

Division for Palestinian Rights

Chronological Review of Events Relating to the Question of Palestine

Monthly media monitoring review

March 2012

Monthly highlights

- World Bank approves \$40 million development policy grant to support progress in key PA reforms ([6 March](#))
- At least 21 Palestinians are killed since flare-up of violence after Israeli air strike on Gaza ([12 March](#))
- Quartet issues statement after consultations in New York ([12 March](#))
 - Cairo brokers "comprehensive and mutual" truce between Israel and Gaza militants ([13 March](#))
- Non-governmental organizations call for lifting restrictions on the movement of Palestinians in the West Bank ([14 March](#))
- General Assembly appoints Ecuador as a member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People ([16 March](#))
- PA Prime Minister Fayyad warns AHLC meeting of fiscal crisis threatening the PA Government ([21 March](#))
- Human Rights Council decides to dispatch an independent international fact-finding mission on Israeli settlements ([22 March](#))
- US Congress releases \$88.6 million in development aid for the Palestinians ([24 March](#))
- Land Day protests take place across the West Bank and the Gaza Strip ([30 March](#))

1

The armed wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine claimed responsibility for firing three mortar shells at an Israeli force east of Gaza. No casualties or damage were reported. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces arrested seven Palestinians across the West Bank, including Muhammad Mardawi, a senior member of the Islamic Jihad in Jenin. Mr. Mardawi was last released in December 2011, having been in and out of Israeli prison for seven years. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

PA President Abbas met separately with Turkish President Abdullah Gül, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and Parliament Speaker Cemil Çiçek in Ankara.

Mr. Abbas and Mr. Gül discussed bilateral relations, Palestinian reconciliation efforts and the Middle East peace process. (www.turkishpress.com)

PA Minister of Communication and Information Technology Mashhour Abu Daqqa said that the Israeli Ministry of Communication had never complained of any communication disruption caused by either *Wattan TV* or *Al-Quds Educational Television*. He expressed concern that the Israeli campaign of shutting down Palestinian television and radio stations could escalate and target more companies. (*Wafa*)

According to the International Solidarity for Human Rights, Israel was set to release at least a dozen Palestinian prisoners due in part to the activation of a law by the prison authorities releasing detainees early for good behaviour and for having served a third of their sentence. The PA Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs, however, said that the Israeli decision to release prisoners was in fact related to conditions of overcrowding in jails. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Some 2,700 people participated in the Gaza Strip's second marathon, organized by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Most of the participants were children running one kilometre sections of the 42-kilometre event. UNRWA hoped that the race would raise funds for the summer games youth sports camps it ran in Gaza each year. UNRWA Spokesman Chris Guinness, thrilled that participants took part despite the freezing conditions, called it a chance to highlight the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza. (*AFP*)

2

A Qassam rocket fired from Gaza exploded in Israel causing no damages or injuries. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh called on Palestinian leaders to visit the Gaza Strip. "Palestine is united and Gaza is part of it which was liberated through resistance and steadfastness," Mr. Haniyeh told Imad Alami and Maher Taher, two top leaders of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. "This meeting should include people from Gaza, the West Bank, 48 [Israel] and exile," he added. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In a press release, Palestinian researcher Riyadh Al-Ashqar stated that Israel heightened its arrests of Palestinians in February and detained more than 380 in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and Israel, among them 54 children and 6 women, including one female detainee released under the prisoner swap deal. (*IMEMC*)

Palestinian youth activist Fadi Quran was released on bail from an Israeli prison. Mr. Quran was arrested in Hebron on 23 February after allegedly pushing an Israeli police officer. (*Global Voices Online*)

The Head of Tunisia's Constituent Assembly, Mustapha Ben Jaafar, condemned the Government of Israel for its arrest and continued detention of Palestinian lawmakers. "We must bring the whole world's attention to the fact that Israel has detained not just Marwan Barghout and Abdel-Aziz Dweik but 48 other legitimately-elected Palestinian parliamentarians," declared Mr. Ben Jaafar. A delegation of Palestinian parliamentarians was visiting Tunisia, headed by Gaza-based Hamas leader Ahmed Bahar. (*Tunisia Live*)

Power outages throughout the Gaza Strip remained high, disrupting the provision of basic services. As a result, around 40 per cent of the population did not have access to running water for much of the week. (*Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)*)

In response to a question about the Israeli raid on two television stations funded by the US Government, State Department Spokesperson Victoria Nuland said that the US was aware of the raids and was consulting with the Government of Israel on the issue. (www.state.gov)
The Land Research Centre issued a press release stating that 120 Palestinians would be displaced and prevented from accessing their farmlands due to an Israeli military plan and a military training drill being conducted in the Jordan Valley. (IMEMC)

UN Women Executive Director Michelle Bachelet announced new grants for the Arab region that included a grant to empower 10,000 women to engage in constitution-building in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. (www.unwomen.org)

3

Al Arabiya reported that the PA had set a number of conditions for the resumption of peace talks with Israel, including the acceptance by Israel of the two-State solution based on the 1967 borders, with the possibility of a limited land swap, a complete halt of settlement construction, including in East Jerusalem, and the release of Palestinian prisoners. (Haaretz)

The Spokesperson for European Union (EU) High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton issued the following statement: "The High Representative is deeply concerned by the incursion into Ramallah by Israeli security forces to seize equipment from the Palestinian television stations, *Wattan TV* and *Al-Quds Educational Television*. Incursions by Israeli forces into Palestinian cities where the PA, under the Oslo Accords, assumed the powers and responsibilities for internal security and public order, was a breach of those accords and put in jeopardy the internationally-recognized success of Palestinian institution-building efforts. The EU had worked with both stations, which had been broadcasting for many years. The Oslo Accords had established an Israeli-Palestinian Joint Technical Committee to address any issues arising in the telecommunications field. The High Representative calls on Israel and the PA to use this mechanism to urgently resolve any issues concerning broadcasts by these companies." (www.consilium.europa.eu)

A Palestinian man died and two others sustained injuries when they fell inside a smuggling tunnel under the border between the southern Gaza Strip and Egypt.

(Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli forces demolished a caravan containing agricultural equipment on land belonging to the PA Ministry of Agriculture, north of Tulkarm. (Ma'an News Agency)

4

Israeli forces detained 14 Palestinians across the West Bank, including five minors in Silwan, in East Jerusalem. (Ma'an News Agency)

In his remarks before the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) conference in Washington, D.C., United States President Barack Obama said: "I believe that peace with the Palestinians is consistent with Israel's founding values because of our shared belief in self-determination, and because Israel's place as a Jewish and democratic State must be protected. ... We have continued to insist that any Palestinian partner must recognize Israel's right to exist, and reject violence, and adhere to existing agreements. And that is why my Administration has consistently rejected any efforts to short-cut negotiations or impose an agreement on the parties." (www.whitehouse.gov)

In an interview with *Al-Jazeera*, PA President Abbas said that there were no differences between Fatah and Hamas because they had "agreed on a peaceful popular resistance [against Israel], the establishment of a Palestinian State along the 1967 borders and that the peace talks would continue if Israel halted settlement construction and accepted our conditions". "I agreed with [Hamas leader Khaled] Mash'al ... to serve as Prime Minister because it was supposed to be a transitional Government dominated by technocrats. ... But if this is going to create a problem ... I'm not insisting on it," Mr. Abbas said. (The Jerusalem Post)

Ali al-Hayik, head of the Federation of Industries and the Palestinian Businessmen Association in the Gaza Strip, warned that dozens of factories were at risk of closure due to Gaza's fuel crisis. (Ma'an News Agency)

5

A 19-year-old Palestinian man was seriously injured when he was hit in the head with a tear gas canister during clashes with Israeli forces near the Atara checkpoint, north of Ramallah. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli forces detained 20 Palestinians across the West Bank, locals and security officials said. (The Jerusalem Post, Ma'an News Agency)

PA President Abbas briefed visiting Lithuanian Foreign Minister Audronius Azubalis on the latest developments regarding the political process, particularly the impasse it had reached due to Israel's refusal to accept the two-State solution and to stop settlement activities in the Palestinian territory. (Ma'an News Agency)

Saeb Erakat, Executive Committee member of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), said that the PA was disappointed with US President Obama's speech at the AIPAC conference. "This speech is part of Obama's election campaign," he said. "Unfortunately, the speech ignored the requirements for peace as it did not touch on urging Israel to accept the two-State solution, halt settlement activities and stop imposing facts on the ground," and that the speech showed "unprecedented support" to Israel. Similarly, Nabil Abu Rudeineh, an adviser to PA President Abbas, said: "What interests us is that the US be committed to a real peace process, but the US is busy with the elections". "It was clearly an election speech, to win votes and influence people in the US and Israel," said senior PLO official Hanan Ashrawi. (AP, Haaretz)

PLO Executive Committee member Erakat, following a meeting with US Consul-General in Jerusalem Daniel Rubinstein, said that Israel must commit to requirements for peace proposed by any party to achieve peace in the Middle East. Peace, he added, demanded a stop on dealing with Israel as a State above the law and to compel it to accept the peace requirements, namely the two-State solution based on the 1967 borders, halting all settlement activities, including in East Jerusalem, and release of prisoners, particularly those arrested before 1994. (Wafa)

During his meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, US President Obama raised the issue of the Israeli-Palestinian stalled talks. He pledged to work for "a calmer set of discussions between the Israelis and the Palestinians" in a bid to seek a "peaceful resolution to that long-standing conflict". (AFP)

Senior Hamas official Khalil Al-Hayya said that his party will not allow the Central Elections Commission to update the electoral register in Gaza and hold elections until Hamas members were given more freedom to operate in the West Bank. (Ma'an News Agency)

Gaza's energy authority announced an agreement with Egypt to import fuel via the Rafah crossing, with initial supply of car diesel and later supply of industrial fuel. (Ma'an News Agency)

In a press release, the World Food Programme (WFP) said that it had helped transfer 140 tonnes of pallets of biscuits produced in the Gaza Strip to the West Bank through Israeli crossing points. Pablo Recalde, WFP Country Director in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, said, "This transfer ... is the first of its kind since the inception of the blockade in 2007 and hopefully more will follow in order to support children learning and school assistance and concomitantly help boost the private sector and support a productive economy in Gaza." (Wafa)

The Israeli military court ruled to extend the administrative detention order for Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) member Mohammad Abu Teir for the second time and for an additional six months. (IMEMC)

6

Two 12-year-old Palestinian boys were killed and two others were injured in an explosion caused by abandoned munitions. According to Palestinian sources, the children had been playing in a field of scrap metals in the Hebron-adjacent village of Sier. (Ynetnews)

PA security forces returned two Israeli citizens to Israeli authorities after entering Jenin claiming it was by accident. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli forces detained 16 Palestinians, including 4 teenagers, in several districts of the West Bank, while installing roadblocks and after having searched dozens of vehicles. (IMEMC, Wafa)

The PA accused Israel of causing the deaths of two Palestinian children in an explosion caused by an Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) dud near Hebron. (Ynetnews)

PLO Executive Committee member Ahmad Qurei told London-based *Al Hayat* that Israel had killed the option of a two-State solution. Mr. Qurei argued that it was important to confront the Israeli policies and measures and bring them to an end through extensive and collective Arab/Palestinian and Islamic action to save what was possible to save. (Al-Hayat)

Hamas member Salah Bardawil said that his party will not support Iran in any war with Israel, stating that "If there is a war between two Powers, Hamas will not be part of such a war". (The Guardian)

PA President Abbas, through the Palestinian delegation headed by PLO official Nabil Sha'ath, sent a message of congratulations to the newly-elected Russian Federation President, Vladimir Putin. The delegation was in the Russian Federation for a meeting of the joint Palestinian-Russian Committee. (Ma'an News Agency)

Hamas leader Ahmad Yousef said that ministers in a new interim Government will be named within two weeks, raising hopes that an impasse over the new Cabinet had been broken. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

The World Bank approved a \$40 million development policy grant to support progress in key reforms by the PA. It would focus on improving transparency and accountability and ensure efficient use of public finances. The Bank also approved an \$8 million grant for the Gaza Electricity Network Rehabilitation Project and an additional \$2 million to support municipalities in improving their management and governance. *(ReliefWeb, WAFA)*

A new model of health care through a "family health team" clinic was launched with the support of UNRWA in the Aqbat Jabr refugee camp near Jericho. *(Reliefweb)*

Five senior Palestinian Justice Ministry officials participated in a capacity-building study trip to Germany. The Palestinian delegation met officials from the German Ministry of Justice and visited the Foreign and International Criminal Law Department of the Max-Planck Institute. *(WAFA)*

Jordan and the PA signed a Memorandum of Understanding to boost agricultural cooperation. *(Jordan News agency)*

Speaking at an environmental conference in Salfit, Jamil Daraghma, the head of Salfit's Ministry of Health, said that sewage from Israeli settlements near Salfit, in the northern West Bank, which was flowing into nearby Palestinian communities, posed serious health hazards, including some reported cases of cholera. Waste from factories in an industrial zone in the settlements was also threatening Salfit's agriculture, Isam Abu Bakr, Salfit's Governor, said. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

A group of settlers, supported by the Israeli military forces, set up a checkpoint adjacent to the evacuated Homesh settlement south of Jenin. *(WAFA)*

A group of armed settlers invaded the Qarawat Bani Zeid village, north of Ramallah, and attacked several residents causing one injury. The armed settlers were aiming at occupying a spring in the village. *(IMEMC)*

The head of the Israeli civic anti-settlement group "Peace Now", Yaariv Oppenheimer, filed a police complaint after receiving death threats on his voicemail. *(AFP)*

Hana Shalabi, a 28-year-old Palestinian prisoner who was on her twentieth day of hunger strike, refused the Israeli military court's offer to reduce her six-month administrative detention by two months and demanded that Israel end its practice of administrative detention. *(Palestinian News Network)*

The head of the Hebron branch of the Palestinian Prisoner Society, Amjad An-Najjar, reported that, during January and February 2012, Israeli soldiers detained more than 200 residents in the Hebron district, south of the West Bank. *(IMEMC)*

PLO Executive Committee member Ashrawi thanked the Executive Board of UNESCO for adopting five resolutions supporting Palestine, while criticizing the US who had cast the sole vote against. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

7

Israeli forces raided the homes of former detainees in Jenin at dawn, Palestinian security officials said. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

Israeli forces arrested four Palestinians from the Hebron area and a fifth from the Qalqilya area. *(WAFA)*

Israeli forces arrested several youths in Jerusalem in recent days, particularly in Silwan. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

Israeli military vehicles crossed into the Gaza Strip near the northern Erez crossing. Mahir Abu Al-Ouf, director of the Palestinian civil liaison department at the Erez crossing, said that the crossing was temporarily shut down while the military operation took place. *(AFP, Ma'an News Agency)*

Palestinians threw three Molotov cocktails at an IDF post near Bethlehem overnight. The fire bombs did not cause any injuries or damages. *(The Jerusalem Post)*

Nasser Judeh, Foreign Minister of Jordan, held talks in Ramallah with PA President Abbas over efforts to restart the peace process with Israel. Palestinian Chief Negotiator Erakat said that they will not resume talks without an Israeli settlement freeze. *(AP, The Jerusalem Post)*

The Executive Committee of the PLO announced that President Abbas had agreed to be the head of the upcoming interim Palestinian Government for a few months, until new elections are prepared and held. *(IMEMC)*

Fatah Central Committee member Jamal Muheis said that the new unity Government will not be formed until Hamas permitted the elections commission to update its registers in the Gaza Strip. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

The EU announced that it was making a contribution of approximately €22.5 million to the payment of the PA's February salaries and pensions. Nearly 84,000 Palestinian civil servants and pensioners in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip will benefit from the contribution. *(WAFA)*

According to data from an internal document of the Jerusalem Municipality, 10 illegal structures were razed over the course of 2011, down from 23 in 2010 and 65 in 2009. *(Ynetnews)*

The police arrested a Palestinian during clashes that broke out among settlers, Israeli activists and Palestinians near the "Netzer" settlement. The violence broke out when the Palestinians and the activists entered territory owned by settlers. *(Ynetnews)*

A \$546,259 voluntary donation from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation to UNRWA had built nine new classrooms, a playground and a cafeteria at a school in the Rashidieh refugee camp in Lebanon. *(ReliefWeb)*

According to the Addameer advocacy group, an Israeli military court postponed a decision on an appeal by striking Palestinian prisoner Hana Shalabi, who was on her hunger strike for the twenty-second day in a row, against her four-month administrative detention order. *(WAFA, IMEMC)*

A group by the name of Takamul ("Integration") was the main sponsor of a campaign in the West Bank calling on Palestinians and Israelis to abandon the two-State solution and form one democratic State in its place. Posters calling for "one democratic State for five million Arabs and six million Jews" were hung in Palestinian cities across the West Bank. *(Ynetnews)*

8

A mortar shell fired at Israel from northern Gaza landed within Eshkol Regional Council limits. No injuries or damage were reported. *(Ynetnews)*

Zakaria Abu Araam, 22, was killed by Israeli soldiers in the West Bank village of Yatta, while an 18-year-old, Muhammad Rashad, was injured. An Israeli army spokesman said that Mr. Araam had accompanied the Palestinian who stabbed and injured a soldier in an earlier incident. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

Israeli forces detained a 13-year-old boy from Nablus. The boy's mother was a former detainee freed in the Shalit deal. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

Clashes broke out near Qalandiya when Israeli soldiers broke up a rally in solidarity with detainee Hana Shalabi who was currently on a hunger strike. The IDF fired tear gas which resulted in eight people being treated at the scene for tear gas inhalation. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

Israeli police arrested a Palestinian after clashes broke out between settlers and protesters near the illegal settlement outpost of Netzer, Israeli media reported. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

Some 200 Palestinians rallied near the Qalandiya checkpoint and hurled stones at security forces who responded with crowd-dispersal means. The Palestinians claimed that a protest of Israeli and Palestinian women against checkpoints and in commemoration of International Women's Day was being held at the area. They said that three women were slightly injured. *(Ynetnews)*

After meeting with PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad and other PA officials, the Special Envoy of the Italian Minister for the Mediterranean and the Middle East, Maurizio Massari, said that Italy was engaged in keeping the Palestinian issue a top priority on the international agenda. He said that by visiting the region, he wanted to convey the Italian Government and society's support for the Palestinian people, adding, "The main purpose of my visit is to get acquainted with the situation on the ground and the general mood on the perspectives of the peace process." *(WAFA)*

Speaking to *Voice of Palestine* radio, Fatah official Azzam Al-Ahmad said that Palestinian officials were preparing the final draft of a letter to be delivered to Israel and international actors on the status of the peace talks. He said that the Palestinians were waiting to see what decisions the Quartet would make during their meeting in New York the following week. *(The Jerusalem Post)*

The Ramallah based *Al-Quds* educational TV resumed broadcasting, a week after Israeli soldiers raided the station and seized its transmitters and other equipment. *(WAFA)*

The Palestinians were poised to submit the names of 20 sites in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza for addition to UNESCO's list of World Heritage sites, an official said today. The submission of the tentative list is the first step in the process of obtaining World Heritage status. The list includes sites ranging from Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity, revered as the birthplace of Jesus Christ, to Hebron's walled Old City, in the southern West Bank. It also includes the caves at Qumran where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, as well as a series of aqueducts and Umayyad palaces, some of which are in Jerusalem. Gaza sites on the list include the Wadi Gaza coastal wetlands and the Anthedon Harbour. The list will be presented when the World Heritage Committee holds its annual meeting in June, Omar Awadallah, head of the UN Department at the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said. *(AFP)*

Japan donated \$16 million to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), a statement said. "This donation demonstrates Japan's enduring commitment to improve the lives and well-being of children all over the world and most especially here in the Occupied Palestinian Territory", UNICEF Special Representative in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Jean Gough, said. The funding will contribute towards reducing child and maternal mortality, reducing water-related health conditions and providing nutritional supplements to children under five and pregnant women. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

Palestinian farmers from the southern West Bank villages of Al Khadier and Beit Iskaria announced that a group of settlers stormed their lands and uprooted 100 young olive trees that were part of some 200 trees planted the previous day by Norwegian students and their teacher. *(IMEMC)*

Ahmad Qatamesh, a Palestinian academic who received a third six-month administrative detention order on 1 March, should be considered a prisoner of conscience and released unconditionally, Amnesty International said on 6 March. (*amnesty.org*)

On the occasion of International Women's Day, which was an official holiday in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Palestinian Minister of Social Affairs Magda al-Masry stated that women have always been an integral part of the Palestinian struggle for freedom. "This struggle is manifested in the plight of female detainees like Hana Shalabi," she told *Al Arabiya*. Ms. Al-Masry added that the Palestinian Government should take a firm stance on the strip search of Palestinian female detainees. (*english.alarabiya.net*)

Hundreds of women marched in Gaza and the West Bank to mark the International Women's Day with a call for national unity and the release of Hana Shalabi. The Palestinian Prisoners' Center for Studies also marked the day by expressing solidarity with Ms. Shalabi. (*Ma'an News Agency, petra.gov.jo*) World Vision Australia Spokeswoman Chloe Adams said in a statement that the organization had resumed funding the Gaza-based Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC) after suspending assistance following a warning from the Israel Law Centre (Shurat Hadin) that UAWC was providing financial aid to a Palestinian terrorist group. Ms. Addams said that after an investigation, it was determined that the claims had been unfounded. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

9

Two Qassam rockets fired from Gaza landed in open areas in the Negev's Eshkol Regional Council. There were no reports of injury or damage. (*Ynetnews*) Popular Resistance Committees' Secretary-General Zuhair Qaisi and Mahmoud Hanani, a Nablus native freed from Israeli custody four years ago, were killed when an Israeli strike targeted their car in Deir al-Hawa, a Gaza source said. One other person sustained injuries in the explosion. (*Ma'an News Agency*) Palestinians threw four firebombs at the entrance of "Beit El" settlement north of Ramallah. There were no injuries. (*The Jerusalem Post*) The IDF acquired a new system that would allow it to track the exact location of each missile strike. (*Haaretz*) Speaking to *A I-Quds Al-Arabi* about the change in Hamas' policy regarding talks with the West, Senior Hamas member Al-Bardawil said that Hamas leader Mahmoud al-Zahhar met with top American and Western officials in Cairo in May 2011, adding that Hamas had initiated the talks with the Americans. (*Ynetnews*) "We hope that other countries will step up to the plate, share the [financial] burden," said Filippo Grandi, Commissioner-General of UNRWA, in his appeal, which included a particular focus on the BRICS countries [Brazil, Russian Federation, India and China], adding that Arab States were also chipping in, with Saudi Arabia emerging as the third-largest donor of UNRWA in 2011. He said that the Gaza blockade caused an economic depression, as exports to Israel and the West Bank remained barred. He called for the implementation of legislative measures passed a year and half ago by the Lebanese Parliament to expand the right to work for the refugees. (*UN News Centre*)

Following the review of the State report by Israel on compliance with the International Convention on the Elimination Of All forms of Racial Discrimination and a parallel report by the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination published its concluding observations expressing, among others, great concern at the consequences of Israel's policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory which amounted to de facto segregation. (*www.unog.org*)

10

The Israeli military said that Zuhair Qaisi, who was killed in an Israeli strike the previous day, "was among the leaders who planned, funded and directed" a cross-border attack into southern Israel from Sinai in August 2011. (*IMEMC*) PA President Abbas called on leaders in Egypt, the EU and the Quartet to bring a stop to Israeli military escalation in the Gaza Strip. He also gave instructions to contact the Israeli side. He also contacted Hamas leader Mashaal and the head of the Islamic Jihad, Ramadan Shallah. (*Wafa*)

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Ashton issued the following statement: "The EU is following with concern the recent escalation of violence in Gaza and in the south of Israel. I very much deplore the loss of civilian life. It is essential to avoid further escalation and I urge all sides to re-establish calm." (*www.consilium.europa.eu*)

PLO Executive Committee member Ashrawi stated that Israel was committing crimes and extrajudicial assassinations against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and that Prime Minister Netanyahu was seeking further provocation in order to destabilize the region and to provoke the Palestinians into further retaliation. (*IMEMC*)

According to a statement issued his office, PA President Abbas had ordered medicines to be sent to Gaza to meet needs in light of the continuous Israeli air strikes and the high number of dead and wounded. (*Wafa*)

The Miles of Smiles 10 humanitarian convoy entered the Gaza Strip from Egypt via the Rafah border terminal, carrying humanitarian supplies. (*IMEMC*)

11

Jordanian Government Spokesman Rakan Majali condemned Israel's deadly air strikes on Gaza, describing them as "barbaric aggression". (*AFP*)

PA President Abbas called the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Nabil El-Araby, to discuss ways to end fighting between Gaza and Israel. Mr. Abbas raised the prospect of taking the case to the Security Council. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

According to security sources, Israeli forces stormed a Palestinian house in the old city of Hebron and attacked its residents. (*Wafa*)

Israeli air strikes killed three Palestinians, including a 12-year-old boy, Gaza medics said, as militants fired rockets into Israel. (*Reuters*)

Israel Radio reported that there had been a lull in the barrage of rockets late in the day as Hamas announced on television that Israel had informed Egypt that it would stop air strikes in Gaza at midnight. Palestinians had fired over 160 rockets into Israeli territory since the beginning of the escalation. (*AFP, The Jerusalem Post*)

Israel will continue air strikes against Gaza "as long as necessary", Prime Minister Netanyahu said, giving no indication that a ground operation was imminent. (*AFP*)

Settlers signed an agreement with the Israeli Government to leave the "Migron" outpost and move to a nearby site after months of negotiations to avoid their forced removal. (*Reuters*)

PA official Ghassan Daghlis said that a group of masked settlers attacked a group of Palestinian shepherds along with international solidarity activists in Khirbat Yanun, a village south-east of Nablus. (*Wafa*)

12

Gaza militants fired a fresh barrage of rockets toward Ashdod and Beersheba. Most were intercepted by the Iron Dome anti-missile system or exploded in open areas. A Palestinian official close to the mediation told *Reuters* that Israel had agreed to a midnight ceasefire, but that Islamic Jihad had balked and intensified its attacks overnight. Islamic Jihad and the Popular Resistance Committees said that they had fired most of the rockets. (*Haaretz, Reuters*)

Overnight, the Israeli Air Force (IAF) struck six locations in the Gaza Strip, killing four Islamic Jihad militants, one Palestinian child and wounding 38 others, including several children. (*Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency*)

The Israeli army denied that it had carried out an air strike on northern Gaza which killed a teenager and wounded six others. An *AFP* correspondent confirmed there had been no sign of an air raid. (*AFP*)

IDF Chief of Staff Benny Gantz said that over four days of hostilities, precipitated by an Israeli air strike that killed two Palestinian militant leaders in Gaza, 26 Palestinians were killed, 4 of them civilians, with at least 74 wounded. Some 300 rockets were fired into Israel, 56 of them intercepted by the Iron Dome, representing an over 70 percent success rate since Iron Dome only targets missiles that are deemed likely to land in populated areas. (*Haaretz*)

An Israeli military spokeswoman said that 42 rockets landed in Israel. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu told members of his Likud party in Parliament: "The Israeli army will continue to attack the terrorists in Gaza with strength and determination." (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Israeli army detained 10 Palestinians across the West Bank. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In an evening session, the Egyptian People's Assembly demanded the expulsion of the Israeli Ambassador and the withdrawal of the Egyptian Ambassador from Tel Aviv and unanimously adopted a statement which called for a stop on gas exports to Israel in protest against Israel's operations in the Gaza Strip. It also called for activating the Arab boycott of the "Zionist entity" and of the international companies that dealt with it. (*Egypt Independent*)

The Palestinians' rocket fire was burying prospects for a territorial link between Gaza and the West Bank, Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman said. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

According to Hamas-affiliated parliamentarian Younis al-Astal, Egypt offered to provide fuel to Gaza if militants agreed to a ceasefire with Israel. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The following note was issued in New York by the Quartet: "The Middle East Quartet ... and Quartet Representative Blair held informal consultations today to assess developments since its statement of 23 September 2011. Quartet principals remain committed to the overall objectives of the statement. In this regard, they welcome the important effort led by Jordan, which began in early January, as part of the shared commitment to reach a negotiated agreement by the end of this year.

The Quartet also discussed the grave situation in Gaza and southern Israel, expressed serious concern for the recent escalation and called for calm. The Quartet reiterates its call on the parties to remain engaged and to refrain from provocative actions. The Quartet decided to meet in Washington in April." (*UN press release SG/2181*)

A Hamas delegation headed by Musa Abu Marzouk visited Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah to discuss recent events in the Syrian Arab Republic, Gaza and in the Arab world. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Israel's Ministry of Defense decided to leave border crossings between Gaza and Israel open despite ongoing rocket attacks in order to allow for a flow of goods and aid into Gaza. (*Ynetnews*)

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told the Security Council meeting on "Changes in the Middle East": "...The past year has not brought new momentum; the peace process continues to stagnate. The situation in Gaza is yet again proving its unsustainability... Rocket attacks out of Gaza against Israeli civilian areas are unacceptable and must stop immediately. I reiterate my call on Israel to exercise maximum restraint. I have appealed to Israeli and Palestinian leaders to embrace regional changes and show the courage and vision needed to reach a historic agreement." (*UN News Centre*)

"We're very concerned about this latest [Gaza] escalation," Richard Miron, Spokesman for UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Robert Serry, said. "We call on both sides to exercise maximum restraint and we deplore the fact that civilians are paying the price for this violence." (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Settlers uprooted dozens of trees in the town of Beit Ummar, near Hebron, local officials said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Vandals uprooted at least 200 olive tree saplings in orchards belonging to Palestinians south of Bethlehem. Security forces had opened an investigation into the incident which officials called an apparent "price-tag" attack. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Local residents said that a new military-controlled road gate the Israeli army had been set up in the village of Beit Iksa, north-west of Jerusalem, raising concern about possible takeover of almost 2,000 dunums of land as it limited access to agricultural land. (*Wafa*)

Eleven Palestinian prisoners were injured when Israeli security officers raided Ashkelon prison, in southern Israel, the PA Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

UNICEF Special Representative to the Occupied Palestinian Territory Gough expressed deep concern over the impact on children of the recent escalation of violence in the Gaza Strip and Israel, adding: "We call upon all parties to do everything in their power to protect children and to put an end to violence." (*UNICEF*)

According to a study released by Save the Children Sweden and YMCA-East Jerusalem, thousands of Palestinian children struggle with mental health problems and reintegration into society after they are detained by Israel. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

13

An Egyptian intelligence official said that Cairo had managed, after four days of violence, to broker a "comprehensive and mutual" truce between Israel and Gaza militants: "An agreement ending the current operations between the two sides, including a halt to assassinations, entered into force at 1 a.m." (*AFP*)

An Islamic Jihad spokesman said that the group would respect the quiet as long as Israel stopped assassinations of militant leaders. Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak said that Israel expected "this ceasefire to continue but we cannot be sure, so our forces ... are ready to continue if it ends up being necessary." (*The Jerusalem Post, Reuters*)

Palestinian militants fired five mortar shells and two rockets at southern Israel after a reported Egyptian-brokered ceasefire came into effect. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The IDF shot and injured three Palestinians after they approached the security fence (*The Jerusalem Post*)

A 22-year-old Palestinian man was arrested after attempting to stab a policeman in Hebron. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Hamas leader Haniyeh criticized the US position on the escalation of hostilities between Israel and the groups based in Gaza, calling on US Secretary of State Clinton to visit Gaza "and have a close look at the level of Israeli crimes", adding that Washington "should stop denouncing the Palestinian people's right to defend themselves". (*Xinhua*)

During his weekly address to his parliamentary group, Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan accused Israel of attempting to commit genocide against Palestinians through "state terrorism" while calling on Israelis who suffered in the Holocaust to stand against its Administration. (*www.hurriyetdailynews.com*)

PLO Executive Committee member Ghassan al-Shaka said that in a forthcoming communiqué to Israel, PA President Abbas will not threaten to dismantle the PA, as opposed to a report in *Haaretz* saying that President Abbas had warned that if Israel did not stop settlement construction, did not release Palestinian prisoners and did not recognize two States on 1967 borders, the PA would demand that the international law be applied in the West Bank and control be handed to Israel. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli border security personnel placed in temporary police custody 55 Harvard students for allegedly entering a military zone during a trip organized by students at the Harvard Kennedy School to al-Walaja, a Palestinian town in the West Bank. Shireen Al-Araj, the students' guide and a coordinator of al-Walaja's local Popular Committee against the Wall, was arrested and released after the incident. (*www.thecrimson.com*)

Israeli Energy and Water Minister Uzi Landau said that Israel "by all means" supported Palestinian plans to build a desalination plant in Gaza. (*AFP*)

According to local sources, the Israeli army detained six Palestinian volunteers from Hebron and prevented them from cleaning a piece of land adjacent to the Israeli "Tel Rumeida" settlement in the centre of Hebron. (*Wafa*)

Israeli forces uprooted Palestinian farmlands in the Al-Majnouna area, south of Hebron, reportedly in order to expand a military base located at the top of Musharraf mountain. (*IMEMC*)

A group of settlers expanded the "Negahot" settlement outpost into privately-owned Palestinian land in Doura city near Hebron. (*IMEMC*)

14

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, referring to the truce deal, said: "Our message is that quiet will bring quiet, but anyone who violates it or even tries to violate it, our guns will find him." Similarly, a spokesman for Islamic Jihad said: "We are committed to calm, as long as the occupation is committed to it, and the response will be harsh in case of renewed assassinations." (*AP, DPA, Reuters*)

A seven year-old Palestinian child from Gaza died of injuries sustained during a shooting accident at the funeral of one of the Palestinian casualties of the recent hostilities. (*AFP*)

Israeli warplanes bombed northern Gaza, causing damage but no injuries, casting uncertainty over a truce deal agreed 24 hours earlier. The raids were launched after a Palestinian rocket hit a town in southern Israel, slightly injuring one person, an army spokesman said. (*AFP, Ma'an News Agency*)

The Palestinian Cabinet, in a statement it issued following its weekly meeting, called for an end to the Israeli escalation against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, which had resulted in the death of 26 people. (*Wafa*)

Prime Minister Netanyahu told a special session of the Knesset called following the recent round of escalation in the south: "There are many reasons to strike peace with the Palestinians... but to think that peace with the PA will stop Iran and its proxies is a dangerous illusion." He stated, "Gaza is Iran. The missiles are Iran, the money is Iran, the infrastructure is Iran and in many cases the instruction are from Iran... Our enemies must know that Israel will not tolerate an Iranian terror base in the Gaza Strip and sooner or later it will be ripped out". (*Ynetnews*)

France commended the mediation efforts led by Egypt, urging the parties to comply with the ceasefire in order to avoid any further risk of escalation that would be detrimental to the civilian population. (www.ambafrance-us.org)

The EU Political and Security Committee concluded a three-day visit to the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel. The delegation held meetings with senior officials and also addressed the EU role in the security and justice sectors. (eeas.europa.eu)

During a meeting between José Enriquez, the Head of Northern African and Middle Eastern Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba, and Marwan Al-Fahoum, a member of the Political Bureau of Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Cuba reaffirmed its support for the struggle of the Palestinian people to regain all their rights, including the establishment of their independent State, with East Jerusalem as its capital. (*Prensa Latina*)

The Hamas leadership in Gaza was unlikely to follow through on its end of the reconciliation deal with Fatah any time soon, a senior Hamas official said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces demolished a car wash facility in Husan village in Bethlehem. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Ambassadors of EU States in Ramallah, in an internal report dated February 2012, reportedly said that Israeli authorities were not doing enough to stop the increasing settler violence, noting that during the previous year, there had been 411 incidents, compared to 266 in 2010 and 132 in 2009. (www.euroobserver.com)

The Palestinian energy authority in Gaza said that it had paid Egypt \$2 million towards fuel for its power station but had yet to receive anything in return. The plant, which supplied nearly a third of Gaza's electricity, had shut down three times in the past month and most Palestinians were receiving only six hours of power a day. (*Ahram Online*)

On the sidelines of the World Water Forum in Marseille, French Prime Minister François Fillon informed PA Prime Minister Fayyad of assistance amounting to €10 million for the Palestinian territories and €10 million for a Gaza desalination plant. (www.ambafrance-us.org)

A shipment of clothes and shoes donated by Malta, coordinated with the Representative Office of Malta to the PA in Ramallah, was distributed to poor families in Gaza by UNRWA. (www.foreign.gov.mt)

The Israeli Government asked the Supreme Court to postpone the dismantling of "Migron", one of the largest West Bank outposts, until the construction of new homes for them on a nearby hilltop in 2015. (*The Washington Post*)

Security sources said that a group of Jewish settlers assaulted a Palestinian travelling on the Jenin-Nablus road. He was transferred to a hospital in Nablus for treatment. (*Wafa*)

At a debate during the nineteenth session of the Human Rights Council, 300 non-governmental organizations signed a statement calling for lifting the restrictions on the movement of Palestinians in the West Bank. The debate was held to display Israeli violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, during which the Euro-Mediterranean Observer for Human Rights (EMOHR) presented a report about the violations. The regional director of the EMOHR, Amani Senwar, presented the report entitled "Restricted Hopes", which investigated the Israeli restrictions of the Palestinian rights in the West Bank. The report documented 4,000 cases of Palestinians having been prevented from travelling in 2011. (*Euro-Mid Observer*)

UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Richard Falk, expressed deep worry regarding Hana Shalabi, a Palestinian woman currently detained without charges by Israel who had been on a hunger strike for nearly a month. "The situation of Ms. Shalabi is morbid and life-threatening. This is an appeal to the conscience and to humanity and a desperate call to all of us," Mr. Falk stressed, urging the international community to intervene on her behalf. (www.unog.ch)

15

The IAF and Gaza militants traded sporadic fire overnight but a fragile truce between the sides that ended four days of violence appeared to be largely holding. (*AFP*)

A 19 year-old female Israeli soldier was stabbed by a Palestinian on a section of the light railway in East Jerusalem, police said. (*AFP*)

Islamic Jihad leader Ahmad al-Mudallal in Gaza said that the group remained committed to a truce with Israel, but would retaliate to any attacks on the Palestinian people. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli soldiers manning a checkpoint at Shuhada Street, in the old city of Hebron, arrested a 28-year-old Palestinian woman when she tried to cross the checkpoint with her three-year-old child. (*Wafa*)

Israeli helicopters opened fire toward farmland in the Sheikh Ajlen area west of Gaza City. No injuries were reported. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Local and security sources said that Israeli forces arrested five Palestinians after raiding their homes in the Qalqilya and Hebron areas of the West Bank. (*Wafa*)

Witnesses said that Israeli forces raided Tulkarm at dawn with no report of any detentions. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces uprooted olive trees in the Nablus village of Beit Dajan, claiming it to be a military zone, a local official said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Hamas leader Moussa Abu Marzouq downplayed the likelihood of a large-scale IDF operation in the Gaza Strip following the recent escalation of violence: "It would be difficult to start a new war such as the one we saw in Gaza at the end of 2008". Still, Mr. Marzouq described the Egyptian-brokered ceasefire as "fragile" and said that Hamas had not diminished the importance of "popular resistance". (*turkishweekly.com*)

In a meeting between Hamas faction head in the PLC al-Zahhar and Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi, the latter explicitly voiced Iran's support for the cause of Palestine. Condemning the dastard atrocities of the Zionist regime against the Palestinian people, Mr. Salehi said that they were a sign of its weakness adding that supporting the cause of Palestine was among Iran's principles. (*IRNA*)

During a meeting in Jericho with UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Serry, Palestinian Chief Negotiator Erakat, said that the Quartet must hold the Israeli Government fully accountable for bringing the peace process to a halt. He said that Palestinian national reconciliation did not contradict the peace process; rather it promoted and supported it. Mr. Erakat added that it was imperative for the Quartet to declare that Israel did not comply with its September statement since it insisted on continuing with settlement activities and refused to accept the two-State solution based on the 1967 borders. (*Wafa*)

Senior PLO official Yasser Abed Rabbo said that the national unity agreement will "fade away" without public pressure. He blamed Hamas for the failure to implement a reconciliation agreement signed in May of last year to end years of division between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Lebanon's Grand Mufti, Sheikh Mohammad Rashid Qabbani, announced the creation of a "Charitable Fund for the Relief of the Palestinian people". Sheikh Qabbani issued a decree announcing the establishment of the 11-member Fund board. He told the board in a meeting following the announcement that the Fund aims to "support the steadfastness of the Palestinian people on their land and help the widows and orphans." The fund, he added, is also designed to assist Palestinians at the educational, health and social levels in addition to helping them carry out development projects on their territories. (*The Daily Star*)

The thirty-seventh session of the Council of Arab Ministers of Health, held in Amman, decided to allocate \$1.2 million for an urgent relief effort for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria and Yemen, of which \$200,000 would go to the PA. The funds have been allocated to the Palestinian health sector to provide for medicines and medical supplies. (*KUNA*)

The World Bank published its economic monitoring report entitled *Stagnation or Revival? Palestinian Economic Prospects* for the meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLIC), the donor coordination group for the Palestinian people, to be held on 21 March in Brussels. It warned that the severe PA fiscal crisis would deepen if the recent decline in donor assistance continued and that the situation was "jeopardizing gains" that had been made in recent years in building strong institutions. The authors warned that PA efforts to mitigate the crisis through improved domestic revenue collection and reduction in expenditures would have limited impact in the absence of improved Israeli cooperation, including the sharing of relevant tax information. Additional aid in the short term was also imperative because the PA "simply cannot take enough steps to reduce the projected recurrent deficit to the currently expected level of aid", the report stated.

According to a study by B'Tselem, The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, a significant percentage of the land that Israel declared as State land was privately-owned Palestinian property, which had been taken from their lawful owners by legal manipulation and in breach of local law and international law alike. (www.btselem.org)

The PA Ministry for Prisoners' Affairs lodged a complaint with the Israeli High Court of Justice against the Israeli Prison Service which was alleged to be conducting DNA tests on Palestinian prisoners on unknown grounds. Minister for Prisoners' Affairs Issa Qaraqe said that prisoners who refused to undergo the DNA tests had been punished. In other cases, prisoners had been strapped down and forced to undergo the tests. (Gulfnews.com)

16

An Israeli soldier broke the camera of a Palestinian journalist working for *AFP* as the photographer was covering an anti-settlement demonstration near Bethlehem, in the West Bank. (www.cpj.org)

The annual AHLC spring meeting will be held in Brussels on 21 March. The meeting will be hosted by High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission Ashton, and presided over by Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre, in his capacity as Chair of the AHLC. PA Prime Minister Fayyad and Quartet Representative Blair will attend the meeting. (*EU*)

Hamas leader Mashaal paid a visit to Ankara and met with Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan for talks on Palestinian reconciliation and the Middle East. Mr. Erdoğan said: "There are positive developments regarding relations between Hamas and al-Fatah. We will primarily assess these developments," adding that regional issues will also be discussed. (*Today's Zaman*)

PA Prime Minister Fayyad attended the sixth World Water Forum in Marseille, France. There had been 21 armed disputes over water in recent history and 18 of them involved Israel. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, based on WHO standards, water for consumption was less than the minimum acceptable and approved by the World Health Organization, about 70 litres per capita per day, compared to 100 litres. Israelis get three times that amount. Mr. Fayyad said that there was a big difference between the settlers and Palestinians, especially in the Jordan Valley. The proportion of water available to the settlers was about 18 times more than what the Palestinians get. (*Euronews*)

Ecuador was appointed by the General Assembly as a member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. (www.un.org)

Martin Nesirky, Spokesman for Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, said: "It is regrettable that an OCHA staff member has posted information on her personal Twitter profile which is both false and which reflects on the issues that are related to her work. The opinions ... in no way reflect the views of the [OCHA] ... an internal inquiry into the matter was initiated." (www.un.org)

17

In a press release, Operation Dove said that five Israeli settlers from the illegal outpost of "Havat Ma'on", south of Hebron, attacked a Palestinian shepherd from At-Tuwani village, south of Yatta. (*Wafa*)

The International Monetary Fund issued a report for the forthcoming AHLC meeting in Brussels, urging donors to meet their aid pledges to the PA, warning that, unless funding was forthcoming, the PA would be forced to cut public wages and social benefits to address a deepening fiscal crisis. According to the report, the estimated financing gap amounted to about \$500 million. (*Reuters*)

18

Palestinians threw two Molotov cocktails at an Israeli vehicle travelling near Ramallah, *Israel Radio* reported. Palestinians in Hebron also threw a Molotov cocktail near the "Beit Hadassah" settlement. No injuries occurred in either incident. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Israeli soldiers entered Nabi Saleh village, near Ramallah, late in the night, broke into and searched several homes and vowed further invasions and attacks should popular non-violent resistance continue. Soldiers then withdrew from the village without conducting any arrests. (*IMEMC*)

A six-year-old boy was injured by Israeli gunfire in the Gaza Strip, a medical spokesman said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Fatah official Azzam al-Ahmad said that he would meet later during the week with Hamas leader Abu Marzouq in Cairo to try to resolve obstacles to a deal among party leaders for a new Government. Mr. al-Ahmad, the head of Fatah's dialogue team, said that he expected implementation of the new Government to "take a while" due to internal dissent within Hamas. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Egyptian Ambassador to the PA, Yasser Othman, said that Egypt would provide fuel to Gaza within the next few days despite an energy crisis of its own. The Gaza Strip needed 40 to 45 million litres of fuel a month, 15 million litres of that specifically for the electricity company. "It's very difficult because Gaza's fuel needs are more than four Egyptian governorates," Ambassador Othman said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A group of armed extremists from the settlement of "Ramat Yishai" outpost in Hebron attacked several Palestinian homes in Tal Rumeida neighbourhood during the night and chased the children around while cursing at them. (*IMEMC*)

Sherine Iraqi, a lawyer for the Palestinian Prisoners' Society, said that the health of administrative detainee Hana Shalabi was deteriorating. She could no longer stand, had very low blood pressure and had lost a lot of weight. Physicians for Human Rights will visit Ms. Shalabi later during the day to examine her and try to get her admitted to a hospital, Ms. Iraqi added. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A Global March to Jerusalem is planned to take place on 30 March, on the occasion of Palestinian Land Day. Organizers, who list Noble Laureates Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Mairead Maguire as advisers, said that they were not interested in confrontation with the Israeli army after similar demonstrations the previous year had ended in bloodshed. (*Ynetnews; Ma'an News Agency*)

The Euro-Mediterranean Observatory for Human Rights, a network of more than 80 human rights organizations, institutions and individuals based in 30 countries in the Euro-Mediterranean region, strongly condemned in a statement Israeli soldiers' use of police dogs against peaceful protesters in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, considering it a blatant violation of international and humanitarian law. (*Wafa*)

19

A rocket fired from the Gaza Strip landed in the southern Negev region of Israel, Israeli army officials said. No injuries or damage were reported. (*Ynetnews*)

Local sources said that Israeli forces arrested six Palestinians from across the West Bank. (*Wafa*)

US President Obama telephoned PA President Abbas to try to persuade him to withdraw or soften the ultimatum he intended to send to Prime Minister Netanyahu. Mr. Obama emphasized his continued commitment to the peace process and the establishment of a Palestinian State, insisting that he was just as committed now as he had been on his first day in the White House. But Mr. Abbas responded that he intended to send Mr. Netanyahu the letter in the next few days in which he would blame Israel for the impasse in the peace process. The White House said, "The two leaders agreed on the necessity of the two-State solution and President Obama noted that Jordan's efforts to foster direct discussions between Israel and the Palestinians were an important contribution to the cause of peace." (*Haaretz, www.whitehouse.gov*)

After meeting with Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Dan Meridor in London, British Foreign Secretary William Hague said, "I outlined our concerns about the continuing occupation of the Palestinian Territories, including the impact of continued settlement-building and restrictions on Gaza on the prospects for peace. All sides need to make active efforts to prevent deterioration and to avoid steps that run counter to a two-state solution." (www.fco.gov.uk)

The Human Rights Council opened its general debate on the human rights situation in Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territories after hearing High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay present the report of the Secretary-General and the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the topic.

Ms. Pillay said that the human rights challenges in the Occupied Palestinian Territory were intrinsically linked to the continuing expansion of Israeli settlements, including violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinians. (www.unog.ch)

A report by OCHA said that at least 30 water springs across the West Bank had been completely taken over by settlers, limiting or preventing Palestinian access to much-needed water sources. In most instances, the report said, "Palestinians have been deterred from accessing the springs by acts of intimidation, threats and violence perpetrated by Israeli settlers." Israel slammed the report as "distorted, biased and full of inaccuracies" and said that it protected full access to springs throughout the West Bank. (www.ochaopt.org)

The Israeli Government will present a report during the forthcoming AHLC meeting in which it claimed that the PA was not sufficiently stable to meet the standards of a well-functioning and independent State. The report specified a long line of actions Israel had taken to aid the Palestinian economy in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, but presented data showing that the recent economic growth in the West Bank had stopped. (www.mfa.gov.il)

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Ashton signed two financing agreements with PA Prime Minister Fayyad for a total value of €35 million. The funding would enable the building of a medium-scale wastewater treatment plant in the Tubas Tayasir areas in the West Bank (€22 million) and the upgrading of border crossing infrastructure at the Karem Abu Salem/Kerem Shalom crossing point (€13 million), which was currently the only functioning goods crossing point in the Gaza Strip. (www.consilium.europa.eu)

The Foreign Ministry of the Netherlands said, "Farmers in Gaza can start preparing for the coming growing season. Israel has agreed to the continuation of the Dutch-Palestinian agricultural produce export project. The crops in question are strawberries, bell peppers and cherry tomatoes." (www.minbuza.nl)

The PA released a report for the AHLC meeting in Brussels entitled "Equitable Development: Moving Forward Despite the Occupation." (www.palestinecabinet.gov.ps)

The Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process said in a press release that its report, to be submitted to the AHLC on 21 March, had concluded that Palestinian State-building achievement was at increased risk resulting from increased financial pressure on the PA and the continued absence of a credible political horizon for a negotiated solution. (UNSCO)

PA Foreign Minister Riad Malki said that the PA had asked the Human Rights Council to conduct a formal inquiry into the impact of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. He said that the probe should look into "attempts to confiscate land and settler violence along with the impact of settlement expansion on Palestinian life and basic human rights". (Reuters)

A senior Hamas official will address the Human Rights Council on the issue of Hamas members in Israeli prisons. According to *Ynetnews*, the Ambassador of Israel to the United Nations Office at Geneva, Aharon Leshno-Yaar, wrote to UN officials urging them to deny Ismail al-Ashqar access because of the advocacy by Hamas of violence against Israel. (Ma'an News Agency, *Ynetnews*)

Israeli forces arrested six Palestinians across the West Bank, including two teenagers. (Wafa)

The Adameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association reported that there were 23 detainees who currently on a hunger strike in protest of the Israeli policy of administrative detention. (IMEMC)

In a message to the high-level conference organised by UNRWA in Brussels, entitled "Engaging Youth: Palestine Refugees in a Changing Middle East", delivered by UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Serry, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, "Palestinian refugee youth face bleaker realities of their own: occupation, exclusion, conflict and poverty. Despite this hardship, they are full of promise and ambition, as anyone who has met them can attest. They have a right to fulfil their aspirations without barriers and without discrimination. As hosts, donors and moral supporters, we are committed to helping them achieve precisely that. One way is through support for UNRWA, whose resourceful and creative programming continues to contribute to the human development of the youngest Palestinian refugees." (UN News Centre)

20

The PA and Israel were holding talks in a bid to revamp revenue collection and help relieve the Palestinian Government's deepening debt crisis, officials said. Measures under discussion included developing electronic records of imported goods, enabling Palestinian officials to directly monitor the flow of goods and following up on instances of tax evasion which could in turn generate more revenue, Palestinian officials said. (Reuters)

21

A rocket fired from the Gaza Strip landed in an open area in southern Israel, causing no injuries or damage. (The Jerusalem Post)

According to a press release by Operation Dove, Israeli police and army units arrested two Palestinian shepherds while grazing on the hills surrounding the village of Al-Tuwani, in the south Hebron hills. (Wafa)

A mortar shell was evidently fired towards an IDF unit during routine activity near the Gaza border fence. The force responded by firing towards open areas. No soldiers were reported injured. (Ynet News)

A large explosion was heard in al-Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza, witnesses said. The explosion happened as an Israeli military patrol passed by the area and the soldiers opened fire. An Israeli army spokesman who was not aware of the incident said that there had been no military activity in the area. (Ma'an News Agency)

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics said in a report that preliminary estimates at constant prices showed an increase of 10.7 per cent in GDP in the Palestinian territory for the year 2011 compared to 2010. (www.pcbs.gov.ps)

The IDF said that 798 trucks carrying 20,562 tonnes of goods entered the Gaza Strip from Israel through land crossings during the previous week. (www.idfil)

Israeli forces arrested three Palestinians in the West Bank. (Wafa)

Presidential spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeina said that PA President Abbas and US Secretary of State Clinton spoke about the need for consultations over the stalled peace talks, underlining the "need to pursue consultations and contacts between the two parties over the problems of the region". He said that the leaders also discussed the exploratory talks between Palestinian and Israeli officials in Amman earlier in the year, as well as Palestinian reconciliation efforts. (AFP)

Former Palestinian chief negotiator Qurei wrote in the *al-Quds* newspaper that "the one State solution might be, despite all of its inherent conflicts and problems not particularly exclusive to it, one of the solutions that we would do well to consider". Palestinian officials repudiated the idea, maintaining that despite stalled negotiations, all efforts remained focused on establishing a State. "This is the only track that has international support and international acceptance and is understood to have a reasonable hope of being achieved," said Wasel Abu Yusuf, a member of the PLO Executive Committee. (Reuters)

The PA Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the Knesset's endorsement of settlement activities in the Palestinian territory, referring to the Israeli Knesset Financial Committee's approval to allocate some \$30 million to support settlements. The ministry indicated that the Israeli Government continued its aggression and blatant violations against the Palestinian people, worked to destroy the applicability of the two-State solution on the ground and intensified its settlement activities to Judaize East Jerusalem and the West Bank. The statement also criticized an announcement by the Jerusalem Planning and Building Committee of plans to confiscate 1,235 dunums of Palestinian-owned land in al-Walaja, a village south of Jerusalem, to build parks for nearby settlements. (Wafa)

At the AHLC meeting in Brussels, donor nations were put under new pressure to honour a \$1 billion aid pledge to the Palestinians, as PA Prime Minister Fayyad warned that a fiscal crisis was threatening the Government. Mr. Fayad called for a "greater effort" to help the PA bridge a budget gap, stressing that its ability to provide services to its people and "continue to function... has been impaired already". Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre, AHLC Chair, called on countries to redouble their efforts and urged Israel to lift restrictions on the Palestinian economy. (AFP)

The US Congress reportedly discussed a deal leading to the release of some \$150 million in development aid to the Palestinian territories that had been held up for the past six months. The State Department had repeatedly pressed legislators to lift the hold on the development funds, calling them essential to Israeli and American interests in the region. After the day's hearings, it had become apparent that some money had to be released immediately to at least relieve the current crisis for non-governmental organizations. (The Huffington Post)

According to a press release by the Representative Office of Japan to the PA, Japan and the PA inaugurated three projects for community empowerment in the Jordan Valley which was part of Japan's contribution to the PA totalling around \$12 million to support public activities of the communities in the Jordan Valley of the West Bank, including Area C. The grant will go for rehabilitation of more than 12 kilometres of internal village roads, upgrading of electric power supply, including installation of electric tower, line and poles, benefiting a total of 9,000 Palestinians. (Wafa)

Doctors said that the life of the Palestinian female prisoner Hana Shalabi was in grave danger after her refusal to take food for over a month. Israel's branch of Physicians for Human Rights said that she had lost 31 pounds (14 kilograms), with her muscles being damaged and causing excruciating pain. (AP)

The Israeli Magistrate Court in West Jerusalem ruled to expel a minor from his home in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Silwan and fined him \$1,300. Elias Awar, 16, was arrested on 5 March for allegedly throwing stones at Israeli settlers and police in Silwan, a hotbed for extremist settlers. (Wafa)

In a new report entitled "Bound, Blindfolded and Convicted: Children held in military detention", Defence for Children International-Palestine Section found that there was a systematic pattern of ill-treatment, in some cases torture, of Palestinian children held in the Israeli military detention system. (www.dci-palestine.org)

22
Israeli forces detained seven Palestinians overnight, three arrested in the Qalqilya village and four in the Ramallah area, an army spokeswoman said. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli forces raided two charitable organizations in Jenin. Twenty military vehicles raided the Al-Baraa institution and an orphanage centre, destroyed the front gates and confiscated contents from the building. Soldiers raided the home of detainee Bassam al-Saadi, an Islamic Jihad member, and summoned his son to visit an Israeli intelligence centre. (Ma'an News Agency)

Sergei Vershinin, the Special Envoy to the Middle East of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, told a Brussels news conference that the Arab Spring should not overshadow the Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement. Duly resolving the issue will help to defuse the ongoing tensions in the region, Vershinin said. He also urged the early resumption of the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. (The Voice of Russia)

In a statement, Hamas renewed commitment to armed resistance against Israel saying that any other choice is a "losing bet" and that "valiant" resistance is the only way to liberate Palestinian lands. Speaking at the eighth memorial of the death of the group's founder Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, Hamas called on PA President Abbas to avoid relying on negotiations. The "Zionist enemy", they added, used negotiations as a cover to continue settlement building and the judaisation of Jerusalem. (Ahrum Online)

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia extended an invitation to PA President Abbas to visit Indonesia after the latter expressed hopes that the two countries further strengthen ties. "I've received his letter, in which Palestine expresses its gratitude to Indonesia and hopes to enhance our partnerships. I've invited the Palestinian President to come over to Jakarta; to discuss what we can do," President Yudhoyono told a news conference at Halim Perdanakusumah Airport in East Jakarta. "I've been maintaining communications with the Palestinian President, as Indonesia has continued to actively support the independence of Palestine," he added. (www.thejakartaglobe.com)

Hamas and Fatah supporters demonstrated in Nablus to demand that the two parties end their differences and form a Palestinian unity Government. The demonstration was held under the motto "The People Want an End to Division". The protest marked the launching of a large-scale popular campaign to exert pressure on Fatah and Hamas to set their differences aside and implement the recent Qatari-brokered reconciliation. (The Jerusalem Post)

Residents of the Mateh Binyamin Regional Council and the Ramallah-adjacent Palestinian town of Al-Bireh joined forces to protect their joint local garbage site. The Civil Administration had recently decided to shut the site down over its environmental impact, ordering that waste from the Jewish communities be dumped at one site, while that of the Arab village be dumped at another site. The Al-Bireh municipality petitioned the High Court of Justice against the decision. The Shomron Environmental Association, in charge of managing the site, and the Mateh Binyamin Regional Council both decided to side with the Al-Bireh municipality. (Ynet News)

"I want the crossing to open completely so that whoever wants to travel from Gaza can come to Egypt," said Mahmoud Ghazlan, Spokesman for the Muslim Brotherhood, adding, "We support opening the crossing for import and export." Hamas leader al-Zahar said that he did not expect any serious change in policy until Egypt elected a new president, completing the transition from army rule at the end of June. (Reuters)

In a statement, Maxwell Gaylard, United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for the occupied Palestinian territory, expressed deep concern about the worsening effects of the critical shortages of electricity and fuel in Gaza. He said that hospitals and ambulance services were finding it increasingly difficult to function, the already fragile water and sanitation systems were failing and the routine of daily life was increasingly compromised. He welcomed the news of ongoing negotiations among concerned parties to resolve the supply problems in both short and longer term and encouraged them to identify solutions as soon as possible. (www.ochaopt.org)

The Human Rights Council adopted resolutions in which it decided, among other things, to send an independent international fact-finding mission to investigate the implications of the Israeli settlements on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The settlement resolution was adopted with 36 votes in favour and 10 abstentions. The US voted against. Norway, Switzerland, Belgium, Austria and Russia voted for the measure while Italy, Spain, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Moldova abstained. Other resolutions concerned the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and follow-up to the report of the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict. (AP, The Jerusalem Post, UNOG News and Media)

PA Presidential Spokesman Abu Rudeineh welcomed the passing by the Human Rights Council of the settlements resolution. He said, "This is a new international position that supports Palestinian rights and sends a message to Israel from the international community that settlements are illegal and should be stopped in total," he said. (Wafa)

23

Small amounts of Israeli fuel were trucked into the Gaza Strip, purchased from Israel by the PA. Brig. Gen. Nazmi Muhana, head of the PA border agency in the West Bank, and Maj. Guy Inbar, Israeli military spokesman, said that 450,000 litres (120,000 gallons) of diesel fuel entered through an Israeli crossing. Gaza health official Adham Abu Salmia said that the supplies were enough to power the territory's electricity plant for a single day. "This is no solution," he said, noting that no fuel had arrived to power cars, trucks, or hospitals' backup generators. Ambulance and fire services were still facing severe gas shortages, he added. (AP)

OCHA released a fact sheet on the humanitarian impact of Gaza's electricity and fuel crisis, saying that medical services, including life-saving interventions, are at risk of collapsing due to an imminent exhaustion of the fuel reserves used to operate back-up generators and to run ambulances. It also said that the insufficient supply of electricity and fuel has caused a further reduction in the availability of running water in most households. (OCHA)

Israel issued a warning regarding the Global March to Jerusalem, scheduled to take place on 30 March, stating that if anyone came near its borders, they would be

accused of trespassing. The Israeli Government sent warning letters to Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the PA and Hamas, asking them to put an end to the possible escalation of tension as a result of this march. Israeli military authorities put a "security plan" in place to face the risk of the flow of protesters to the borders. The international committee on the Global March to Jerusalem began organizing the event two months ago under the slogan "Freedom for Jerusalem, No Occupation, No Ethnic Cleansing and Segregation, No for Judaizing of Palestine, its land and holy sites". The committee selected 30 March to coincide with the Palestine Land Day. (*Palestine News Network*)

Israeli army bulldozers destroyed a large area of Palestinian agricultural land in the town of Al-Khadr, south of Bethlehem. On land located near the "Daniel" settlement, all 20 dunums planted with olive and almond trees were destroyed. (*Wafa*)

Israeli forces raided Zubuiba village west of Jenin and fired tear gas. Israeli soldiers sparked clashes by firing tear gas canisters toward homes. Three Palestinians, including a child, were taken to a hospital for inhaling gas. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In a statement, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu rejected the resolutions passed by the Human Rights Council the previous day and said "This is a hypocritical Council with an automatic majority against Israel. This Council ought to be ashamed of itself. Until today, the Council has made 91 decisions, 39 of which dealt with Israel, three with Syria and one with Iran." Israeli Foreign Minister Liberman said that he was considering withdrawing the Israeli Ambassador to the Council and severing ties with the body. A Government official said that Israel would not cooperate with the fact-finding mission. (*AP, The Jerusalem Post*)

24

An explosion near Gaza City wounded two children, medical officials said. Medical Services Spokesman Adham Abu Salmiya said that the 5-year-olds, who were moderately injured by "Israeli remnants" [UXOs] east of Shujaiya neighbourhood, were evacuated to Shifa hospital. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

PA Prime Minister Fayyad said that the release of \$88.6 million in development aid for the Palestinians by the US Congress, which they had held up since the previous summer, would help ease a fiscal crisis in the aid-dependent Palestinian economy. (*Ma'an News Agency, Reuters*)

A group of Israelis broke two Muslim gravestones in a Jerusalem cemetery, the Al-Aqsa Foundation said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A Palestinian was shot and wounded in a clash with settlers who entered the Burqin area in the West Bank, Palestinian security sources said. The Israeli military intervened to separate the two groups and then forced the settlers to leave the area. (*Oman Tribune*)

Israeli settlers destroyed dozens of olive trees in the town of al-Khadr, south of Bethlehem, a local activist said. (*Wafa*)

The Portuguese and South African Ambassadors were treated for effects of tear gas inhalation after Israeli soldiers fired gas bombs at dozens of local and international peace activists during the weekly non-violent protest against the wall and settlements in Kufri Qaddoum village, near Ramallah. (*IMEMC*)

25

Israeli troops stormed Nablus, detaining three men, witnesses and security officials said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Gaza's sole power station shut down during the morning hours after two days of electricity production as the PA and Egypt sought to reach a deal for six months of fuel supply to the power plant. Meanwhile, PA Prime Minister Fayyad accused Hamas of foiling an attempt to resume fuel supplies to the Gaza Strip by boycotting talks with Egyptian authorities in Cairo. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel's Supreme Court ordered a West Bank outpost built on private Palestinian land to be dismantled by 1 August 2012, rejecting a Government compromise with the settlers that would have allowed them to stay put for another three years. (*The New York Times*)

The PA Ministry for Prisoners' Affairs reported that Palestinian prisoners in Nafha, Majiddo, Calboa and Ramon prisons returned their meals during the past three days to protest forced DNA tests conducted on them by Israeli soldiers. (*IMEMC*)

According to a lawyer from the Prisoners' Society, the Ofer military court rejected the appeal against [hunger striker] Hana Shalabi's detention without trial, stating that there were grounds to continue holding her as she was a threat to Israel's security. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

26

An Israeli woman was injured and her car was damaged after people threw rocks at her while she was driving near "Pedu'el" [settlement] along the western border of the West Bank. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The IDF detected and defused a powerful explosive device that was concealed on the Gaza border fence and was meant to be used as a roadside bomb against military forces patrolling the sector. (*Ynetnews*)

The IDF was gearing up for a possible storming of Israeli borders as part of the Global March to Jerusalem set for Friday, 30 March. Soldiers deployed along Israel's borders had been instructed to increase their level of alert to prevent violation of Israel's sovereignty with minimum harm to protesters. (*Ynetnews*)

According to PA settlement affairs official Daghlis, a farmer was injured after settlers threw rocks at him near "Yizhar" settlement. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A petition calling on the Israeli Education Ministry to halt a process granting university status to the "Ariel" University Centre in a West Bank settlement was signed by 1,000 Israeli academics, including 18 Israel Prize laureates. (*Haaretz*)

According to the head of the Wadi Al Maleh Council, Aref Daraghme, Israeli authorities demolished houses belonging to farmers and herders in Al-Hemma area in the northern Jordan Valley in the West Bank. (*Petra*)

Ronan Farrow, the Special Advisor on Global Youth to US Secretary of State Clinton, announced an additional contribution of \$10 million to UNRWA's General Fund, which brought the US Government's total contribution to UNRWA in 2012 to \$65 million. (*UNRWA press release*)

Israel decided to sever all contact with the Human Rights Council and with High Commissioner Navi Pillay, after the international body decided to establish a fact-finding mission on the West Bank settlements. An official of the Israeli Foreign Ministry stated that "we will not permit members of the Human Rights Council to visit Israel and our ambassador has been instructed to not even answer phone calls". (*Haaretz*)

PLO Executive Committee member Ashrawi criticized the Israeli Government's threats to cut tax revenue transfers to the PA as part of the Israeli response to the decision by the Human Rights Council to send a fact-finding mission on settlements. (*IMEMC*)

An official statement by the PA stated that PA President Abbas approved a new structure of military and security branches operating in Palestine refugee camps in Lebanon. Under the new structure, all military factions will be united under a framework entitled "National Security". (*The Daily Star*)

The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights condemned the campaign by the Israel Law Centre against the Union of Agricultural Work Committees, accusing the latter of having ties with "terrorist" groups and threatening its donors with legal accountability if they continued to support it. (www.pchrgaza.org)

The PLO and Hamas voiced support for upcoming demonstrations marking Land Day on Israel's borders with nearby countries. The protestors reportedly plan to march toward Israel's borders with the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syria Arab Republic. (*Xinhua*)

Imprisoned Fatah leader Barghouti called for civil resistance in the quest for Statehood. "The launch of large-scale popular resistance at this stage serves the cause of our people. Stop marketing the illusion that there is a possibility of ending the occupation and achieving a State through negotiations after this vision has failed miserably," he said in a statement issued on the tenth anniversary of his imprisonment. (*Reuters*)

France said that it "regrets" Israel's decision to disengage from the Human Rights Council over its decision to probe the effect of West Bank settlements on Palestinians. (*The Jerusalem Post, www.ambafrance-us.org*)

The President of the Human Rights Council, Laura Dupuy Lasserre, said that if confirmed, the news of Israel cutting off all contacts with the Council would be "most regrettable", adding that "it is in the interest of Israel to cooperate with the Human Rights Council on this investigative mission, not least so that it can explain its own policies and actions to the independent commissioners once they are appointed". (*AFP, Jerusalem Post, Reuters*)

27

Three Palestinians were shot and an Israeli soldier was stabbed during a confrontation near Ramallah. The fighting reportedly ensued when the Palestinian men confronted a group they had believed were thieves but had turned out to be Israeli soldiers working undercover. (*Al-Arabiya*)

Three Molotov cocktails were thrown at an Israeli military patrol in al-Khader village, south of Bethlehem. No damage or injuries were reported. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Palestinian Constitutional Court in Ramallah rejected a legal challenge to PA President Abbas' appointment as Prime Minister of an [interim] Government. The

verdict said: "The Doha agreement has nothing to do with legislation and it is not to be subject to judicial review by the constitutional court." (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In a statement, the Islamic Development Bank announced that it signed a number of aid agreements worth a total of \$52 million to support several projects in different sectors in Gaza. It said that \$13 million would go for housing; a little more than \$15 million for Gaza's municipal sector; \$9.5 million for supporting the rehabilitation of facilities and buildings of universities and public schools; and \$5 million to support the building of a public children's hospital in central Gaza and the reconstruction of Rafah health centre. The agreement will also support the water and wastewater sectors with a total amount of \$3 million and the social sector with \$1.8 million. (*Wafa*)

The Palestine Electricity Company announced a deal with Egypt to provide natural gas to the Gaza Strip, with its director in Gaza signing the agreement with the Egyptian General Petroleum Corporation in Cairo on behalf of the PA. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Organizations supporting Palestine refugees in Lebanon called on the League of Arab States to include refugee rights on the agenda of the League's summit. The petition to Arab League Secretary-General Nabil El-Araby, signed by 111 non-governmental organizations, stated that "the area will not have peace and quiet unless the Palestinian refugees' right of return is implemented". (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Jerusalem municipality handed six Palestinian families living in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Silwan home demolition notices under the pretext of building without a permit. (*Wafa*)

An 18-year-old Palestinian boy, shot by an Israeli settler in Hebron's Old City, sustained moderate injuries to his leg and was undergoing surgery. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli settlers entered Al-Maleh village in the northern Jordan Valley, taking down tents and assaulting residents, the village council said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Meir Hospital may consider force-feeding hunger-striking detainee Hana Shalabi, reported *Ma'an News Agency* referring to a joint statement by the prisoner rights group Addameer and Physicians for Human Rights-Israel. Amnesty International had warned that forcible feeding "could constitute cruel and inhuman treatment".

(*Ma'an News Agency*)

Islamic Jihad announced that its leading member Jaffar Izz al-Din began a hunger strike after he was taken into administrative detention following a raid on his home in Jenin. Prior to this, Mr. al-Din had spent four years in Israeli prisons, mostly in administrative detention. (*IMEMC*)

Head of the Palestinian Prisoners' Club Qadura Fares said that strip searches in Israeli prisons and checkpoints deterred Palestinian women from visiting jailed family members and caused Palestinian men to fight with Israeli soldiers. (*GulfNews*)

In a briefing to the Security Council, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Serry said that despite recent diplomatic efforts to revive direct negotiations between Israel and the PA, prospects remained "slim". The situation between the Palestinians and Israel remained "uncertain and difficult", he said, warning of the increased risks of the absence of political progress and violence on the ground. (www.un.org)

PLO Executive Committee member Ashrawi briefed the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and developments in the political process. (*UN Multimedia*)

UNRWA denied rumours that its staff had vacated the Gaza Strip during Israel's latest offensive. UNRWA Spokesman Adnan Abu Hasna said that UNRWA staff remained in Gaza and would not leave, adding that the Agency's employees were there to serve the people, particularly in difficult times. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Dozens of demonstrators rallied in northern Gaza to protest Israel's confiscation of land in the Israeli-imposed "no-go" zone inside the borders of Gaza, demolition of homes and buildings in the area and firing at Palestinians near the fence. The demonstration was organized by a local initiative in Beit Hanoun. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Hundreds of pro-Palestinian activists began arriving at Beirut and Tripoli airports ahead of the Global March to Jerusalem, planned for 30 March on Land Day. The organizers expressed concern that the demonstrations could get out of control due to the involvement of outside activists. Members of the organizing committee said that their group's plans call for peaceful marches in areas of the West Bank controlled by the PA, the Jerusalem area, Jordan and several locations in Europe, notably in front of Israeli embassies. (*Haaretz*)

28

A €5 million Dutch-funded programme to support the Palestinian civil police was launched in Ramallah, according to a statement issued by EUPOL COPPS, one of the participants in the project. (*Wafa*)

The members of the German and Palestinian Cabinets came together for the second German-Palestinian Steering Committee under the chairmanship of German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle and PA Prime Minister Fayyad. At the press conference following the meeting, Mr. Westerwelle recognized that the PA had created the prerequisites for an independent Palestinian State in many areas and encouraged the Palestinian leadership to continue on this path. He also said that a Palestinian State could only be recognized in the context of a two-State solution to the Middle East conflict. (*DPA*, www.auswaertiges-amt.de)

PA Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Kholood Deibes discussed with Sri Lanka's Minister of Industry and Commerce, Rashid Bathiuddeen, possible ways to enhance economic and tourism cooperation. A Palestinian delegation of business people and journalists headed by Minister Deibes were in the country to attend the Sri Lanka Expo 2012. (*Wafa*)

Israeli tax collectors, backed by a large police force, raided shops in Silwan in East Jerusalem and seized goods from several stores on the pretext that the owners had not paid their taxes. (*Wafa*)

According to the human rights group Yesh Din, 91 per cent of [Israeli police] investigations into crimes committed by Israelis settlers and others, against Palestinians and their property were closed without indictments. Some 84 per cent of the investigation files were closed because of the investigators' failure to locate suspects and evidence. (www.yesh-din.org)

Dozens of residents from the settlement in Hebron occupied a three-story Palestinian house, about 100 metres south of the Cave of the Patriarchs. (*Haaretz*)

PA Minister of Civil Affairs Hussein Al-Sheikh said that the PA was negotiating the release of the administrative detainee Hana Shalabi, who had been on a hunger strike for over a month in protest of her detention. (*Ynetnews*)

Palestinian political prisoner Abbas As-Sayyid was attacked and injured by Israeli soldiers in front of his prison cell at the Galboa Israeli prison. (*IMEMC*)

Some 100 Israeli soldiers took a tour of the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem's Old City. Settlers also joined the tour and held provocative religious rituals. (*Wafa*)

A joint poll conducted by the Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem and the Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research in Ramallah, showed that 68 per cent of Palestinians and 64 per cent of Israelis viewed chances for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State next to Israel in the next five years as low to non-existent. In addition, 68 per cent of Israelis rejected a Palestinian demand that Israel should stop settlement construction as a precondition for resuming peace negotiations. On the other hand, 58 per cent of Palestinians opposed return to negotiations without a halt to settlements and the acceptance of the 1967 lines as the borders of the future Palestinian State. (*Wafa*)

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People will convene the United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine on 3 and 4 April at the United Nations Office at Geneva. The theme of the meeting is "The question of Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli prisons and detention facilities: legal and political implications". (www.un.org)

PA Minister for Prisoners' Affairs Qaraqe said that the PA was launching a campaign to end Israel's policy of administrative detention. The Minister referred to the upcoming UN International Meeting in Geneva on 3 and 4 April. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

29

Israeli aircraft opened fire towards open areas in the Khan Yunis area in south Gaza after three mortars were fired from Gaza causing no damage. Israeli military vehicles crossed into the Gaza in a limited incursion, witnesses said. (*Ma'an News Agency*, *Ynetnews*)

Palestinians threw a Molotov cocktail at a bus near Bethlehem, an Israeli army spokeswoman said. Israeli media, meanwhile, reported that a similar event occurred near Mt. Scopus in Jerusalem. There were no reports of injury or damage. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

"Together, we must create the conditions for meaningful negotiations that will resolve the core issues of the conflict and end the occupation that started in 1967," Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told the Arab Summit. (*UN News Centre*)

PA President Abbas urged the Arab League Summit to reactivate the Arab Peace Initiative. He called on the Arab countries to uphold a previous pledge of \$500 million to support East Jerusalem and called on Arabs, Muslims and Christians around the world to visit the Holy City. (*Wafa*)

Permanent Observer of Palestine to the UN Riyad Mansour said that all members of the Security Council, except for the US, had accepted an invitation to visit the Occupied Palestinian Territory. "The American delegation is studying the issue in Washington," he said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

PA President Abbas said that the reconciliation deal between Fatah and Hamas had broken down. He said he had agreed "on many points" with Hamas leader Mashaal during their meeting in Qatar in February but some Hamas leaders had rejected the agreements. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

PA President Abbas urged Arab leaders gathered for a summit in Baghdad to fulfil their pledges for financial aid for the Palestinians. (*The Washington Post*)

Germany would give Palestinians nearly \$93 million for the year, of which about \$53 million will go toward development, German Foreign Minister Westerwelle said. (*UPI*)

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said that it was preparing to supply Gaza health authorities with 150,000 litres of diesel fuel. "More than a month has passed since the fuel and electricity crisis began. The current failure to ensure delivery of fuel and electricity could rapidly lead to interruptions in vital public services such as hospital care and water supply, putting the lives of thousands of patients in danger," said Juan-Pedro Schaefer, head of the ICRC delegation for Israel and the occupied territories. (www.icrc.org)

Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon made a secret visit to Washington, D.C. to seek US help in thwarting the work of the Human Rights Council-sponsored probe into settlements. Mr. Ayalon reportedly conveyed a message to the US Administration that Israel wanted the US to act to limit the mission's mandate so its recommendations will be less binding. (*Haaretz*)

Israeli settlers added four mobile homes to a settlement outpost east of the village of Yanoun, south-east of Nablus. (*Wafa*)

Marking the twenty-sixth anniversary of Land Day, the PLO said that so far during the year, Israel had seized 3,626 dunums of land, uprooted 2,418 trees and was planning to build 1,805 housing units in settlements in the West Bank.

Palestinian prisoner Hana Shalabi's lawyer said that Ms. Shalabi ended her 44-day hunger strike after agreeing to be deported to Gaza. (*CNN*)

Israeli forces detained two Palestinian men in Al-Khader near Bethlehem and two others from the Tulkarm refugee camp in the northern West Bank. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

30

Land Day protests took place across the West Bank in Qalandiya, Bethlehem, Hebron, Nabi Saleh, Budrus and other villages. Israeli soldiers used live fire to prevent protesters in the Gaza Strip from approaching the border, killing a 20-year-old man and wounding 37 others. At the Qalandiya checkpoint, Palestinian protesters clashed with Israeli forces, throwing rocks, firebombs and burning tyres. Israeli forces used large amounts of tear gas, stun grenades, sound weapons and foul-smelling water to disperse the protesters. Several Palestinians were injured, among them lawmaker Mustafa Barghouti. In Bethlehem, dozens of protesters threw stones at an IDF checkpoint after breaking through a line of Palestinian police. An estimated 5,000 Lebanese, Palestinian and foreign demonstrators marched in Lebanon, some 15 kilometres from the Israeli border. (*Reuters, DPA, The Jerusalem Post*)

The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights reported that one Palestinian civilian was killed and 63 others were wounded, including 18 children, by Israeli forces during demonstrations commemorating Land Day. (www.pchrgaza.org)

Israeli soldiers used live fire to prevent protestors in the Gaza Strip from approaching the border, killing a 20-year-old man and wounding 37 others. (*Reuters*)

B'Tselem, in its annual report, indicated that Israeli security forces killed 115 Palestinians, 18 of them minors, in 2011. (*Wafa*)

Foreign diplomats said that PA President Abbas had dropped a planned threat to dismantle the PA to protest the deadlock in peace efforts with Israel, after the urging of US President Obama. (*AP*)

The Arab Summit in Baghdad confirmed that the "fair and comprehensive peace in the region would not be achieved without full withdrawal by Israel from the occupied Palestinian and other Arab lands to the border line of June 4, 1967." Leaders also support the Palestinian demand for the UN to recognize the State of Palestine on the 1967 border line, and to recognize East Jerusalem as its capital. Meanwhile, the Arab leaders "renewed their stance to condemn all kinds of terrorism" but called to distinguish between terrorism and legal resistance against occupation. (*Xinhua*)

The Palestinian community of Susiya, in Area C of the West Bank, with a population of some 350 people, including 120 children, was at imminent risk of forced displacement, OCHA said. (www.ochaopt.org)

Israeli Ministry of Defense plan earmarked 10 per cent of the West Bank for settlement expansion, a map released in response to a request from anti-settlement activist Dror Etkes revealed. (*Haaretz*)

Israeli settlers attacked several Palestinians in Salfit in the northern West Bank, wounding four of them, one seriously. (*IMEC*)

A 67-year-old Palestinian farmer from Beit Ummar and his children were pelted with stones by dozens of masked Israelis from a nearby settlement. (*Ma'an News Agency*)