Egypt's news agency, MENA, without elaborating. (AFP)

UN Special Rapporteur Richard Falk said: "Even if this [Israeli] open-ended definition [of 'infiltrator'] is not used to imprison or deport vast numbers of people, it

causes unacceptable distress”, pointing out that it was unclear what kind of permits satisfied the Israeli military order. “Two Israeli Defense Military Orders may be in breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention and violate the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights”, he charged. They “establish a system that allows Israel to deport people without having their right to judicial review properly fulfilled or possibly not reviewed at all”. (AFP)

Hamas said that it would keep up executions of those convicted of spying for Israel. (AFP)

A group of Turkish NGOs were undertaking a joint effort to break the Israeli embargo through a Humanitarian Aid Foundation project to send two aid ships to Gaza in mid-May. The Foundation had launched its project in early April, attracting strong support from other NGOs in Turkey. The Foundation’s public relations representative, Salih Bilici, told *Today’s Zaman* that the ships would carry more than 3.5 tons of humanitarian aid as well as a delegation of about 500 people to Gaza. (Wafa)

20

With the support of Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia, Qatar had put forward a comprehensive initiative for Palestinian reconciliation, said Khaled Abdul Majeed, the secretary of the Supreme Follow-up Committee [of the Palestinian National Conference]. He said that the initiative included Palestinian unity, the release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit and Palestinian prisoners, opening Gaza’s crossings and alleviating the siege imposed on the enclave. A parallel proposal had been put forward by Arab League Secretary-General Amre Moussa, developing the Egyptian document, and giving both Fatah and Hamas the guarantees they sought, Mr Abdul Majeed said. (Ma’an News Agency)

The Labour Force Survey 2009, published by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, said that the 2009 unemployment rate in the West Bank had reached 17.8 per cent whereas in the Gaza Strip, it had reached 38.6 per cent. The highest unemployment rate in the West Bank had been recorded in the Governorate of Qalqilya at 23.4 per cent, and in the Gaza Strip, in the Governorate of Khan Yunis, at 49.3 per cent. (www.pcbs.gov.ps)

Thousands of Israel’s Arab citizens marked the *Nakba*, or “catastrophe,” the exodus of Palestinians that accompanied Israel’s creation. Protesters carrying Palestinian flags and signs with the names of destroyed Arab villages marched to the site of the village of Maskah, emptied in 1948, to demand the right of return for those exiled following Israel’s birth. (Al-Arabiya)

The Union of Arab Doctors’ Relief and Emergency Committee said that it had made an emergency delivery of 72,000 litres of industrial diesel fuel to Gaza to cover the deficit in the Gaza Strip’s hospitals. Muhammad Al-Alkook, the head of the Committee, said that the Union was ready to support the health sector in Gaza and to provide what was needed to alleviate the effects of the blockade. (Ma’an News Agency)

21

A Palestinian fisherman sustained a gunshot wound to the hand after Israeli forces opened fire at fishing boats along the Rafah coast, in the south of Gaza, a medical official said. (Ma’an News Agency)

Several Palestinian youths clashed with Israeli soldiers in the Silwan area of East Jerusalem. The clashes reportedly took place following settler attacks on Palestinian residents and their homes to which the Palestinians had responded by throwing stones and empty bottles. (IMEMC)

Israel erected two new military barriers in Hebron where Palestinians were stopped and asked to show their ID, but no detentions had been reported. (The Palestine Telegraph)

The IDF had drawn up plans to withdraw to pre-intifada lines in the West Bank, if ordered to do so by the Israeli Government, a top Israeli Defense official said. Such a withdrawal was one of the demands that President Obama had made to Prime Minister Netanyahu during their meeting at the White House last month. (The Jerusalem Post)

Head of the Negotiations Department of the PLO Saeb Erakat denied reports that Washington had suggested a summit meeting on stalled peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians in Egypt. (Xinhua)

US Middle East Envoy George Mitchell, who was reportedly scheduled to arrive in Israel this week to work towards indirect talks between Israel and the Palestinians, had delayed his trip, Israel’s *Army Radio* reported. Mr. Mitchell had been originally expected last week, but postponed his trip amid reports that he had been awaiting Israeli answers to demands made by US Secretary of State Clinton regarding East Jerusalem construction. (The Jerusalem Post)

Israel’s Deputy Foreign Minister, Danny Ayalon, today said, “We must ensure Israel’s existence as a Jewish State. Not only will pressure not support peace, it will prevent it”. Mr. Ayalon added, “We desire peace – but not at the cost of Israel’s national interests”. (Ynetnews)

A growing number of Palestinians support the establishment of a single state for Jews and Arabs, including Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, according to a poll released today. The survey conducted by the Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre found that support for a bi-national state in which Israelis and Palestinians would have equal rights had grown to 33.8 per cent from 20.6 per cent in June 2009. Palestinian hopes that US President Barack Obama would bring an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory had significantly declined in recent months, the poll found. (AFP, DPA)

Palestinian traders in Gaza said that they had begun ordering clothing and shoes to renew their stocks after an easing in the Israeli embargo had helped clear stocks that had been held up in transit, sometimes for years. (Reuters)

The Palestinian Ministry of Waqf and Religious Affairs said that the Israeli authorities had barred the PA from renovating the Al-Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron. (www.arabnews.com)

A coalition of left-wing groups was planning on trying to reach the port of Gaza next month with eight ships containing goods and 600 passengers, including journalists, an umbrella association of the groups said. The flagship was to depart from Dundalk, Ireland. (Haaretz)

Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman said that Jerusalem was the eternal capital of Israel and will never be divided – “neither directly nor indirectly”. (Haaretz)

American officials voiced harsh criticism over advertisements in favour of Israel’s position on Jerusalem that appeared in the US press with Mr. Netanyahu’s encouragement. “All these advertisements are not a wise move”, one senior American official said. (Haaretz)

One of four main gates to Jerusalem’s Old City, Jaffa Gate, had been reopened after a two-month restoration project. (AP)

Activists from the extreme rightist group Eretz Yisrael Shelanu (Our Land of Israel) were expected to march on 25 April in East Jerusalem’s mostly Arab Silwan neighbourhood. (Ynetnews)

Following clashes between stone-throwing settlers and Israeli border guards in the “Yizhar” settlement the previous day, Israeli military sources said that, as part of the investigations, the Israeli police was planning to carry out a campaign of arrests and confrontations with the settlers of the northern West Bank settlement. The IDF dubbed as “intolerable” what it described as a “riot” by settlers in the West Bank. The military said that about 100 settlers had thrown rocks and attacked soldiers as they tried to stop the settlers from entering a Palestinian village. (BBC, The Palestine Telegraph)

PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad vowed today to step up “peaceful resistance” against Israeli occupation by boycotting settlement goods throughout the West Bank. “There has been progress in the boycott of settlement products, which comes from the idea of popular peaceful resistance, and I hope we will rid our markets of all settlement goods by the end of the year”, he told the Fifth Bil’in International Conference for Palestinian Popular Resistance. (AFP)

The PA Minister of Labour, Ahmad Majdalani, issued a statement noting the PA plan, according to which there would not be a single Palestinian working in Israeli settlements by the end of 2011. “The decision is part of the Palestinian campaign to boycott the Jewish settlements and their products”, said Mr. Majdalani. (Xinhua)

Former Minister of Prisoners’ Affairs Wasfi Kabaha was released from Israeli custody today, the Palestinian Prisoners’ Society Wa’ed announced. He had been in administrative detention [without trial] since May 2007. (Ma’an News Agency)

Following the approval of new military orders to expel Palestinians living in the West Bank without certain ID cards, Israel deported a released prisoner from Tulkarm to the Gaza Strip. (Ma’an News Agency, Xinhua)

Palestinian supporters in Egypt were taking the Egyptian Government to court to prevent them from building an impregnable barrier along the border with Gaza. The group said that the plan was a violation of international law and broke agreements with the Arab League. But the Egyptian Government argued that the barrier was needed to protect its sovereignty and security. The court was expected to rule on the case in June. (BBC)

Hundreds of Gazans as well as representatives of all Palestinian factions, including Hamas and Fatah attended a rally near the Beit Hanoun crossing between Gaza

and Israel to denounce two Israeli military orders that allowed the expulsion of Palestinians from the West Bank. Jordan and South Africa were among the countries condemning these orders, which the latter said were “reminiscent of past laws under apartheid South Africa”. (AFP, Ma'an News Agency, The Jordan Times)

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People [met](#) in New York to receive updates on developments on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Chairman briefed the Committee on the UN Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People and the UN Meeting of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People, which had been held in Vienna in March. The Committee also screened two documentaries, *Refuse to Die in Silence*, produced by Shai Cameli Pollak, and *Walled Horizons*, prepared by the UN team in Jerusalem. (UN News Centre)

22

Twenty four Palestinians were reported to have been arrested by Israel early in the morning in the West Bank and brought in for interrogation. (KUNA) Israeli tanks and bulldozers stormed the village of Abassan Al-Mubra in the southern Gaza Strip opening fire at homes, while bulldozers uprooted trees and destroyed farmland. (IMEMC)

Two Palestinian civilians were injured and one international peace activist detained by Israeli forces, as Palestinian homeowners, along with Israeli and international supporters, gathered to stop Israeli military bulldozers from cutting down olive trees to make way for the separation wall. (IMEMC)

The Israeli army said that, following an inquiry by Ma'an News Agency, it would investigate allegations put forth in a report by the Palestine Solidarity Project that a 14-year-old boy had been used as a human shield by Israeli forces in Beit Ummar on 16 April. (Ma'an News Agency)

UNRWA Director of Operations in Gaza John Ging [told](#) a news conference at UN Headquarters that the recent easing of Israeli restrictions on the entry of goods into Gaza was welcome but still “a drop in the bucket”. UNRWA's focus at the moment was to accommodate thousands of children. UNRWA had not been allowed to build a school in Gaza for three years and there was no proposal on the table to do so, he added. (UN News Centre)

In a move that Israeli officials stressed was not a change in policy, the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) facilitated the transfer of equipment needed to repair a sewage pumping station in the southern Gaza Strip. The transfer of the equipment, to be used by the United Nations, had been approved by Defense Minister Ehud Barak as part of a goodwill gesture to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon. (The Jerusalem Post)

Israeli Interior Minister Eli Yishai issued a decree preventing Sheikh Ikrima Sabri, the Imam of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, from leaving the city. Mr. Yishai accused Sheikh Sabri of incitement and claimed that his travel harmed the security of Israel. (IMEMC)

Israeli authorities served demolition orders for five structures, including Bedouin tents, south of Hebron. (Ma'an News Agency)

Aides to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu were reported to have said that Israel had officially rejected the demand by US President Obama for a suspension of all Israeli settlement construction in East Jerusalem. (AP, DPA)

Overnight, Israeli settlers opened a sewage pipe running towards the Hebron-area town of Beit Ummar, flooding a Palestinian vineyard with wastewater, local officials said. The wastewater destroyed some 70,000 square metres of the vineyard. (Ma'an News Agency)

The Palestinian Prisoners Society reported that detainee Raed Abu Hamad had died in his cell on 16 April due to spine and neck injuries suffered during a beating by Israeli interrogators. (IMEMC)

23

The Israeli army detained five Palestinians during a raid in the village of Beit Ummar near Hebron. (Ma'an News Agency)

At least a dozen Palestinian and international activists were injured by Israeli soldiers, some seriously, during a weekly non-violent protest in Bil'in. In Ni'lin, seven local youths were injured by Israeli troops during the weekly anti-wall protest. (IMEMC)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu told visiting US Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George Mitchell: “I look forward to working with the Obama Administration to move peace forward. [...] We are serious about it, we know you are serious about it and we hope the Palestinians respond”, Mr. Netanyahu told Mr. Mitchell at the beginning of the meeting. Another meeting between the two had been scheduled for 25 April. Mr. Mitchell had earlier held talks with Defense Minister Ehud Barak, and was due to meet with PA President Abbas later in Ramallah. A senior Palestinian official had told the BBC that the “Ramat Shlomo” settlement project must be put on hold for at least three years, and the Israelis must not “continue to take actions which destroy our credibility.” (BBC, Haaretz)

Petra news agency reported that the Arab League would hold a ministerial meeting on the Arab Peace Initiative on 1 May at the request of the PA. Palestinian officials said that President Abbas planned to consult with the League on whether to go ahead with the indirect talks, according to the AP. (AP, Petra)

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In a speech before Fatah's Revolutionary Council in Ramallah, PA President Abbas said, “Mr. President [Barack Obama] and members of the American Administration, since you believe in this [an independent Palestinian State], it is your duty to take steps towards a solution and to impose this solution.” Mr. Abbas rejected the establishment of a Palestinian State within temporary borders, an idea he said had been recently proposed for restarting peace talks. He also called for an open political dialogue between different Israeli and Palestinian forces, parties and leaders, aside from [formal] negotiations, on the basis of the two-State solution. (Haaretz, Wafa)

Al-Hayat reported that Prime Minister Netanyahu had agreed to release more than 1,000 Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails, to remove several roadblocks in the West Bank, and to ease the blockade on the Gaza Strip, as a series of gestures towards PA President Abbas. During his meeting with US Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George Mitchell, Mr. Netanyahu had also reportedly agreed to enable the PA to act in Area C of the West Bank. (Haaretz, Ynetnews)

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Israeli engineering forces discovered three land mines near the Gaza fence. The mines were detonated in a controlled manner. ([www.idfil](#))

Malta filed an official protest with Israel after a Maltese woman had been shot and injured by Israeli soldiers during a protest in Gaza on 24 April. Two others were injured in the incident. In a statement, the Maltese Foreign Ministry said it “deplored and condemned in the strongest possible terms” the shooting of Ms. Bianca Zammit. The protestors had been pushing into a 300-metre-deep area declared as a “no-go” zone by Israel on the Gaza side of the border. (DPA)

Israeli forces detained overnight three men from Hebron. (Ma'an News Agency)

US Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George Mitchell ended a three-day mission to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory with no sign of any breakthrough in efforts to revive Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, but he said he would return next week. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, briefing his Cabinet on his meetings with Mr. Mitchell, [said](#), it would soon become clear whether suspended peace talks would get under way. In a statement summing up his visit, Mr. Mitchell said he had held “positive and productive talks” with Israeli and Palestinian leaders in an effort “to improve the atmosphere for peace and for proceeding with proximity talks”. Palestinian sources said that Mr. Mitchell had proposed a compromise in which the Palestinians would begin indirect talks in return for an unwritten commitment by the US to assign blame publicly to any party that took action compromising the negotiations, and Israel would quietly delay implementing some settlement projects in and around East Jerusalem, without declaring a freeze. (Reuters, [www.pmo.gov.il](#))

Saeb Erakat, Head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO, said: “[Special Envoy] Mitchell invited President Abbas to visit the United States in May and he has responded positively to the invitation,” adding that the exact date of the talks had yet to be determined. (AFP)

Fulfilling his promise to PA President Abbas made during his last trip to India, the Indian Government delivered \$10 million in support of the PA budget. (Ma'an News Agency, Wafa)

At least five Palestinians, including a medic, were wounded by rubber-coated bullets fired by the Israeli army at protestors in the Al-Bustan neighbourhood of Silwan in East Jerusalem. (IMEMC)

In a response to a petition filed with the High Court regarding the “Derech Ha'avot” outpost in the “Gush Etzion” settlement, the Israeli Government wrote that even though the entire outpost, with 17 permanent and 15 mobile homes, had been built without a permit, the Government was considering retroactively legalizing all of those structures built on privately owned Palestinian land. (The Jerusalem Post)

After a Cabinet meeting, the PA said in a statement: "The Cabinet decided to continue with all necessary preparations for carrying out the polls for local councils in the West Bank on 17 July 2010, while postponing the elections of local councils in Gaza until the CEC [Central Elections Commission] is able to conclude its administrative and technical preparations according to the law." (*Reuters, www.palestinecabinet.gov.ps*)

Palestinian, Israeli and international demonstrators today managed to stop the construction of the separation wall in the village of Al-Walaja, south of Jerusalem, for the second time this week. Some 200 demonstrators succeeded in halting construction for almost three hours. Two protesters – a Palestinian and an Israeli – were arrested. (*Bikya Masr, Egypt*)

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Ali Sweti, a 40-year-old member of the armed wing of Hamas, was killed when Israeli troops raided the home of one of his relatives in Beit Awwa near Hebron, according to Palestinian security officials. After Mr. Sweti had refused to surrender, a gunbattle ensued and an Israeli bulldozer demolished a part of the dwelling with Mr. Sweti in it. (*Reuters*)

Israel banned Fatah Central Committee Member Tawfiq At-Tirawi from travelling through the King Hussein border crossing between northern Israel and Jordan. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Two Palestinian brothers, aged 14 and 15, stood trial at the Ofer military court in the West Bank, facing charges of throwing stones at Israeli soldiers in the West Bank. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

US President Obama held an impromptu meeting with Israeli Defense Minister Barak during which Mr. Obama affirmed his country's "unshakeable commitment to Israel's security". According to White House Spokesman Robert Gibbs, Mr. Obama "dropped by" a meeting between Mr. Barak and US National Security Adviser James Jones. Mr. Barak was to meet on 28 April with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and with Secretary of Defense Robert Gates. (*Haaretz*)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu called Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and updated him about his talks with US Envoy George Mitchell. Prime Minister Netanyahu asked President Mubarak to persuade President Abbas to start the proximity talks immediately, without preconditions. (*Ynetnews*)

PA President Abbas said that he opposed the unilateral declaration of a Palestinian State, during an exclusive interview on Israel's *Channel 2 News*. His remarks contradicted comments made by PA Prime Minister Fayyad, who had told *Haaretz* earlier this month that Palestinians would have an independent State by August 2011. "We stand by agreements", Mr. Abbas said regarding the unilateral declaration of statehood. During the same interview, Mr. Abbas said that he hoped for a "positive response" after he presented US proposals for renewed negotiations with Israel to Arab Foreign Ministers next week. (*Haaretz, AFP*)

Ynetnews reported that Israeli Interior Minister Eli Yishai's aide, Director-General of the Ministry Gabi Maimon, had sent a letter to the head of the Jerusalem District Planning and Construction Committee, in which he said that [settlement] construction plans in East Jerusalem should be promoted in the Committee "as was customary in the past". (*Ynetnews*)

Two top Jerusalem City Hall officials said that Israel had frozen plans for new construction in East Jerusalem. They said that Prime Minister Netanyahu's office had verbally ordered a construction freeze. (*AP*)

The Islamic-Christian Commission in Support of Jerusalem and Holy Sites said that Israel had intentions to build 321 new settler homes in East Jerusalem. (*IMEMC*)

Israeli soldiers patrolling the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Wad Hilweh sparked stone-throwing from local teenagers this morning. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

PA President Abbas issued a decree banning the products of settlements in Palestinian markets. The law also bans Palestinians from working in settlements. (*AP, Wafa*)

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon renewed his backing for the US push for indirect Israeli-Palestinian peace talks in a telephone conversation with US Envoy George Mitchell, his press office said today. A UN readout said that Mr. Ban and Mr. Mitchell spoke by telephone about the "continuing US efforts to launch Israeli-Palestinian proximity talks and the situation in Gaza". The Secretary-General thanked the US Middle East Envoy for "his determined efforts and reiterated the UN's support". (*AFP*)

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Israeli forces raided the village of Edna west of Hebron. Firing stun grenades at a store, they caused a fire that injured two Palestinians. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Some 50 Palestinians hurled rocks at Israeli forces in Beit Awwa near Hebron. An Israeli military spokesman said that the IDF had responded with riot-dispersal means. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Six Palestinians were reportedly detained by Israeli forces in the West Bank and brought in for questioning. According to the IDF, 10 Palestinians had been arrested in the West Bank, where Israeli forces had also found one improvised gun. (*IMEMC, www.idf.il*)

According to local fishermen, Israeli naval forces had opened fire at Palestinian fishing boats off the shoreline of northern Gaza. (*IMEMC*)

Witnesses reported that two 11- and 12-year old boys had been beaten by Israeli settlers in the Al-Bustan neighbourhood [of Jerusalem]. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel's army chief had reprimanded two senior officers over the killing of four Palestinians in two separate shooting incidents in the West Bank last month, the IDF said today. Lieutenant-General Gabi Ashkenazi determined, after military investigations of the incidents, that commanders and soldiers could have behaved differently to avoid the killings. (*Reuters*)

A 17-year-old Palestinian was detained at the entrance to the police station in Afula, Israel, this morning. The youth held a knife in a plastic bag and told the police that he "planned to attack Jews". (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations were expected to start in early May, Israeli Cabinet Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer said. (*DPA*)

Stating that the division among Palestinians was harming their national project, member of the Politburo of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Laila Khaled, called for dismantling the PA "if that body is the cause of Palestinian division". (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The European Commission wants the EU 2011 budget to include an extra €200 million for the PA, EU Budget Commissioner Janusz Lewandowski told journalists in Brussels. (*DPA*)

According to the Palestinian Water Authority, the "Ariel" settlement had been pumping its sewage directly into the nearby Palestinian village of Burqin. Burqin Mayor Ikrimah Samara told reporters that the sewage dumping "is making life unbearable, polluting underground water and springs". (*IMEMC*)

IDF troops destroyed at least 10 structures built by Israeli settlers in the West Bank. (*Haaretz*)

A special task force from Israel's Border Police will be stationed in the northern West Bank in order to prevent retribution-related violence from settlers against Palestinians, to prevent damage to property, and to ensure public order. (*www.idf.il*)

A 19-year old Palestinian man, who had resided in Hebron for 15 years but still carried an ID card issued in Gaza, was deported from the West Bank to Gaza by Israeli forces, acting on the basis of Military Order 1650. (*IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency*)

Speaking at the Harry S. Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry, gave a lecture entitled "[Is the Two-State Solution Fading?](#)", in which he reiterated his support for the two-State solution, and warned that with developments on the ground filling the void of the stalled negotiations, neither party had the "luxury of time" if they wanted to realize the goal of two States. (*The Jerusalem Post, www.unsco.org*)

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A 21-year old Palestinian man died in a hospital after having been injured by Israeli fire during a demonstration in Gaza against the "no-go" zone at the Gaza-Israel border. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

An Israeli was slightly injured when his vehicle crashed into boulders placed on the road by Palestinians near the "Itamar" [settlement]. (*www.idf.il*)

Four Palestinians had died in an explosion in a smuggling tunnel under Egypt's border with the Gaza Strip, Palestinian medics said. An Egyptian intelligence official denied Hamas allegations that Egypt had pumped gas into the tunnel. (*AP, BBC*)

The IDF arrested nine Palestinians in operations in the West Bank. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

In an interview with the *Voice of Palestine* radio station, Saeb Erakat, Head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO, said that while the talks with the

United States about resuming the peace process were continuing, it was too early to set a date for the resumption of talks with Israel. He expressed concern about Israeli settlement activities, and noted his hope "that the Israeli Government chooses peace, if peace and settlements are on opposite sides of the table". (*KUNA, Voice of Palestine*)

Israeli Interior Minister Eli Yishai received an official invitation to visit Washington, in a move to promote dialogue with Israeli officials involved in tensions between Israel and the Obama Administration over the issue of [settlement] construction in East Jerusalem. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Haaretz reported that French President Nicolas Sarkozy, during a meeting with Israeli President Peres two weeks ago, had expressed disappointment with Prime Minister Netanyahu, whose foot-dragging, he said, was unacceptable. (*AFP, Haaretz*)

Two crossing points between Israel and Gaza were expected to be open today for the import of 133 truckloads of aid and 122 truckloads of wheat and animal feed, Palestinian crossings official Raed Fattouh said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat denied reports of a de facto building freeze in East Jerusalem and, according to *Israel Army Radio*, said that [settlement] construction in East Jerusalem would continue despite the "slap in the face" Israel had received from the United States over the matter. (*Haaretz*)

Referring to the law signed this week by President Abbas which prohibits the sale of Israeli settlement products in the West Bank and bans Palestinians from working in Israeli settlements, PA Economy Minister Hassan Abu Libdeh said that workers would be given a grace period to find new employment before facing punishment.

(*AP*)
Despite the Israeli Road Map commitment and years of pledges by successive prime ministers, including Benjamin Netanyahu, *The Jerusalem Post* learned that following the dispute with the Obama Administration regarding settlement growth, Israel no longer had any intention of dismantling any of the 23 unauthorized West Bank outposts built after March 2001. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Israel announced that the Israeli outpost of "Derech Ha'avot" near Bethlehem, which was established in 2001 and was on the list of outposts that Israel must evacuate according to the Road Map, would be authorized as a new settlement. (*IMEMC*)

In anticipation of Nakba commemoration day next month, Palestinian student and youth groups across the West Bank and Gaza have signed a memorandum calling for a massive boycott of Israeli products and programmes. The memorandum warned that any normalization with Israel legitimized the continuation of the occupation. (*IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency*)

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon met Israel's Defense Minister Ehud Barak in New York where he expressed hope that proximity talks between Israel and the Palestinians, would begin shortly. Mr. Ban also appealed for [progress] to be made on moving reconstruction materials into Gaza. (*UN News Service*)

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South of the Bisan checkpoint in the north of the Jordan Valley, an Israeli military jeep collided with a tractor carrying a Palestinian family, killing two young girls and injuring their father and brother, witnesses said. An Israeli military spokesman confirmed the incident. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A Rafah man was injured during a demonstration against the Israeli-enforced "no-go" zone along the Gaza-Israel border, said Ziad As-Sarafandi, the coordinator of the Popular Committee Against the Buffer Zone in Rafah. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli tanks and bulldozers invaded border areas near the Bureij refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip. Homes and crops sustained damage but no injuries were reported. (*IMEMC*)

Palestinian medical sources in Hebron reported that Israeli soldiers had fired a gas bomb at a Palestinian taxi, wounding a 23-year-old mother, who was in the vehicle along with a number of women and children. (*IMEMC*)

Palestinians threw stones at three Israeli vehicles travelling in the West Bank, north-west of Hebron. No injuries were reported, but the vehicles were damaged.

(*Ynetnews*)

A senior Palestinian official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that during a meeting between PA President Abbas and US Special Envoy for Middle East Peace Mitchell last week, the Envoy had delivered a letter from US President Obama in which he pledged to hold Israel and the Palestinians accountable if they hindered the indirect negotiations. Mr. Mitchell also informed Mr. Abbas that Washington was committed to taking steps, such as refraining from using the veto to protect Israel at the UN Security Council. Mr. Mitchell also told President Abbas that Israel had pledged not to undertake any work on settlements during the talks and to halt a controversial project to build 1,600 settler homes in East Jerusalem. (*AFP*)

An Egyptian official told the Arabic-language daily *Al-Hayat* that US President Obama told PA President Abbas that he was committed to seeing the creation of a sovereign Palestinian State within two years. (*Haaretz*)

Israel's Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman said that the Palestinians were inflexible. He criticized the international community for failing to effectively counter such intransigence and warned that Israel would not compromise its vital interests. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

When asked in an interview on *Israel Radio* when the indirect talks might resume, Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon said: "There is no final date yet, but I estimate that it is a matter of some two weeks." (*AP, Reuters*)

US President Obama had told several European leaders that if Israeli-Palestinian talks remained stalemated into September or October, he would convene an international summit on achieving Middle East peace, senior Israeli officials told *Haaretz*. The officials said that the event would be convened by the Quartet in a bid to forge a united global front for creating a Palestinian State, and would address such core issues as borders, security, refugees, and Jerusalem. Mr. Obama was determined to exert his influence to establish a Palestinian State, the officials said, and several European leaders had pledged the EU support of any peace plan proposed by Washington, which would likely be presented by the end of this year. (*Haaretz*)

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh said that a Fatah delegation would soon arrive in Gaza, affirming that contacts with Fatah were ongoing. He also applauded recent remarks by Turkish officials urging an end to the siege of Gaza. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli bulldozers destroyed a wastewater network near the entrance of the Shu'fat refugee camp, turning the streets into a swamp. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

At a press conference, Palestinian residents of Silwan's al-Bustan neighbourhood in East Jerusalem unveiled an alternative plan to regulate illegal construction, in an attempt to thwart the razing of their houses. The plan had already passed all technical requirements and had been issued a zoning file at the municipality three weeks ago. Attorney Sami Arsheed, who represented the neighbourhood residents, explained that, "It is actually a service the authorities should have provided but did not; therefore we presented a plan in order to prevent our houses from being razed". (*Ynetnews*)

According to Palestinian sources, at least 60 or 70 settlers from the settlement of "Yizhar" entered the nearby village of Hawara, vandalizing kindergartens and homes and setting fire to Palestinian-owned agricultural land. They said that IDF soldiers did not prevent the attack. The Israeli police said that they had detained a bulldozer driver in "Yizhar" for violating the construction moratorium, and detained seven of the dozens of settlers gathered at the scene throwing stones and burning tires. (*Ynetnews*)

The Israeli State Prosecutor's Office ordered the immediate closure of a settler-owned building in East Jerusalem, known as "Jonathan House," built in 2004 without a permit, overturning an appeal by Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat to delay its closure. (*Xinhua*)

Ultra-nationalist Israeli settlers surrounded a Palestinian home in the northern West Bank and hurled rocks through windows in a show of anger over the latest IDF raid of the settlement and the arrest of seven settlers, including three minors, for unspecified "disturbances", Police Spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said. A "Yizhar" settler said that the violent demonstration was part of what they called their "price tag" policy, whereby they go after Palestinian targets to avenge Israeli police actions against them. The Israeli army had announced plans to increase protection for Palestinian villages near "Yizhar", *Army Radio* reported. (*AP*)

Three students from UNRWA's Askar Girls' School in Nablus had been chosen to compete with 1,500 finalists in the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in San Jose, California, for devising a walking cane with electronic sensors for the vision impaired. Asil Shaar, Nour Al-Arda and Asil Abu Lil, all aged 14, teamed up for a science [project](#) that had been nurtured by their teacher, Jameela Khaled. The project entailed installing electronic sensors at the upper and lower end of a walking stick. The lower one was an innovation as it detected and beeped within 30 inches when the ground surface changed, such as near stairs, holes or water.

(*UN News Centre*)

UNRWA began distributing the first batch of the 200,000 portable computers to schoolchildren in the Gaza Strip, as part of an educational project, a [statement](#) from the organization said. "One Laptop Per Child", a non-profit organization, was collaborating with UNRWA for the initiative, supported by the Jordanian Hashemite Charitable Organization and the Office of PA President Abbas. (*DPA, www.unrwa.org*)

Gaza fishermen reported heavy fire at fishing boats out at sea. Witnesses reported no injuries and the boats all returned safely to shore. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli soldiers had shot and killed two Palestinians, wounded 20, including children, and seized 45 residents in 27 incursions into the West Bank and 4 limited incursions into the Gaza Strip, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights stated in its latest weekly report. (www.pchrgaza.org)

PA Prime Minister Fayyad has been placed on the Time Magazine annual list of 100 world's most influential people. He ranked tenth in the leaders section. Quartet Representative Tony Blair [describes](#) Mr. Fayyad as a "passionate advocate of the Palestinian cause", lauding his "unquestionable personal integrity" and "clear vision of the unequivocal, non-violent path to statehood and peace with Israel". (www.time.com)

There is a growing conviction among some members of the Netanyahu Government, *The Jerusalem Post* had learned, that the PA is aiming to secure a new Security Council resolution, updating resolution 242 (1967), providing for the establishment of [the State of] Palestine and fudging the refugee issue. The idea of such a move, according to this assessment, would be to establish a State continuing the conflict with Israel. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The US had given private verbal assurances to encourage the Palestinians to join the indirect talks, including an offer to consider abstaining on a Security Council resolution condemning any significant new Israeli settlement activity, *The Guardian* learned. Saeb Erakat, Head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO, denied assurances had been given. "We are still talking to the Americans", he said. (*The Guardian*)

Hamas official Mahmoud al-Zahhar blamed Israel for the failure to conclude a prisoner exchange deal: "The Zionist enemy bears responsibility for the foot-dragging and the deceit of successive Governments," he said. (*AFP*)

Israeli human rights groups say that they are deeply concerned about a newly proposed Knesset bill that could shut down any organization that investigates and mounts legal challenges to abuses by the military. (*The Guardian*)

A group of European Jewish intellectuals launched a petition, called "[JCall - European Jewish Call for Reason](#)". The group hoped to build a European movement that is both "committed to the State of Israel and critical of the current choices of its Government". The petition will be presented to the European Parliament on 3 May. (*The Jordan Times*, *The Washington Post*)
