

Division for Palestinian Rights  
**Chronological Review of Events Relating to the  
 Question of Palestine**  
**Monthly media monitoring review**  
**November 2007**

**Monthly highlights**

- United States Secretary of State Rice meets in Jerusalem with Prime Minister Olmert and in Ramallah with PA President Abbas. ([4, 5 November](#))
- Senior European Union officials meet in Lisbon for a two-day meeting with top diplomats from the Middle East to discuss the progress of Middle East peace efforts. ([5 November](#))
- Peace Now issues a report stating that the construction of settlements in the West Bank had accelerated in 2007. ([7 November](#))
- Secretary-General Ban deplores a rocket attack against Israel launched from an UNRWA school. ([8 November](#))
- Knesset gives initial approval to draft legislation making it harder to change Jerusalem's status in any peace deal with the Palestinians. ([14 November](#))
- Quartet meets in Washington and issues statement supporting the Annapolis Conference. ([26 November](#))
- United States hosts the Annapolis Conference on Middle East peace, with Israeli and PLO leaders agreeing on a joint understanding to restart final status negotiations. ([27 November](#))
- The annual International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is observed at United Nations Headquarters and United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. ([29 November](#))

**1**

*Israel Radio* reported that IDF troops stationed in the southern Gaza Strip shot and killed an armed militant near their position. (*Ha'aretz*)

The IDF killed four armed Palestinians overnight in northern Gaza during clashes near the border fence. Five Palestinians were also wounded. Israeli aircraft carried out an air strike on Palestinian militants who had launched rockets, an Army spokesman said, adding that nine rockets fell into southern Israel, causing no casualties or damage. (*AFP, Ha'aretz*)

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades began a military campaign called "The Autumn of Gaza" by launching 20 homemade rockets towards the Israeli town of Sderot in the northern Negev. A statement by the Brigades said that "The campaign will shower the Israeli towns around the Gaza Strip with hundreds of homemade projectiles every day as the Palestinian resistance is fed up with the 'peace lie' and the news about conferences here and there." (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces arrested 40-year-old Umar Tirawi, a prominent leader of Hamas' Izz ad-Din Al-Qassam Brigades in Nablus. Another man from the Balata refugee camp, east of Nablus, was also arrested. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Twelve Israeli military vehicles swept into al-Mazra'a al-Qubaliya town, north of Ramallah, conducted a house-to-house search and arrested eight Palestinians, including three boys. (*Wafa*)

PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad confirmed that he would be working with Defence Minister Ehud Barak and US Middle East Security Coordinator Lt. Gen. Keith Dayton to carry out the first phase of the Road Map. In that first phase, Palestinians were to declare an end to all violence and take action against militants; in return, Israel would freeze settlement expansion, dismantle unauthorized settlement outposts and lift roadblocks to facilitate Palestinians' travel to administrative centres. Mr. Fayyad said that none of those actions had been carried out and the implementation of the first phase of the Road Map would be key to the success of the US-proposed Middle East peace conference in Annapolis, Maryland. The IDF had been preparing a list of Israel's essential security needs in advance of the conference, only listing Israel's security concerns, without dealing with the specific details of borders and territories, as had been done in the past. (*Ha'aretz*)

Israel's Foreign Minister, Tzipi Livni, denied that Israel wanted to prolong negotiations on Palestinian statehood, saying it rejected the Palestinian demand for a timetable. She said that past experience had taught that timetables proved impossible to fulfil, and could "afterwards create violence and terrorism." (*Ha'aretz*)

Germany pledged €1 million for Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip, according to German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who spoke during a press conference in Ramallah with PA Minister for Information Riyad Malki. The donation, which came in addition to funds Germany had already given to the Palestinians either bilaterally or through the EU, would go to UNRWA. Meanwhile, a Palestinian delegation would be going to Germany to light a Christmas tree decorated with items from Bethlehem in Berlin. (*Deutsche Presse-Agenture (DPA)*)

**2**

More than 300 PA security officers arrived in Nablus in an effort to launch a PA plan to restore law and order in that city. Uniformed and armed officers arrived in the northern commercial centre before dawn from Jericho, where they had undergone several months of training. PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad was in Nablus to supervise the deployment in person. An additional 200 policemen were scheduled to arrive within days. "The Palestinian Authority must make its presence felt so that people feel secure," Mr. Fayyad said. (*AFP, Ha'aretz, Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli security forces acting in and around the Gaza Strip over the past three days had uncovered several tunnels that served Palestinian militants in smuggling arms from Egypt, IDF sources said. (*Ha'aretz*)

Israeli forces arrested two Palestinians at dawn in Qalqilya and Nablus in the northern West Bank. They were taken to a nearby interrogation centre. Another Palestinian was arrested at a Nablus roadblock for carrying a knife. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Jaysh Al-Baraq, affiliated with the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, claimed responsibility for setting off an explosive device near an Israeli patrol and clashing with Israeli forces in the city of Nablus. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli Prime Minister Olmert hoped to reach an agreement on all the core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict within a year, he said in conversations with both

Israeli officials and foreign diplomats in the last few days. Senior officials said that this time frame stemmed from the political timetable in the United States, where presidential elections would take place in November 2008, and with President Bush leaving office. Mr. Olmert reportedly cited two reasons: President Bush's letter of April 2004 to former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon expressed support for Israel's retention of major settlement blocks, and the Road Map required the PA to dismantle terrorist organizations before a Palestinian State could be established. Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, however, said setting a deadline for a peace deal would be counterproductive. (AP, Ha'aretz, Xinhua)

PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad said that his Government was willing to operate the Gaza Strip border crossings if Israel reopened them. (Ha'aretz)

PA President Mahmoud Abbas met with members of Hamas for the first time since the group took over the Gaza Strip in June. Mr. Abbas' aides described the meeting with four West Bank-based Hamas members as an informal gathering after Friday prayers at the presidential compound. It was not an official contact between the two movements. Hussein Abu Quaik, one of the Hamas members of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), said that Mr. Abbas had invited them to prayers. "This will contribute to strengthening our relationship, and lay the basis for national unity, God willing," Mr. Abu Quaik said. Mr. Abbas reiterated that he would not hold formal reconciliation talks with Hamas unless it gave up control of the Gaza Strip. (AP, Ha'aretz)

In a letter to the Israeli High Court of Justice, State Prosecution defended the Government's decision to curb the supply of fuel and electricity to the Gaza Strip, claiming it was not a form of collective punishment. Human rights organizations had petitioned the High Court, demanding that it prohibit Israel from carrying out its decision, stating that it would hurt innocent civilians. (Ha'aretz)

The Western Wall Heritage Foundation was planning an underground passage in Jerusalem's Old City to link the reconstructed Ohel Yitzhak synagogue in the Muslim Quarter with the Western Wall tunnels in the Jewish Quarter. Contrary to claims already raised by the Islamic Movement, Arab Knesset members and the Waqf (the Muslim religious trust that runs the Al-Haram Al-Sharif or Temple Mount), the plan would not involve any digging within the Al-Haram Al-Sharif compound. The new passage would lie about 100 metres west of the Mount. (Ha'aretz)

3

At dawn, Israeli tanks and jeeps invaded the city of Tulkarm and the neighbouring refugee camp of the same name. Residents said that the gunfire was "intense" when Israeli forces roamed the streets. Palestinian militants fought back and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades detonated a bomb near an Israeli tank. The Israeli forces later withdrew from the area. No arrests or injuries were reported. (Ma'an News Agency)

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades claimed responsibility for launching a home-made rocket at the Israeli town of Ashkelon from the Gaza Strip. (Ma'an News Agency)  
PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad told AP that the US-proposed Middle East conference would not be seen as credible by Palestinians unless a deadline was set for concluding a peace accord. (AP)

4

Israeli air and ground strikes killed four Palestinians, including three civilians, and left a fifth clinically dead as Palestinian militants fired six Qassam missiles at western Israel, causing an electricity outage in the town of Sderot. The three civilians were killed in Beit Hanoun when an Israeli helicopter fired a rocket at a guard's outpost in a factory in the northern Gaza Strip town, killing the 40-year-old guard, his 18-year-old son and a third youth. A ground-to-ground missile also hit an Islamic Jihad militant launching rockets from the eastern part of Jabalya refugee camp. At least six other people were injured in the strike. A second Israeli air strike also targeted rocket launchers in the area. The Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for launching the rockets. (DPA)

The Israeli police announced the arrest two weeks ago of three members of Islamic Jihad who allegedly planned to kill the Mayor of Jerusalem, Uri Lupolianski, in a suicide attack, police spokesman Mickey Rosenfeld said. The three Palestinians, who were from East Jerusalem, also intended to shoot Jews in the old city of Jerusalem, he said. (AP)

Israeli forces invaded the West Bank city of Tulkarm, firing shots and storming Palestinian homes. (Ma'an News Agency)

Visiting US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice had a working lunch with Israeli Prime Minister Olmert. A source in Mr. Olmert's office said that Ms. Rice had agreed to most of Israel's conditions regarding the Annapolis conference. Mr. Olmert had requested that the joint declaration at Annapolis not refer to the "core issues", or to a fixed timetable for resolving them. However, Mr. Olmert said that negotiations with the Palestinians after the summit will focus on the core issues.

Defence Minister Ehud Barak also met Ms. Rice in Jerusalem the same day, telling her that the sanctions Israel had imposed on the Gaza Strip would not lead to a humanitarian crisis. He also promised to allow Palestinian policemen to deploy to other cities in the West Bank, if the deployment of the 300 PA policemen in Nablus, which had been carried out on 2 November, would prove to be effective. Ms. Rice also met Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, who told reporters afterward that the Palestinians "need to understand that the implementation of future understandings will be implemented only according to the phases of the Road Map - meaning security for Israel first and then the establishment of a Palestinian State." (Ha'aretz)

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Quartet Representative Tony Blair and Israeli Prime Minister Olmert attended the Saban Forum in Jerusalem sponsored by the Brookings Institution. At the Forum, Mr. Olmert said "If we act decisively together, we and the Palestinians, there is a chance for us to reach real achievements, maybe even before the end of President Bush's term". Mr. Blair said that he hoped to announce soon a series of projects that would help bolster the Palestinian economy. He said that formal negotiations over creating a Palestinian State should not be "impossibly difficult." But he acknowledged that the path was "utterly fraught" and that both sides had to take steps to build confidence. (AFP, Ha'aretz)

In an interview with Ma'an News Agency, Quartet representative Tony Blair said that building the Palestinian economy was key to ending what he described as the "suffocating pressure of the occupation." He said, "The biggest mistake ... is to divorce the politics from the Palestinian capability and to divorce the Palestinian capability from the facts on the ground. There is a matrix of three things - the political perspectives, the Palestinian institution-building and capability and the economic and other facts on the ground." (Ma'an News Agency)

Around 2,000 Israeli settlers protested in central Jerusalem as US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice discussed the upcoming Middle East peace conference with the Israeli Prime Minister Olmert. The demonstration was called by the main settler organization in the West Bank. "We know perfectly well that with the concessions envisaged by Olmert, Hamas will end up in the West Bank and the heart of Israel will be within the range of their rockets," the movement's Secretary-General, Shaul Goldstein, said. Ultra-orthodox MK Meir Porush, who joined the protest, said that the Prime Minister was throwing into doubt Israel's claim to the whole of Jerusalem, including its occupied eastern Arab sector, as the Jewish State's "eternal, indivisible capital". (AFP)

Nehro Hisamawi, the Director of the distribution centre at Nahal Oz, the main crossing point for liquid fuels into the Gaza Strip, said that Israeli authorities were allowing 47,000 litres of gasoline daily, down from the previous level of 90,000 litres. Israel was also allowing the transfer of 190,000 litres of diesel fuel per day, down from the usual level of 300,000 litres. The diminished supply had caused a hike in fuel prices and a consequent hike in transportation cost. (Ma'an News Agency)

A Palestinian military court jailed six officers from PA President Abbas' Presidential Guard for failing to protect key facilities overrun by Hamas militants during fighting in the Gaza Strip in June. The highest ranking officer on trial, a colonel, was handed the longest sentence of three years. (Reuters)

Nayef Hawatmeh, Secretary-General of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, told AP that his faction and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine had been trying to mediate between Fatah and Hamas. He said that the two groups have proposed a ten-point mediation plan which calls on Hamas to restore Gaza to how it was before its militants took over the area in June. It also calls for new presidential and parliamentary elections and for an investigation into clashes between the two groups. (AP)

In a ceremony headed by PA President Abbas, the former Middle East Quartet's Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement, James Wolfensohn, and the former Director-General of UNRWA, Peter Hansen, were honoured by the Palestinian Government in the West Bank by giving them the Palestine Prize for Excellence and Creativity. (AP)

5

The IDF foiled an attempted stabbing attack in Hebron, Army Radio reported. According to the report, a young Palestinian woman who was arrested earlier in the day, had planned to stab a soldier stationed at a military post in the city. (Ha'aretz)

US Secretary of State Rice met in Ramallah with PA President Abbas and PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad. She was also to meet with the chief Palestinian negotiator for the upcoming peace conference, Ahmed Qureia. During a joint press conference with Ms. Rice in Ramallah, President Abbas said that Israel, the Palestinians and the United States had agreed to aim for a regional peace settlement before President Bush steps down in January 2009. Mr. Abbas said that he had received encouraging signs from Israel and the United States, but expected tough going in the negotiations. He called on Israel to begin immediately meeting its obligations under the first stage of the Road Map such as the settlement freeze and easing the movement of Palestinians. Mr. Abbas said that the Palestinians were ready to do their part, including trying to disarm Palestinian militants. Ms. Rice said that she hoped the Middle East peace conference in Annapolis later this year would be the launching pad for negotiations that could achieve their goals within the time remaining to the Bush administration. (Ha'aretz)

PA President Abbas' National Security forces clashed with gunmen for the first time after three days of deployment in Nablus. The security forces imposed a

curfew within the Balata refugee camp and searched houses for gunmen involved in the exchange of fire, in which five Palestinians were wounded, including two security men. A Palestinian security official said that the fighting erupted after Mr. Abbas' forces chased a group of gunmen who had been firing shots in the air. (Reuters)

Israeli police disguised as Israeli Channel 2 TV news crew to arrest a wanted Palestinian provoked an outcry from critics, who said that the sting threatened to put the lives of media personnel at risk. A source from the police said that the target of the operation was Nadim Injaz, a Palestinian, who had been wanted for making unspecified threats. He said that police impersonated a news team "in order to meet with the suspect and have him arrested". Channel 2 executive director Avi Weiss sent a letter of complaint to Police Commissioner David Cohen, Ha'aretz reported. (AP)

At a press conference following a forum of Palestinian intellectuals in Damascus, Khaled Mashaal, the Hamas Political Bureau Chief, dismissed the US-proposed Middle East peace conference as a distraction, in order for the US administration to prepare for an attack against Iran. He also warned Palestinian leaders against making concessions to Israel during the meeting. (AP)

In Lisbon, senior European Union officials were expected to begin a two-day meeting with top diplomats from the Middle East, including the Israeli and Palestinian Foreign Ministers, to gauge the progress of Middle East peace efforts. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the European Commissioner for External Relations and the European Neighbourhood Policy, was expected to push Israeli Foreign Minister Livni and Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad Malki to grasp the chance to settle their differences. Portugal currently holds the EU presidency. (AP)

6

In Nablus, Palestinian police who lay siege to the Balata refugee camp in the West Bank, battling militants for more than 12 hours, withdrew with two suspects in custody and a vow that security forces would no longer shy away from entering militant strongholds. Police marksmen took positions on rooftops, trading shots with gunmen from the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades. The operation, in which a policeman and eight passers-by were wounded by gunfire, was the first major offensive in PA President Abbas' campaign to assert control over gunmen. Nablus Governor Jamal Mohsein said, "We shall post police in all the camps and in the Old City. In the future, nobody will be able to say that the police cannot go here or there." (Ha'aretz, [www.asharqalawsat.com](http://www.asharqalawsat.com))

IDF troops arrested Hamas PLC member Hatem Qafisheh in Hebron, Palestinian security officials said. Israel had released him earlier this year after holding him for six months without pressing charges. (AFP)

Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak said that Israel had no plans for a large-scale invasion in the Gaza Strip in the near future. MK Limor Livnat (Likud) said Mr. Barak hinted that he did not want to jeopardize the peace conference in Annapolis. (Ha'aretz)

Detainees Study Centre reported that Fatah female detainees imprisoned by Israel launched a hunger strike to show solidarity with the detainee Anna Mona, who had been confined to solitary confinement in the Al Ramla Israeli prison. In a letter addressed to the Centre, the detainees said that the strike was intended to put pressure on the Israeli prison authorities to end the solitary confinement of Ms. Mona, who had been suffering from several physical and psychological problems.

She was arrested by Israeli forces in January 2001. (Wafa)

At the summit of Middle East and European Foreign Ministers in Lisbon, Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni told her Egyptian counterpart, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, that Cairo must put a stop to weapons smuggling in the Gaza Strip. In an interview with Ha'aretz on the same issue, the Chairman of the US House Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, Gary Ackerman, said that weapons estimated at \$20 million had been smuggled into the Gaza Strip each month through the Salah al-Din ("Philadelphia") area. He expressed hope that the Egyptians "are not intentionally" trying to strengthen Hamas, but said that "that is the effect." (Ha'aretz)

A senior Palestinian official told AFP that the US had decided that the international meeting in Annapolis would begin on 26 November. US Secretary of State Rice planned to return to the region on 15 November to help Palestinian and Israeli negotiators finalize a joint statement that would be the basis of negotiations in Annapolis. (AFP, Ma'an News Agency)

The US had agreed to establish an American-Israeli-Palestinian committee that would monitor implementation of the first stage of the Road Map, according to PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat. The US, he said, would serve as the panel's arbitrator, deciding which Road Map commitments each side had successfully implemented. US Secretary of State Rice had met with PA President Abbas a day earlier and agreed that after the Annapolis meeting, Israel and the PA would begin negotiations on the core issues. (Ha'aretz)

PA President Abbas said, "All the parties agree and are determined to reach an agreement before the end of [President] Bush's term in office and we are determined that this serves as our deadline and we are working towards that." Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert had said earlier that he would rule nothing out in the discussions. PA Presidency spokesperson Nabil Abu Rudeineh said that a joint document, which had been the subject of intense negotiations for weeks to serve as a basis for the Annapolis meeting, was in the process of being drafted. It would incorporate the "principles" of the Road Map and the Arab Peace Initiative, which called for the normalization of ties with Israel in exchange for Israel's full withdrawal from Arab land. ([www.asharqalawsat.com](http://www.asharqalawsat.com))

Israeli opposition leader Binyamin Netanyahu told Israel Radio, "If we set up a Palestinian State now, we will get an Iranian State", saying that Prime Minister Olmert was making peace with "a virtual negotiating partner and in virtual reality." He said that if there was "a real partner" on the Palestinian side, he would agree to a peace deal that would allow Palestinians to rule their territory with "limited sovereignty" in order to minimize threat to Israel. (Jerusalem Post)

US Security Coordinator Gen. Keith Dayton visited Nablus to review the implementation of the PA security plan with Palestinian officials. ([www.imenc.org](http://www.imenc.org), Ma'an News Agency)

7

Egyptian police said that they had discovered two tunnels used to smuggle arms into the Gaza Strip and arrested two Palestinians. A large quantity of cigarettes and two assault rifles were seized. Another tunnel had collapsed, leaving three Palestinian injured and one missing. (AFP, Ma'an News Agency, Xinhua)

Israeli troops, reinforced with 45 military vehicles, entered the Balata refugee camp in Nablus and arrested 25 Palestinians. PA security sources said that the house of Hani el Ka'bi, an Islamic Jihad activist, had been demolished. (AFP, Ma'an News Agency, Xinhua)

Israeli troops entered the Gaza Strip amid heavy gunfire near the town of Wadi As-Salqa, conducting house searches, and detaining the residents of one house. (Ma'an News Agency)

Peace Now issued a new report covering the period from May to October 2007, stating that the construction of settlements in the West Bank had accelerated: construction was underway in 88 settlements and settlers were building permanent structures in 34 outposts. Settlers had found a way to circumvent the ban on transporting caravans to the West Bank by assembling them on-site instead. "If this continues like this we will soon have a settler State instead of a Palestinian State in the West Bank... There is no connection between what is happening in political negotiations and what is happening on the ground", said Peace Now Secretary-General Yariv Oppenheimer. Citing Israeli Government statistics published in June 2007, Peace Now said that the number of settlers had reached 267,500, representing an annual growth rate of 5.8 per cent, versus 1.8 percent growth inside Israel. "This means that the growth of settlements is much more than the natural growth and includes a massive migration of settlers to the West Bank", the report said. The settlers' "Yesha Council" responded by saying that the "latest report proves that the Jewish settlement in the area does not stop for a minute, not due to terrorism, building freezes, political pressure, or legal decrees... We want to thank Peace Now for documenting this important Zionist enterprise." The Council said that it hoped to see the settler population pass 300,000 by the end of next year. (AFP, BBC, Ha'aretz, [www.israelnationalnews.org](http://www.israelnationalnews.org), The Jerusalem Post, Ynetnews)

PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat told the Voice of Palestine radio: "In the past months, the Israeli side was not showing any readiness even to speak about the final status issues, but now Israel has changed its positions and accepted to negotiate them" He warned that the Israeli practices of settlement and wall construction, assassinations and arrests "would only lead to enlarging the circle of violence and chaos ... such practices have nothing to do with achieving peace". (Xinhua)

US Consul General Jacob Walles, at a press conference in Jerusalem, said: "The most important issue for the Annapolis meeting is the start of Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations between the two sides ... Failure is not an option". He added: "We have gone seven years without any negotiations so we now have a situation in which we are going to launch negotiations on all the issues. Just a couple of months ago the Israelis said there was no way they would talk about the core issues... That's a big change and it is significant". (Ma'an News Agency)

A military operation planned in the Balata refugee camp in Nablus was cancelled by Defence Minister Ehud Barak. The planned operation was to include a large amount of forces, including reserve forces. Sources in the IDF told Ynetnews that the IDF activity in the Nablus area had not been halted, however. (*Ynetnews*) Ahmed Yusuf, Political Advisor to former PA Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, said that Hamas would consider attending the upcoming Annapolis meeting if invited. He also said PA President Abbas did not have a mandate to negotiate on behalf of the Palestinian people. (*Ma'an News Agency*) Israel would not grant the Palestinians a direct territorial passage between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Defence Minister Ehud Barak told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee. The passage, which still remains to be negotiated, would remain under Israeli control and will either run underground or through bridges, Mr. Barak said. (*Ha'aretz*) The Israeli Supreme Court gave the Government one week to prove that power and fuel cuts to the Gaza Strip will not lead to a humanitarian crisis. (*AFP, Ha'aretz*) Hamas lawmakers convened what they said was a legitimate session of the PLC. Hamas said that each of the Hamas PLC members detained by Israel had designated a surrogate to represent them, allowing them to muster the needed quorum. Fatah and other Palestinian factions boycotted the meeting. Former PLC Secretary-General Ibrahim Khreisheh said that the session was an illegal move intended to legitimize "authority gained through a military coup and inter-Palestinian division." In his opening remarks, PLC Acting Speaker Ahmad Bahar declared that all decisions made by PA President Abbas without the consent of the PCL would be illegitimate. (*Ma'an News Agency*) Khan Yunis Governor Usama al-Farra said that direct agricultural losses amounted to \$56 million since the beginning of the intifada. "The said number was due to Israeli practices - razing agricultural lands and greenhouses ... the agricultural sector has been subjected to major losses [due to] the closure of the crossings", he said in a press release. (*Wafa*) Western officials said that Washington had asked US Ambassador to Israel Richard Jones to deliver a complaint about the recent Israeli raids into the Balata refugee camp in Nablus, shortly after the deployment of PA security forces there, and an earlier seizure of military equipment belonging to the Palestinian Presidential Guards, which were seen as undermining the ability of the PA to expand its security control in the West Bank. (*Ha'aretz, Reuters*)

Pledging the support of his Government to help negotiations for a viable two-State solution, French President Sarkozy pointed out that "the issue of security is non-negotiable" for Israel, adding that "Israel has its back to the sea and little room to manoeuvre." He made his remarks after receiving a Light onto Nations award from the American Jewish Council in Washington. ([www.ajc.org](http://www.ajc.org))

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics reported an 18 per cent increase in unemployment in the West Bank in the third quarter of 2007 due to a contraction in the agriculture sector, and a 25 per cent rise in the Gaza Strip due to an employment slump in manufacturing and construction. ([www.pcbs.gov.ps](http://www.pcbs.gov.ps))

8

Israeli forces, equipped with 20 tanks and bulldozers, entered the northern Gaza Strip and arrested dozens of residents of a Bedouin village, witnesses and security sources said, adding that bulldozers also razed fields and some greenhouses. (*Wafa, Xinhua*)

PA security sources said that Israeli forces had detained 22 Palestinians in Nablus and Hebron during overnight operations. Two Palestinians were wounded in clashes. Israeli soldiers also shot a sixteen-year-old Palestinian boy in the back during an incursion into the village of Kafr Dan, near Jenin. (*Ma'an News Agency, Wafa, Xinhua*)

Israeli forces entered the village of Um An-Nasir in the Gaza Strip, detaining the head of the village and seizing 10 people from a local mosque. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds Brigades claimed responsibility for launching five home-made projectiles at Israeli towns bordering the Gaza Strip. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In a press statement, Hamas said that PA troops detained five of its members in Nablus and Jenin. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A spokesman for PA President Abbas said that the IDF operations in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip "are meant to evade the commitment reached between Palestinian Premier Salam Fayyad and Israeli Minister of Defence Ehud Barak." (*Xinhua*)

Palestinian officials said that they were pleased with Israeli pledges to resume peace talks after the Annapolis conference, and were now less concerned about a pre-summit understanding that had stymied earlier negotiations. "We were hoping for a document that would define the limits and guiding resolution for every difficult point," said Rafiq Husseini, a top aide to PA President Abbas. "I'm not sure we'll get it." "Annapolis is not about implementation. It is about defining the issues, showing how we go forward without giving the solutions right now," said Prime Minister Olmert's spokesperson Miri Eisin. A US diplomat said that Washington was encouraged by the latest Palestinian position, which appeared to be compatible with the Israeli and American thinking. "We have never envisioned Annapolis as a meeting that hammers out core issues, but rather sets the stage for parties to work on the core issues in an atmosphere of confidence," said the diplomat, who asked that his name not be used. (*AP*)

The office of the head of the Palestinian negotiating team, Ahmed Qureia, issued a statement denying that "back-channel" talks were being conducted with Israel.

The statement stressed that his team was the only party authorized to negotiate ahead of the Annapolis conference. Islamic Jihad leader Khalid Al-Batsh said: "Insistence on holding secret or public meetings with the Israelis is considered a bypass of the Palestinian rights, specifically in light of the escalating destruction and siege programmes against all aspects of life." (*The Jerusalem Post, Xinhua*)

In talks between the Israeli and Palestinian negotiating teams, it was agreed that any implementation of agreements in the future would be conditional on both sides meeting their obligations in accordance with the first stage of the Road Map. As part of the first stage of the Road Map, Palestinians are obligated to undertake a series of security-related activities, with a particular emphasis on counter-terrorism actions and militant groups, collecting weapons and arresting militants. Israel is obligated to freeze settlement activity, evacuate the settlement outposts and withdraw from Palestinian cities. (*Ha'aretz*)

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon [deplored](#) a rocket attack against Israel that was launched from a school in the Gaza Strip operated by UNRWA. UN spokesperson Marie Okabe told reporters that Mr. Ban had asked UNRWA to conduct a full investigation of the incident of the previous week. Inquiries made so far indicated that the school had been evacuated at the time of the rocket attack to ensure the safety of both the staff and the pupils during an Israeli military incursion. Palestinian militants entered the school while it was empty and then fired rockets from the compound. "The Secretary-General condemns this abuse of UN facilities, which is a serious violation of the UN's privileges and immunities," Ms. Okabe said. "He calls on all involved in this conflict to avoid actions that endanger the lives of civilians, especially children, and that put at risk UNRWA's ability to carry out its humanitarian mission." (*UN News Centre*)

"They are trying to punish those who have taken control of Gaza but in fact they are punishing everybody inside Gaza, a very small percentage of whom support the people who are controlling Gaza right now," UNRWA Commissioner-General Karen AbuZayd said. She told a news conference that UNRWA was only able to provide 61 per cent of the daily nutritional needs. "The point that we are making is we are losing the fight to those who are on the extreme end of the groups in Gaza, and they are the ones who are benefiting by this isolation and this continual squeeze on Gaza and its economy and the people of Gaza," she added. (*AP, Wafa*)

The PA Ministry of Health said that there were 350 patients in different parts of the Gaza Strip in need of treatment abroad but unable to travel due to Israeli restrictions, adding that seven of the patients had died in the past months. (*Wafa*)

9

Israeli troops shot and killed two Palestinians crawling near the security fence between the Gaza Strip and Israel and apparently planting an explosive device, the military said. An official of the PA Ministry of Health, Mu'awiyah Hassanein, identified the two as 16-year-old Bilal Ahmed Nabaheen and 17-year-old Jihad Nasser Nabaheen. (*AP, Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces arrested 12 Palestinians in the West Bank. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

US diplomats said that the US Government would grant \$1 million in development aid to Nablus to help the PA establish control in the city. The spokesman of the US Consulate in Jerusalem, Micaela Schweitzer-Bluhm, said that the assistance package, which would help to fund as many as 10 development projects, would officially be announced next week. (*AP*)

The French Foreign Ministry said that Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner would visit Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory on 17 and 18 November to discuss a French proposal to host a donors' conference. France plans to host the conference in the coming weeks, jointly with Norway and Quartet Representative Tony Blair. (*AFP*)

10

Israeli fire wounded an Islamic Jihad militant and a doctor in the northern Gaza Strip, witnesses said. The militant was wounded by an anti-tank rocket that struck his car in Jabalya, and the doctor was wounded by an air-to-ground missile targeting a rocket launcher. An Israeli army spokesman confirmed the twin strikes and said that they had been in response to two rockets fired at Israel earlier without causing casualties or damage. (AFP)

Israeli forces arrested three Palestinians in Ramallah and another in Nablus. (Wafa)

The local police chief in Nablus, Ahmad Sharqawi, said that Palestinian security forces had seized explosive devices and home-made munitions as part of a campaign to curb militant actions in the city. Since the start of the month, hundreds of Palestinian security officers had deployed in Nablus. (Reuters)

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah met in Cairo to discuss the upcoming US-sponsored Middle East peace conference. Egypt's presidential spokesman, Suleiman Awaad, told reporters: "Egypt and Saudi Arabia have a clear stance, which is to welcome the meeting because it comes after long years of a frozen peace process." (AP)

11

Israeli soldiers opened fire at a march commemorating the third anniversary of Yasser Arafat's death in Hebron. One Palestinian was shot in the leg with a rubber-coated bullet and hospitalized. Three were arrested by the soldiers. (Wafa)

Israeli bulldozers razed large tracts of agricultural land in Bethlehem to annex them to Israeli settlements. (Wafa)

Cows were killed and wounded when a Qassam rocket hit Kibbutz Zikim in Israel's western Negev region. Three people were treated for shock at the scene.

Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds Brigades claimed responsibility for launching two home-made rockets at the southern Israeli city of Ashkelon. The Al-Nasser Brigades, the military wing of the Popular Resistance Committee, said that they had launched two projectiles at Sderot in southern Israel. Fatah's Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades claimed responsibility for launching three rockets at the Erez crossing and Kibbutz Netiv Ha'asara and another two at Sderot. (Ma'an News Agency)

Palestinian officials said Mr. Ahmed Qureia, the head of the Palestinian negotiating team, and other members, had been stopped by Israeli soldiers near Jerusalem while on their way to meet their Israeli counterparts to try to draft a joint statement ahead of the Annapolis conference prompting them to call off a scheduled round of talks. (Reuters)

Despite Attorney-General Menachem Mazuz's ban on disrupting the electricity supply to the Gaza Strip, Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak insisted that "some power restriction" would be placed on Gaza. Mr. Barak announced his intentions to go ahead with the power restriction during a cabinet meeting and was immediately supported by both Prime Minister Olmert and Justice Minister Daniel Friedmann. (Ynetnews)

12

Israel arrested two Hamas members of parliament. Mariam Saleh was arrested in the town of Al-Bireh near Ramallah, and Khaled Tafesh was arrested in Bethlehem, Hamas members said. Palestinian security officials said that Israel had arrested another 17 Hamas members in the northern West Bank town of Tulkarm. (AFP)

Israeli forces arrested four "wanted" Palestinians in Ramallah and another south of Bethlehem. (Ynetnews)

The military wing of Islamic Jihad, the Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades, claimed responsibility for launching a home-made rocket at Kibbutz Netiv Ha'asara near the border with the Gaza Strip. Hamas' Al-Qassam Brigades said that they launched five mortar shells Nahal Oz in southern Israel. (Ma'an News Agency)

Gunfire killed at least six people at a Fatah memorial rally for Yasser Arafat that had drawn hundreds of thousands of supporters. The rally broke up in chaos after gunfire rang out and grew into what Hamas described as battles with Fatah fighters. Medical officials said that at least 50 people, including women and youngsters, had been wounded. Fatah officials accused Hamas forces of opening fire from the nearby Islamic University. Hamas said its men had come under attack from Fatah gunmen and shot back. (Reuters)

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert disclosed plans to release more than 400 Palestinian prisoners in a goodwill gesture before the upcoming US-sponsored peace conference, Knesset members said. Mr. Olmert, appearing before the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, also said that Israel would continue to negotiate with PA President Abbas even if militants continued to fire rockets at southern Israel from Gaza, panel member Yuval Steinitz said. The implementation of any peace accord would depend on the attacks stopping, another meeting participant said. (AP)

Arab officials said that Arab foreign ministers would meet in Cairo in the last 10 days of November. PA Foreign Minister Riyad al-Malki said that President Abbas would attend the meeting in person to brief the Arab ministers on the latest developments in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on a joint document. "[The aim] is for all of us to contribute in setting out a common Arab vision and strategy and define the Arab position on the [Annapolis] meeting," he told reporters at the Arab League. (Reuters)

Israel's Prime Minister Olmert and Foreign Minister Livni told the Knesset that the Annapolis summit would last for one day. (Ha'aretz)

13

Israeli forces detained seven Palestinians during a raid in the city of Nablus. In another incident, the IDF demolished houses and shops in the northern West Bank village of Kafr Haris, west of Salfit, following orders issued to their owners weeks ago. Israeli military vehicles entered the northern West Bank town of Qabatiya, south of Jenin, and Palestinian militants engaged the invading forces before withdrawing. Sources within Hamas' Izz ad-Din Al-Qassam Brigades and the Islamic Jihad's Saraya Al-Quds claimed their gunmen had clashed with the Israeli forces. IDF troops tried to ambush Palestinian activists and ransacked several homes. No injuries or arrests were reported. The IDF arrested a 42-year-old Palestinian after raiding his home, east of Qalqilya. (Ma'an News Agency)

The National Resistance Brigades, an armed group affiliated with the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, claimed responsibility for launching a home-made projectile at the Israeli military post of Sufa, near Rafah. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli forces ordered Palestinian farmers near Jenin to evacuate their orchards, forbidding the owners from using them. A farmer said that "the Israeli military is not satisfied with the fields they confiscated to establish the wall, but wish to take more." (MEMO)

Appearing before the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, Israeli Prime Minister Olmert said that Israel and the Palestinians had agreed to a new plan that skips the first phase of the Road Map and proceeds directly to final status negotiations. "I concluded that we can permit ourselves to somewhat change our traditional position," Mr. Olmert told the Committee. He added that time was working against the diplomatic process, and so "we will try to reach an understanding on all elements of the solution. But we will not have to implement anything before the fulfilment of the first stage of the Road Map," he added. Mr. Olmert said that there would be a period of time, which he called a "buffer zone," between the agreement and its implementation. "If stage one of the Road Map is implemented – if the Palestinians dismantle the terror infrastructure – then and only then will Israel have to implement the agreement." (Ha'aretz)

Israeli Government sources said that the Annapolis conference would begin on 26 November with meetings of foreign ministers. That evening, President Bush would host Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas for dinner at the White House. The next day, Messrs. Olmert and Abbas would speak at the formal opening of the conference, which would last a few hours. According to Mr. Olmert, "the starting point of the negotiations will be the recognition that Israel is the State of the Jewish people", and the end point would be the declaration of the end of the conflict and claims. Mr. Olmert plans to bring the agreement reached at the end of the negotiations to the Security Council, the United States and the Quartet, to ensure the widest possible international support. (Ha'aretz)

Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak said that Syria's participation in the Annapolis conference could be a positive factor and could lead to the renewal of peace talks.

He said that Syria's attendance at the conference "needs to be based on the premise that the Syrians recognize that the main topic for discussion is the Palestinian issue. To the best of my knowledge, the Prime Minister, I, and the Americans see completely eye-to-eye on this issue." (Ynetnews)

PA President Abbas announced three days of official mourning for seven Palestinians killed by Hamas fire in the Gaza Strip during a mass rally commemorating the third death anniversary of Yasser Arafat. Mr. Abbas also issued a decree to consider the deceased "martyrs on the road to freedom, independence, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State." (Wafa)

The Israeli and Palestinian negotiating teams, headed respectively by Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and former PA Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia, met to discuss the joint declaration ahead of the Annapolis conference. Disagreements arose over most of the issues. Mr. Qureia insisted that the declaration present core principles for a solution, such as an Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders, and state that East Jerusalem will be the capital of the future Palestinian State. Israel had rebuffed his demands and was willing to refer only in general terms to the core issues, without presenting any solutions. The questions still open for debate include whether to set a timetable for reaching an agreement; how to supervise the implementation of the Road Map; whether a tripartite (US, Israel and Palestinian Authority) committee would be established for such a purpose, as the Palestinians have demanded, or whether the US would be the sole arbiter, as the Israelis want; and whether the negotiations' goals would include ending the dispute and all Palestinian claims, as Israel wants. Israel made it clear that it considered Palestinian recognition of Israel as a Jewish State to be a precondition for flexibility on the core issues, and that the establishment of a Palestinian State constituted a solution to Palestinian national demands. (Ha'aretz)

At a joint press conference in Ankara with Israeli President Shimon Peres, PA President Abbas said, "If peace comes and the occupation comes to an end, Israel will live in a sea of peace, security and stability in the Middle East." Mr. Peres said that he believed peace with the Palestinians and all interested countries was a definite possibility, but warned that peacemaking was a slow, cautious process. The Israeli and PA Presidents, along with their Turkish counterpart, Abdullah Gül,



signed an agreement to establish a joint industrial zone in the West Bank to create 5,000 new jobs for Palestinian. The goods produced in the zone would easily access markets in the US, Europe and Gulf countries. Israel assured that it would assist in the shipment of products to those markets. (*Ynetnews, Turkish Daily News*)

Prime Minister Olmert met with settlers' leaders from the "Yesha Council." They were due to discuss the freezing of settlement activity, the future of the settlements in the wake of the Annapolis conference and the unauthorized outposts. (*Jerusalem Post, Ynetnews*)

EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana met in Ramallah with PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad. Mr. Fayyad told Mr. Solana that the PA was committed to the Road Map, demanding that Israel implement its part of the plan, including halting settlement construction, releasing Palestinian prisoners and reopening Palestinian institutions, which had been closed in East Jerusalem. They also discussed the donor countries' meeting in Paris in December. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said in a speech to the United Jewish Communities General Assembly: "Israelis and Palestinians alike need to recognize that peace will require difficult, painful sacrifices to some of their longest-held aspirations... I believe that most Palestinians and most Arab States are ready to end the conflict. I believe that most Israelis are ready to leave most of the – nearly all of the West Bank – just as they were ready to leave Gaza for the sake of peace," she said. "I believe that we have two democratic leaders in Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas who know that the best way to serve their people is to build a basis for peace. We can succeed and we must succeed – failure is not an option." ([www.ujc.org](http://www.ujc.org), *Ynetnews*)

14

A Hamas sniper shot and wounded an Israeli soldier near the border fence with the Gaza Strip, sources on both sides said. (*AFP*)

PA security forces arrested 22 Hamas activists near Nablus, a statement by the Hamas said. Palestinian security officials confirmed the raid and said that it was part of a security plan to restore law and order to the city. (*DPA*)

Israeli forces seized eight Palestinians near Ramallah, in Abu Dis and Hebron. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

An IDF soldier was lightly wounded by Palestinian fire near the Beit Hanoun (Erez) crossing. Two Qassam rockets fired from the Gaza Strip struck Sderot. No damage or injuries were reported. The military wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades, claimed responsibility in a statement. (*Ha'aretz, Ma'an News Agency*)

A six-month-old infant died in the Gaza Strip after she was denied access into Israel for medical treatment, medical sources said. (*Wafa*)

Hamas announced plans to curb public gatherings in the Gaza Strip after a mass rally by Fatah had ended in bloodshed. Hamas arrested more than 400 Fatah loyalists after the rally and announced that journalists who do not hold press cards from the Hamas-run Interior Ministry would not be allowed to work in Gaza.

Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine condemned Hamas' detention of Fatah activists. The syndicate of Palestinian lawyers announced a three-day suspension of work in the courts of the Gaza Strip in protest against the shooting. (*AP, Ma'an News Agency*)

PA security forces had made "some progress" in restoring order in Nablus, US Consul General in Jerusalem Jacob Walles said after touring the city. (*AP*)

The Knesset approved, 52 to 24, a bill that would make it far more difficult to divide Jerusalem in the context of a peace agreement with the Palestinians. The bill, introduced by the Likud faction and other rightist and religious MKs, would require the support of 80 MKs for any changes to the Basic Law: Jerusalem. A simple majority of 61 MKs is currently needed to change the law. Before becoming law, the bill must be approved by the Ministerial Committee on Legislation and pass three more Knesset plenary votes. Likud party member Gideon Saar, the author of the bill, said that the vote in the Knesset was a clear sign to the international community that there was consensus in Israel against concessions on Jerusalem. (*BBC, Ha'aretz, Ynetnews*)

*Ha'aretz* quoted an unnamed Israeli official as saying that Israel would announce a freeze on settlement construction but not in the three settlement blocks of "Ariel", "Ma'ale Adumim", and "Gush Etzion", nor in East Jerusalem, and declare its willingness to remove unauthorized outposts before the Annapolis conference.

(*Ha'aretz, The Guardian*)

Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak told Egypt's People's Assembly: "I am looking forward to the coming peace meeting and sincerely hope that it successfully re-launches serious peace negotiations within a limited time frame to fulfill the hopes of the Palestinian and Israeli peoples ... with a just and durable peace." (*AP*)

Visiting Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko said during a joint press conference with Israel's President Peres: "In the State of Israel, we see a loyal partner and the best friend in all areas relating both to regional and global issues... Ukraine wishes to play a role in the peace process." "Parallel to the political process there is now also an economic process, and I suggest that Ukraine take part in building the economic peace," Mr. Peres said. (*AP*)

UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown told Parliament: "If we can see tangible progress on security, then we, the United Kingdom, would be prepared to put a \$500 million package of aid into this area [Occupied Palestinian Territory] so that economic reconstruction can take place." (*AFP, Reuters*)

German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Jordan's King Abdullah II expressed the wish that the relative stability being experienced in the West Bank would transfer to the Gaza Strip. The "greater prosperity" being seen on the West Bank, under the control of PA President Abbas and the Fatah movement, could lead to improvements in the Gaza Strip, Ms. Merkel said. Both leaders said they hoped the Middle East peace conference in Annapolis would be "crowned by success."

King Abdullah insisted that Mr. Abbas would negotiate on behalf of the Palestinian people. (*DPA*)

PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat said "We want to completely implement the first phase of the Road Map in parallel with the Israeli implementation of their commitments... but if the Quartet kept holding off [on the] the mechanisms and the timetables, there will be a bigger problem in my opinion." (*Xinhua*)

15

Three Palestinian militants from the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades were killed and two others wounded in an Israeli airstrike on their car in northern Gaza Strip. Another aircraft struck an electricity transformer in Beit Hanoun, causing no casualties, but power was interrupted for about 5,000 people in the area. (*AFP, AP, Ha'aretz, Ma'an News Agency, Xinhua*)

Israeli forces invaded the town of Qabatiya, south of Jenin, carrying out an arrest and inspection campaign in the town's center. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In a speech televised on *Palestine TV*, on the occasion of the 19th anniversary of the declaration of Palestinian independence, PA President Abbas said that there could be no new unity talks with Hamas until it relinquished control of the Gaza Strip. He also said that he would meet with King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia the following day to try to hammer out a united stance for the Annapolis meeting. President Abbas said, "We must topple the junta who took control by military force and who reap the benefits of Palestinian disasters and commit criminal acts which have led to the tightening of Israel siege". Hamas officials described President Abbas' comments as "shameful" and said they proved that he was not interested in any Palestinian reconciliation. Hamas spokesman Taher Nunu said that President Abbas was "divorced from reality... The divide cannot be resolved that way, only through dialogue". (*AFP, AP, Ha'aretz, Ma'an News Agency, Reuters*)

Secretary-General of the Executive Committee of the PLO Yasser Abed Rabbo told *Voice of Palestine* radio that the Annapolis meeting was aiming at a renewed peace process based on a fresh approach to the Road Map. "We know that in the past timetables have been violated and never respected, but we think some kind of timetable not exceeding one year from now is realistic". He also said, "Jerusalem is a united capital and not subject for concessions ... this issue is not subject for talks and negotiations." (*The Guardian, Xinhua*)

Strategic Affairs Minister Avigdor Lieberman said that the Israeli Cabinet was scheduled to discuss making Palestinian recognition of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish State a precondition for any negotiations with the PA. He said that the proposal's acceptance would be "important and symbolic". (*Ha'aretz*)

PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat said that there were serious difficulties regarding negotiations with Israel, and that recognizing "Israel as a Jewish State is unacceptable". In a statement to *Al Jazeera* satellite channel, he said that the Palestinians recognized the State of Israel, adding that the Road Map also stated this, whether it is Jewish or not. Mr. Erakat added, "We reject this statement and we recognize Israel within the borders of 1967; we recognize the State but not the religion of this State ... Accepting Israel as a Jewish State means for the Palestine refugees giving up their right of return to their land". ([www.palpress.org](http://www.palpress.org))

Only 2 out of the 24 roadblocks in the West Bank Israel had allegedly removed recently were in fact removed. Many never existed to begin with, the Machsom Watch organization said. Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak had told US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that Israel had removed 24 West Bank roadblocks in order to ease mobility for Palestinians. The organization noted that the IDF refused to provide a list of removed roadblocks. The information was received from a third party that obtained the list from the IDF. (*Ha'aretz*)

Israel removed a dozen settlers from a "wildcat" settlement in the West Bank. "We have removed a dozen people from Harhivi near the "Eilon Moreh" settlement close to the Palestinian town of Gaza", police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said. (*AFP*)

The lawyer of the Nafha Association for Prisoners said that the health of Palestinian Legislative Council speaker Aziz Dweik, currently detained in the Ramla prison in Israel, was seriously deteriorating. Mr. Dweik suffers from anaemia due to the diabetes he had developed in prison. Prison doctors had attributed the spread of anaemia among prisoners to their poor prison diet. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs David Miliband would visit Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory on 17 November. The Foreign Secretary is due to meet PA President Abbas as well as Prime Minister Salam Fayyad and members of the Palestinian Cabinet. He is also scheduled to hold talks with Israeli Prime Minister Olmert, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and Defence Minister Ehud Barak. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister for Middle Eastern Affairs Alexander Sultanov and Special Envoy Sergei Yakovlev told Israeli officials that Syria would be participating in the Annapolis peace conference, albeit with a low-level delegation. They also asked that Israel include in the summit declaration with the Palestinians a statement on Israel's desire for peace with its neighbours. The Russian officials said that Moscow was interested in a follow-up conference to Annapolis in December or January, which they would host. (*Ha'aretz*)

**16**

Israeli forces entered the Balata refugee camp in Nablus. In al-Bireh, near Ramallah, Israeli troops established a mobile checkpoint on one of the main roads. No arrests were reported. (*IMEMC*)

IDF troops arrested three "wanted" Palestinians in West Bank operations overnight, the army said. One of the suspects was arrested south of Bethlehem, another southwest of Hebron and the third man in nearby Dura. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, head of the Israeli negotiations team, was expected to meet the following day with Prime Minister Olmert at his residence to continue consultations on the forthcoming summit. The Israeli and Palestinian teams were also scheduled to meet on the same day to continue working on the draft of the joint statement for the conference. Four members of the Israeli delegation to Washington, including the Prime Minister's chief of staff, Yoram Turbowicz, Foreign Ministry Director-General Aharon Abramovich, and the Prime Minister's diplomatic advisor, Shalom Turgeman, were scheduled to return to Israel from meetings with President Bush's representatives in Washington. (*Ynetnews*)

Israel was still waiting for notification of US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's next visit to the region. It was reported that Ms. Rice had been delaying her arrival in order to ensure that the Israeli and Palestinian teams have reached agreements on the principles of their joint statement. Ms. Rice was expected to arrive in the region the following week, bringing along the invitations to the peace conference. (*Ynetnews*)

PA President Abbas, who is currently on tour of Middle East countries, including Egypt, Turkey and Saudi Arabia, met with Saudi King Abdullah. They discussed the current developments in the region and the convening of the Annapolis Conference. (*Ma'an News Agency, Wafa*)

Thousands for Hamas supporters converged on the deserted Gaza City house of PA President Abbas to warn him of violence if he made concessions to Israel in the forthcoming Annapolis Conference. (*Ha'aretz*)

**17**

A Qassam rocket fired from the Gaza Strip set fire to five cars in Sderot. Another rocket was fired at the western Negev, causing no damage. (*AP*)

During a meeting with King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, PA President Abbas voiced his pessimism on the Annapolis Conference's chance for success and expressed his dissatisfaction with Israel over its unwillingness to agree to the minimum level of what is acceptable by Palestinians, said Jamal al-Shobaki, Palestinian ambassador to Riyadh. The Saudi King echoed Mr. Abbas' concerns, the ambassador said. "If the political momentum and international pressures have not worked in halting construction of settlements, who or what could?" Mr. al-Shobaki asked. (*AP*)

Prime Minister Olmert had officially invited Defence Minister Ehud Barak to join the Annapolis Conference, and Mr. Barak accepted the invitation, *Israel Radio* reported. (*Ha'aretz*)

UNRWA Commissioner-General Karen AbuZayd expressed concerns over Israeli Attorney-General Mazuz's approval of reducing electricity supplies to the Gaza Strip, adding that the decision was against international law and increased the suffering of the Palestinian people. (*Xinhua*)

US State Department Spokesman Sean McCormack said: "I would not anticipate that [Secretary Rice] is going to be going on any foreign travel between now and Annapolis." ([www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov))

PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat said that he had sent a letter to the Bush Administration demanding that Israel fully meet its obligations under the Road Map.

"Enough games. We want to see an end to settlement expansion and natural growth," Mr. Erakat said. (*Reuters*)

PA President Abbas told visiting British Foreign Secretary David Miliband that he hoped for international pressure on Israel before the upcoming Annapolis Conference to overcome the difficulties if the conference is to succeed, and to launch negotiations on permanent status issues. Mr. Miliband told reporters after the meeting that Britain would play both a political and an economic role to boost Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. He earlier had met PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad and the two discussed economic assistance to the Palestinian people as well as Palestinian efforts to enforce law and order in the West Bank. (*DPA, Wafa*)

French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner began a visit to the region for talks with Israeli and Palestinian leaders ahead of the Annapolis Conference. Mr. Kouchner held talks with Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak before going to Jerusalem where he was to meet Prime Minister Olmert and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni the following day. He would then see PA President Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad in Ramallah. "It is very likely that Annapolis will happen and that France will be represented by its Foreign Minister," he told journalists. (*AFP*)

**18**

Two Israeli soldiers were slightly wounded when the IDF stormed the Qalandiya refugee camp near Ramallah, *Israel Radio* reported. Palestinian security sources said that the Israeli force had withdrawn from the camp without arresting or wounding any Palestinian. (*Xinhua*)

Quartet Representative Tony Blair said in an interview published in *Journal du Dimanche* that he hoped to announce within days projects to create jobs for tens of thousands of Palestinians. French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner, who also took part in the interview, said: "Nobody is saying Annapolis will be anything other than the beginning of a process, but its start would even be a success, maybe fragile." (*AFP, The Guardian*)

Prime Minister Olmert told visiting French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner that "Annapolis cannot be a failure, because the very fact that it is taking place makes it a success." (*Ha'aretz*)

PA Interior Minister Abdur Razzaq al Yahya announced that the PA intended to disarm the militant groups, including the military wings of Hamas and Fatah. "The resistance has a clear meaning and the conduct [of these groups] during the past seven years was a disaster for the Palestinian cause," he said. (*Xinhua*)

Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni called on Arab countries to attend Annapolis "without conditions." Stressing that the conference was only "a beginning," she told a news conference in Jerusalem with French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner that the role of the Arab world was "to support the moderates in the Palestinian Authority." Mr. Kouchner told the news conference that the Annapolis Conference was "not only an achievement, but a beginning." (*DPA*)

Visiting British Foreign Secretary David Miliband called on the international community to do "everything it can" to back the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

"The seriousness of purpose of leaders on both sides is something the international community must support", Mr. Miliband stressed at a joint news conference in Jerusalem with his Israeli counterpart Tzipi Livni. Ms. Livni said that the role of Arab States in supporting the process was "crucial." She called on them to "support compromises" and not to "dictate the outcome." (*DPA*)

Arab countries were to meet on 22 November to adopt a common position ahead of the Annapolis Conference, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal told a press conference during an OPEC summit. (*AFP*)

Jordan's King Abdullah II discussed regional issues with Syria's President Bashar Al-Assad during a visit to Damascus. A final statement following the summit announced support to Arab, Palestinian and international efforts aimed at establishing a Palestinian independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital. (*SANA*)

Norway signed an agreement with the PA under which it would provide NOK 168.3 million [approx. \$31 million] in budget support. The funds were to be used to pay salaries and cover operating expenses in the public sector, including the civilian police. The budget support had been pledged by Foreign Minister Støre during the meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee donor group chaired by Norway, held in New York in September. ([www.regjeringen.no](http://www.regjeringen.no))

**19**

A Palestinian child died in Gaza while awaiting approval to enter Israel for medical treatment, medical sources said. (*Wafa*)

Israel's Cabinet decided to free 441 Palestinian prisoners as a goodwill gesture to PA President Abbas ahead of the upcoming international meeting on the Israeli-

Palestinian conflict. Most of the prisoners to be released are members of Fatah, media reports said, and none were jailed for killing Israelis. (DPA)  
Prime Minister Olmert and PA President Abbas met in preparation for the international meeting expected to take place in Annapolis. Mr. Olmert's Spokesperson Miri Eisin said progress was made during the 90-minute meeting. She did not elaborate, but said negotiators would meet on 20 November to continue their work. (Ha'aretz)

US Department of State Spokesman Sean McCormack told journalists during the daily press briefing: "Any sort of imposed solution upon the two sides with respect to the [Annapolis final] document is not going to be one that they are comfortable with and will in some ways detract from the significance of the document." (www.state.gov)

"We have committed ourselves under the Road Map not to build new settlements in the West Bank and we will not build any," a senior Israeli official quoted Prime Minister Olmert as telling ministers. "We have committed not to expropriate land and we will not expropriate any. We have committed ourselves to dismantling illegal outposts and we will remove them." "Israel should also engage to cease the natural growth of the settlements," President Abbas' spokesman, Nabil Abu Rudeineh, said. (AP)

Col. Shlomi Muchtar of the IDF Coordination and Liaison Office, which coordinates Palestinian civilian affairs, said in a letter to the High Court of Justice: "The rate at which the Government is limiting the supply of fuel to the Gaza Strip is not enough to cause even minimal humanitarian damage." The letter constituted the State's answer to a petition from Palestinian and Israeli human rights organizations opposed to the Government's intent to limit the amount of fuel and electricity to Gaza in response to Qassam rocket fire. "If the terror organization controlling the Strip decides to divide fuel based on preference for uses like the launching of Qassam rockets against Israel instead of humanitarian uses, Israel has no say in the matter," Col. Muchtar said. (Ynetnews)

"By the end of the year, the EU should have given about 1 billion euros to the Palestinians," European Commissioner for External Relations and the European Neighbourhood Policy Benita Ferrero-Waldner said in Brussels. (DPA)

"The situation is deteriorating day by day and around the clock," UNRWA spokesman in the Gaza Strip, Adnan Abu Hassna, told Voice of Palestine Radio, attributing the deterioration to the "unprecedented siege" by Israel. "Only a few people are allowed to get in or out of Gaza, imported and exported goods cannot make their way through, thousands of factories have stopped, the agricultural sector has nearly collapsed and the unemployment rates are supremely high," the spokesman elaborated. (Xinhua)

"We could not yet agree on a joint document," PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat told Voice of Palestine Radio. "We tried every effort possible," he said. "But there are still differences over the substance, and not the wording." (DPA)

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon issued a statement to the UNRWA hosts and donors' meeting in Amman. (UN press release SG/SM/11287-PAL/2090)

UNRWA Commissioner-General Karen AbuZayd told a donors' meeting in Amman that the Israeli authorities had told them of plans to install six specially built terminals in the West Bank to check people and cargo, including aid deliveries. "An insidious new regime to limit freedom of movement is threatening to further stifle economic activity and smother social interaction between villages and towns in the West Bank," Ms. AbuZayd said. Under the new system, UNRWA expects the annual cost of transporting and delivering aid is likely to treble. (The Guardian)

Israel must bolster PA President Abbas with economic means, and not only by supplying him with weapons, Israel Radio quoted President Shimon Peres as saying. (The Jerusalem Post)

The Fatah Central Committee during a meeting in Ramallah emphasized Palestinian inalienable rights, reiterating the necessity of providing the Annapolis Conference with terms for success. The Committee sent greetings to the Palestinian people for the national stance it had shown during the third anniversary of Yasser Arafat's death. "Such a massive and comprehensive gathering of Gaza Strip citizens was just a mass referendum for the Palestinian legitimacy," PA President Abbas said. (Wafa)

20

Three Palestinians, two from the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades and a third one from Hamas, were killed in armed clashes with Israeli soldiers in two separate incidents in the southern and northern Gaza Strip, medics said. (Antara News, Ma'an News Agency, Xinhua)

Israeli undercover soldiers killed Muhammad Al-Najjar, 19, who was standing at the door of his house in the southern Gaza Strip town of Khuza'a, according to witnesses. Four other Palestinians were injured. (Ma'an News Agency)

The Izz ad-Din Al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, claimed responsibility for launching nine mortar shells at the Beit Hanoun (Erez) crossing, and also claimed that one Israeli soldier had been wounded. (Ma'an News Agency)

The IDF shot Ahmad Nasir Sawalha, 8, Mua'ath Abu Sarris, 11, and Yousef Urabi, 21, in an ongoing operation in the Far'a refugee camp near Nablus. The soldiers also seized eight young men, most of them affiliated with Hamas. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli forces arrested four Palestinians in Hebron and another four in Nablus. (Wafa)

Israeli settlers smashed a car owned by a Palestinian with stones and clubs in the village of Hawara near Nablus. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli authorities announced the death of a settler whose car had come under fire near Qalqilya. A group affiliated with the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades claimed responsibility for the attack. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli forces seized six Palestinians in the town of Kufur Qadum, near Qalqilya. (Ma'an News Agency)

Yusra al-Amarin, 53, died after Israeli forces prevented her departure from the Gaza Strip for medical treatment, said the Popular Committee to Break the Gaza Siege.

According to the organization, the number of patients who had died since June had risen to 15. (Xinhua)

Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak said that Israel would continue the ongoing settlement construction in the West Bank. "It is not possible from a legal point of view to stop the construction projects that have been going for years", Defence Minister Barak said in a statement. He also said that "wildcat" settlement outposts not authorized by the Israeli Government "will be evacuated and there will be no creation of settlements or large projects". "Under no condition will we strangle the existing settlements", an official quoted him as saying. (AFP)

Israeli Prime Minister Olmert met with Egyptian President Mubarak in Sharm el-Sheikh. "I very much hope that we will reach a definitive deal with the Palestinians in the course of 2008 ... It should be clear, and this is agreed with the invitees that there will be no implementation of agreements until the Road Map undertakings are fulfilled in full ... The commitments also apply for the Gaza Strip ... Gaza must be part of the Palestinian State and then naturally, the Palestinians must fight terrorism, and that includes the Gaza Strip", Prime Minister Olmert told reporters. He also said: "The goal of the Annapolis meeting is to jumpstart negotiations, which will lead us to deal with all the essential issues on the agenda - ahead of the negotiations". President Mubarak said: "I look forward to it [the conference] leading to the launching of serious peace negotiations which deal with all final status issues in a defined timeframe and according to an agreed follow-up mechanism. ... I look forward to constructive positions from Prime Minister Olmert, which would contribute to make the coming meeting a success." He added that he was ready to go to Israel "if the visit would solve the Palestinian problem". (AFP, AP, The Egyptian Gazette, Ma'an News Agency, Ynetnews)

"President Abbas has received a formal invitation from President George W. Bush to attend the Annapolis Conference," Mr. Abbas' aide Nabil Abu Rudeineh told Reuters. "We have received an official invitation from the State Department to participate in the upcoming international meeting in Annapolis," Prime Minister Olmert's spokesperson Miri Eisin said. (Reuters)

The Israeli and Palestinian negotiating teams met again to prepare a joint document for the upcoming Annapolis Conference, Israel Radio reported. "I do not know if we can finalize the document", PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat told Army Radio after late night talks between the two teams. "There is optimism compared with recent days, and there is a good chance of reaching a mutually agreed upon text of the declaration in the coming days", said an Israeli official source.

Palestinian sources said that no breakthrough or significant advances had been made the day before between Messrs. Olmert and Abbas. The Jerusalem Post reported that an agreement had been reached on a draft for a joint Israel-Palestinian statement ahead of the Annapolis Conference between Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and the Head of the Palestinian Negotiating Team Ahmed Qureia. "There are a number of small points that have not been agreed upon. However, if the Palestinians do not get cold feet, there will be a statement to conclude the conference", Israeli officials said. (The Guardian, Ha'aretz, israelinsider, The Jerusalem Post)

"Defence Minister Ehud Barak had ordered the Army to up its security measures and vigilance to face a possible wave of terrorist attacks" ahead of the Annapolis Conference, an IDF spokesman said. (AFP)

Quartet Representative Tony Blair announced several new economic projects aimed at generating jobs for tens of thousands of Palestinians. The projects were expected to include an industrial park in Jericho linked to the Jordanian border by a trade corridor, potentially bypassing Israeli checkpoints, as well as a new sewage



system in the Gaza Strip. "This is part of the Blair mandate to find 'quick-impact projects', and he wanted something before Annapolis. Some of them were existing projects that had not been able to get off the ground before because of Israeli objections or funding issues", a British official said. (*AP, The Independent*)

UK Foreign Secretary David Miliband issued a [statement](#) on his recent visit to Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Egypt. ([www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk))

US State Department Spokesman Sean McCormack spoke on the Annapolis Conference during a daily press briefing: "I'm pleased to announce that on Tuesday, 27 November, the United States will host Israeli Prime Minister Olmert ... Palestinian Authority President Abbas, members of the Arab League Follow-on Committee, Permanent Members of the UN Security Council, members of the G-8 and other key international actors, for a conference in Annapolis, Maryland to take place at the US Naval Academy. This conference will signal international support for the courageous efforts of Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas and will serve as a launching point for negotiations with an eye towards establishing an Israeli and Palestinian state. The Annapolis Conference ... is essentially three days. On Tuesday, that will be the conference that actually takes place at Annapolis. President Bush, Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas will open up the proceedings in the morning, then they go to a lunch hosted by Secretary Rice and a series of plenary sessions in the afternoon and will finish up with a press availability at the end. ... On Monday, the 26th, President Bush will host Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas separately for bilateral meetings. There will be a Quartet meeting hosted by Secretary Rice, and Secretary Rice will host a dinner here for the delegations on Monday night. President Bush is expected to deliver some remarks at that dinner. And then on Wednesday the 28th, President Bush will host, once again, Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas for bilateral meetings at the White House." ([www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov))

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad told visiting Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Muallem in Teheran: "This [Annapolis] meeting will result only in losses for the Palestinians... The organizers of this conference aim to connect all the Arab countries to the Zionist regime". (*AFP*)

The Council of the European Union adopted its conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process. ([www.consilium.europa.eu](http://www.consilium.europa.eu))

IDF Chief of Staff Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi told the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee that the IDF had recently removed 24 West Bank roadblocks in coordination with the PA, *Israel Radio* reported. However, the Machsom Watch organization disputed this claim, saying that only two roadblocks had been in fact removed. (*Ha'aretz, The Jerusalem Post*)

A new survey by the independent polling company Near East Consulting said that 57 per cent of its 1,200 Palestinian respondents said that they did not believe the Annapolis Conference would lead to progress in Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking, compared to 61 per cent in September. Seventy-one per cent said that they wanted President Abbas to attend the conference, down five percentage points from an October poll. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People adopted a [statement](#) on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 242 (1967), calling on the Council to act decisively in implementation of its own resolutions with respect to the question of Palestine, in particular resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). (*UN News Centre, UN press release GA/PAL/1067*)

Introducing Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's [report](#) on the protection of civilians in armed conflicts, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator John Holmes [said](#) that the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly Gaza, was reaching the limits of what was bearable for any community. The combination of access restrictions, economic deprivation, Israeli military incursions and aerial attacks, as well as intra-Palestinian violence, was driving the civilian population into a situation where the risk of provoking even more violence and tragedy was only too evident, he said. (*UN News Centre, UN press release SC/9174*)

UNDP Associate Administrator Ad Melkert ended a two-day visit to the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Mr. Melkert met with key counterparts to understand the magnitude of the development challenges facing the people of the OPT. Sixty-four per cent of the population lived in poverty and unemployment rates had reached alarming levels, with approximately one quarter of the labour force in the West Bank and over a third in the Gaza Strip not gainfully employed, with some of the highest levels in the youth population. As trade with Israel accounted for the majority of trade flows, restrictions on the movement and lack of effectiveness of products had deterred the growth of exports. In East Jerusalem, emerging figures pointed to increasing cracks in the social fabric of society, with around 35 per cent plus dropout rate from schools, high levels of crime and a lack of adequate housing and access to water and health care. ([www.undp.ps](http://www.undp.ps))

Israeli Government spokesperson Miri Eisin said Prime Minister Olmert had approved the transfer of 50 Russian-made military vehicles to the PA over the coming months as a gesture of goodwill towards President Abbas ahead of the Annapolis Conference. Half of the vehicles would be deployed in the coming months around Nablus, where several hundred Palestinian police were deployed with Israeli approval at the beginning of November, Ms. Eisin said, adding that the other half were to be deployed later in the south of the West Bank. "A few weeks ago Russia asked us to be able to deliver these vehicles to the Palestinian Authority solely in the West Bank and the Prime Minister accepted the request," she said. Delivery of the vehicles was first approved in 2005 by then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, but the plans were put on hold after Hamas won parliamentary elections in January 2006. (*AFP*)

The humanitarian agency Oxfam International said that there was an increasing risk to public health in Gaza as water and sanitation services had begun to buckle under the strain of Israel's restrictions on fuel, vital maintenance goods and spare parts into the area. According to Oxfam International's partner, the Coastal Municipalities Water Utilities, 15 per cent of Gaza's population, 225,000 people, was not receiving an adequate amount of drinking water due to the lack of diesel fuel. ([www.oxfam.org](http://www.oxfam.org))

Human Rights Watch said that Israel was preventing 670 students from leaving the Gaza Strip for university programs in countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Germany, Britain, and the United States. ([www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org))

21

Israeli forces arrested three Palestinians in Hebron and another in Al-Bireh. (*Wafa*)

The United States is inviting 49 countries, groups of nations, financial institutions and individuals to the Annapolis Conference. The United States will be represented by President Bush and Secretary of State Rice. Israel will be represented by Prime Minister Olmert and Foreign Minister Livni. The Palestinian side will be represented by President Abbas and senior officials. The United Nations will be represented by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The European Union will be represented by Portuguese Foreign Minister Luis Amado, whose country holds the EU Presidency, Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner, and High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana. Russia is expected to be represented by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. The Arab League will be represented by Secretary-General Amre Moussa. Quartet Representative Tony Blair and members of the Arab League Follow-up Committee tasked with pursuing the Arab Peace Initiative will also attend. Following is a list of the other invitees:

Members of the Arab League: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen, Iraq, Mauritania, Oman, the United Arab Emirates

Permanent Members of the Security Council not included above: Britain, China, France

Members of the Group of Eight industrialized countries not included above: Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan

Members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference not included above: Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Senegal, Turkey

Other countries: Brazil, Greece, India, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden

PA President Abbas said that talks with Israel were still under way to try to draw up a joint document for the Annapolis Conference. "We are still discussing the document with the Israelis, and we might finish today or later," Mr. Abbas said after talks with Jordan's King Abdullah II in Amman. "We are in last-minute negotiations, and there are problems and obstacles," a palace statement quoted Mr. Abbas as saying. (AFP)

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said that he would hold talks with the leaders of Jordan and the Palestinians in Sharm el-Sheik the following day. Efforts to bring Saudi King Abdullah and Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad to the gathering had failed apparently due to the ongoing political crisis in Lebanon. Mr. Mubarak was organizing the gathering ahead of an important Arab League ministerial meeting in Cairo, during which Arab countries are expected to announce whether they will attend the Annapolis Conference. For its part, Egypt confirmed its attendance in a statement, saying Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit would attend "within the framework of Egypt's enduring keenness to extend any possible support for the Palestinian cause." (AP)

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced plans to attend the Annapolis Conference, voicing hope that the event would provide the impetus for final status negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians. But in a [briefing](#) to an informal meeting of the General Assembly at UN Headquarters in New York, Mr. Ban said that he remained concerned by the prevailing humanitarian situation inside the Gaza Strip, where the economy had deteriorated, since many border crossings into Israel were closed earlier this year in response to intra-Palestinian fighting. The Secretary-General also planned to participate in a Quartet meeting in Washington on 26 November, his spokesperson Michele Montas said. (UN News Centre)

The Israeli Government permitted the renewal of flower and strawberry exports from the Gaza Strip to Europe through agricultural export terminals inside Israel. Agriculture Minister Shalom Simhon and Defence Minister Ehud Barak approved the measure after Palestinian farmers and Israeli exporters appealed to the High Court of Justice against them and Prime Minister Olmert. The exports came to a halt after the security cabinet declared the Gaza Strip a "hostile territory" in response to Qassam fire on the western Negev. Mr. Simhon was to send the details of the decision to PA Agriculture Minister Mahmoud Habash. (Ha'aretz)

Jerusalem's Mayor, Uri Lupolianski, announced a new plan to refurbish Arab neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem. "Through our actions, we will unify and strengthen Jerusalem," Mr. Lupolianski said at a news conference. He termed the initiative the "Marshall Plan for East Jerusalem" and said that it was meant to correct years of neglect. According to the plan, the city would invest around \$51 million in the central neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem, sprucing up the area's underdeveloped commercial centre, building parks and hotels, allowing more construction of businesses and homes, and creating closer links with Jewish areas of West Jerusalem, Mr. Lupolianski said. He added that planners had been at work on the projects for the past year but they were still in the early planning stages and needed approval from local and regional authorities, which could take months or years. (AP)

The Independent reported that sweeping security, fiscal and political reforms had been promised in the 33-page draft of a document to be presented to the international donors' conference in Paris next month, in the most detailed blueprint for the creation of a Palestinian State yet drawn up by the Government headed by Prime Minister Salam Fayyad. The plan, intended for endorsement by the donors' conference to be co-hosted by Quartet Envoy Tony Blair, is intended to go hand in hand with a peace process and a progressive easing of Israeli checkpoints and closures to allow an urgently required revival of the Palestinian private sector. It pledges that this part of the economy will be "thriving" and "open to markets around the world." The draft submission, circulated by PA Planning Minister Samir Abdullah, was intended to persuade the international community to provide financing over the three years from 2008 to 2010 of \$5.8 billion to help build a Palestinian State. (The Independent)

22

A Palestinian woman died in Gaza while awaiting approval to travel abroad for medical treatment, medical sources said. Laila Elewa, 51, suffered from cancer and needed medical treatment which was unavailable in the Gaza Strip. (Wafa)

Israel's Attorney-General, Menachem Mazuz, told the High Court of Justice that Israel was to begin gradually reducing power supply to the Gaza Strip on 2 December, in response to ongoing Qassam rocket fire at Israeli communities along the Strip. According to the State Prosecution, the Defence establishment had finalized preparations meant to ensure that the power reduction would not cause humanitarian hardship in Gaza. The Palestinians would be given a week's notice of the intent to begin reducing the power supply. On 19 November, the State Prosecution handed the court an affidavit asserting that Israel's decision to cut fuel supplies to the Gaza Strip would not violate its responsibility to provide humanitarian services to residents of the territory. (Ha'aretz)

Israel's Prime Minister Olmert said: "We have spent too much time dealing with the status quo but it will lead to results that are much worse than those of a failed conference. It will result in Hamas taking over Judea and Samaria [West Bank], to a weakening or even the disappearance of the moderate Palestinians. Unless a political horizon can be found, the results will be deadly." Mr. Olmert added, "The gap is such that intensive negotiations will be able to narrow them to the point of formulating an agreement." The negotiations, Mr. Olmert said, were expected to be difficult, but all the difficulties of conducting negotiations were familiar to him. "I am not approaching this with naiveté, but as a very sober person, who knows all [the Palestinians'] weaknesses." (Ha'aretz)

Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni told Ynetnews that the Israeli stance that the Annapolis Conference was the beginning of a diplomatic process for the establishment of two States for two people was now accepted by the entire world. "This was not a simple process, but as we approach the Annapolis Conference, our perception that the conference is not aimed at ending the process has been absorbed and is now accepted by everyone," Ms Livni said, adding, "Problems, dozens of years old, cannot be solved within a few days. This is a developing process which is now reaching the right lines, as far as Israel is concerned." She said, "The question now is not what Israel will give the Palestinians. The question now is which Arab countries will join the train whose engine is Annapolis." (Ynetnews)

At Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak hosted PA President Abbas and Jordan's King Abdullah II. According to an Egyptian Government spokesman, the American invitation to the Annapolis Conference was based on the principle "of land for peace and the Arab League Peace initiative." (Ha'aretz)

At the meeting of Foreign Ministers of the League of Arab States in Cairo, Syria's Foreign Minister Walid Moallem said that Arab States had demanded that the agenda of the Annapolis Conference included talks between Israel and Syria over the Golan Heights. According to Mr. Moallem, the League had sent a letter to Washington requesting that the conference include references to negotiations on the Golan Heights. PA President Abbas expressed his support for the Syrian demand during the meeting. (Ha'aretz)

At an informal gathering of 11 Arab Foreign Ministers ahead of their meeting in Cairo, the Secretary General of the Arab League, Amre Moussa told reporters that Arab countries would not offer Israel normalization for free during the Annapolis Conference. He said: "Arabs are going to participate in the [Annapolis] meeting, to show support for the Palestinians, based on the Arab Peace Initiative," (Ha'aretz, The Jerusalem Post)

23

Two Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces overnight in the north of the Gaza Strip. Sources said the two brothers in their forties, Talal and Rafat Abu Shrena, were trying to cross into Israel in search of work. The IDF confirmed that one of its units had opened fire and hit the two suspects who were approaching the security barrier between the Gaza Strip and Israel. Hospital sources also reported that a Palestinian fisherman, Rafat Al-Attar, was hit by Israeli fire while he was on his boat in the Sudania region in the northern Gaza Strip. (AFP, Ha'aretz)

PA President Abbas told the Arab Foreign Ministers' meeting in Cairo that Israel and the PA had failed to agree on a joint statement to be presented at next week's Annapolis Conference. At a briefing to the Foreign Ministers on the progress of talks between Israel and the PA, Mr. Abbas said that the negotiations were genuine, but that both sides stuck to their positions, and Israel brought about the talks' failure. (AFP, Ha'aretz)

Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister, Saud Al-Faisal, told reporters in Cairo that Saudi Arabia would attend the Annapolis Conference. He said, "I am not hiding any secret about the Saudi position. We were reluctant until today," adding "if not for the Arab consensus we felt today, we would not have decided to go," he said.

The Arab League meeting had been arranged to decide whether member countries would attend the Annapolis Conference. Mr. Al-Faisal confirmed that the Follow-Up Committee on the Arab Peace Initiative had agreed to attend the conference. (Asharq Al-Awsat, The Guardian)

Israel welcomed the decision of Saudi Arabia to attend next week's Annapolis Conference, calling it a positive development. "We hope that this is only the beginning and that we will see greater and broader Arab involvement in the peace process," said Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Mark Regev. "For this process to succeed, both Arabs and Israelis will have to take bold steps." (Ha'aretz)

In an interview on the 30th anniversary of the late President Anwar Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, Egypt's Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit said that if Israel moved forward with peace negotiations following the Annapolis Conference, Arab States would respond with positive steps. "Egypt is saying clearly, every step on the part of Israel will be met with a step. We will not ask you to first make full peace with the Palestinians before we move toward you," Mr. Aboul Gheit said.

Commenting on the Egyptian request to double the number of guards along the border with the Gaza Strip, which Israel had rejected, Mr. Aboul Gheit called on Israel

to reconsider. (*Ha'aretz*)

UNRWA's Director of Operations, John Ging, issued an appeal to British MPs to use their influence to try to alleviate the impact of indiscriminate and illegal Israeli sanctions in Gaza, which displayed "profound inhumanity" and were "serving the agenda of extremists". He said that "crushing sanctions" imposed since the Israeli Cabinet declared the Gaza Strip a "hostile territory" in September had contributed to truly appalling living conditions. Published in *The Independent*, Mr Ging's message was reinforced by a letter warning of the "increasingly desperate situation" in Gaza from major aid agencies, saying that 649 Palestinians had been killed this year, including 63 children. The figure included more than 330 killed in internal fighting. He said that UNRWA was unable to provide more than 61 per cent of the necessary calories to refugees. "At present we do not have sufficient funding to provide just one high nutrient biscuit to 200,000 children in UN schools," he said. (*The Independent*)

24

Three Qassam rockets were launched from the northern Gaza Strip against Israel. The rockets hit fields, causing no injuries or damage. (*Ha'aretz*)

25

IDF troops killed a Palestinian militant in Tulkarm, Palestinians and the army said. Palestinian officials identified the victim as Mohammed Qusah, head of the city's Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades. The troops wounded a second militant and took him to a hospital in Israel for treatment, the IDF said. Also, IDF troops killed five Palestinian militants in two separate incidents in the Gaza Strip. Three armed Palestinians were killed while approaching the Israel-Gaza border fence. Two were killed in an IDF raid in the central Gaza Strip. Local residents said that the two men were from the Maghazi refugee camp. A spokesman said that one of the men was a member of the Islamic Jihad and the other was aligned with the Popular Resistance Committees. (*Ha'aretz, Ynetnews*)

Syrian Information Minister Muhsen Bilal said that Syria will be represented at Annapolis by Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad. He also said that even though the delegation would not be headed by a foreign minister, "it is nonetheless an envoy who will come especially from Damascus and not an ambassador already stationed in the United States." Despite the presence of the Syrian contingent, "the conference is designed to discuss the Palestinian issue and that has to be the focus of attention," he added. (*Ha'aretz*)

In a [statement](#), US President Bush welcomed PA President Abbas, Israeli Prime Minister Olmert and representatives of 40 countries to the Annapolis Conference. US National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley said, "This is not a negotiation session. It is to launch a negotiation, and for the parties then to take the lead." (*AP, www.state.gov*)

Pope Benedict XVI urged the faithful to pray that the participants in this week's Middle East summit find the "wisdom and courage" necessary to bring peace to the Holy Land. The Pope made the appeal from the steps of St. Peter's Basilica after celebrating a mass with 23 new cardinals. He noted that the US Conference of Catholic Bishops had called for a day of prayer for the success of the summit. (*AP*)

Survey results released by the Palestinian Centre for Public Opinion showed that 67.6 per cent of Palestinians living in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, to some degree, support the participation of the Palestinian leadership in the Annapolis Conference. The poll, which was conducted in late October and early November, also showed that Palestinians were divided about the prospects for success at the conference. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

26

The IDF killed at least four Hamas members in two separate incidents in the northern Gaza Strip. In the first incident, an Israeli Air Force aircraft launched a missile strike on militants at a mortar firing pad in Beit Hanoun. One militant was wounded in the incident and at least two others were killed. In the second incident, which occurred near the Beit Hanoun (Erez) crossing, two other militants were killed by IDF fire on the ground. The two were suspected of preparing an explosive device targeting IDF troops patrolling the area. (*AFP, Ha'aretz*)

Palestinian security forces arrested 11 members of Hamas in West Bank cities overnight. In a statement to the press, Hamas said that the majority of the detentions took place in Nablus, Hebron, Tulkarm and Jericho. Palestinian security forces said that the detentions were related to security issues. (*Xinhua*)

A member of Hamas' Al-Qassam Brigades, Abdul Hadi Abu Al-Jabin, died of wounds sustained two weeks before in fighting with Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip.

(*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces arrested 12 Palestinians, including 6 Hamas members, in the village of Zawata, west of Nablus. Israeli forces had earlier arrested a Hamas member in Jericho. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli settlers broke into the courtyard of the Qurtuba school for girls in Hebron and attempted to set fire to the school building. The school's principal, Reem Ash-Shareef, said that Israelis from the nearby "Beit Hadassah" outpost also attempted to rip the doors off the building and succeeded in knocking over walls, trampling flower beds, and blocking the path to the school with rocks. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Hamas sources said that the majority of Hamas detainees arrested by the PA security forces in the West Bank since June had been released. Not a single Hamas detainee had been put on trial so far, according to the same source. The PA said that it had released three Hamas members from prison a day earlier. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The Israeli military court at the Ofer prison in the West Bank ordered the detention of former PA Minister of Public Works and Housing Abdel Rahman Zeidan for a further six months. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice met with Israeli and Palestinian negotiators to try to bridge gaps between them before the Annapolis Conference. Ms. Rice, Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and former PA Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia were making another effort to agree on a joint document for the meeting. Yasser Abed Rabbo, a senior aide to PA President Abbas, said, "We will reach a joint paper today or tomorrow. There is a persistent American effort to have this statement." (*AP, BBC*)

Secretary-General of the League of Arab States Amre Moussa said, before leaving for Annapolis, that the League's decision to send its Foreign Ministers to the conference did not mean normalizing relations with Israel. Sixteen Arab States would attend the conference, most of them members of the Follow-up Committee established to promote the Arab Peace Initiative. (*Ha'aretz*)

Fatah leader Jibril Rajoub said that the Annapolis Conference would be "pointless" if the US Administration did not insist on a firm timetable and mechanism for the creation of a Palestinian State. He said that the Israeli negotiators would try to avoid "their commitments towards the international and regional dimensions for the peace process, relying on the US adopting a double-standard policy in addressing the Arab-Israeli conflict." He said that Syria's participation was "important" but predicted that progress on the Syrian front was equally unlikely. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A Hamas-sponsored conference opened in Gaza City in opposition to the Annapolis Conference. The Islamic Jihad, the Popular Resistance Committees and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine joined the conference in addition to academics. Meanwhile, a document was signed by former Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, acting Palestinian Legislative Council Speaker Ahmad Bahar and the rest of Hamas' Change and Reform parliamentary bloc. The document called for the "adherence to inalienable Palestinian principles, and refusal to surrender Palestinian rights at the Annapolis summit." It also insisted on the right of return for Palestine refugees. It further said, "... the Road Map or Annapolis summit will not result in stability because such agreement can only stabilize the Israeli security at the expense of our nation and our people's rights. ... Therefore we warn of the dangers resulting from this Conference ..." (*Ma'an News Agency, Xinhua*)

The US State Department issued a list of the heads of delegations participating in the Annapolis Conference. (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2007/nov/95661.htm>)

The Quartet issued the following statement in Washington, D.C.:

The Quartet principals – Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, High Representative for European Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, Portuguese Foreign Minister Luis Amado and European Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner – met today in Washington to discuss the situation in the Middle East ahead of the upcoming Annapolis Conference. They were joined by Quartet Representative Tony Blair.

The Quartet expressed strong support for the 27 November Annapolis Conference. It welcomed the commitment of the Israeli and Palestinians leaders to launch bilateral negotiations towards the establishment of a Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza, and the realization of Israeli-Palestinian peace. This reflects the results of months of work by the parties and by the Quartet, including the Quartet's engagement with members of the Arab League Follow-Up



Committee to expand the circle of support for peace. The Quartet welcomed the parties' continuing efforts to fulfil their respective commitments under Phase One of the Road Map and urged the international community to provide robust support for all the parties' efforts. The principals took note of the broad international support for the Annapolis Conference and looked forward to the December Paris Donors' Conference to muster international financial backing for efforts to build the foundation for a viable and prosperous Palestinian State. The Quartet agreed to remain closely involved, and to that end will meet again in December, and looks forward to inviting members of the Arab League Follow-Up Committee to attend.

The Quartet affirmed its commitment to seize this opportunity to mobilize international support to achieve meaningful progress towards a just and lasting negotiated settlement to this conflict, and ultimately a comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

(UN press release SG/2133)

27

Hamas said that two of its militants had been killed near the Jabalya refugee camp in northern Gaza. An IDF spokeswoman said that troops had shot two Palestinians trying to plant an explosive near the border fence. In a separate incident, a civilian was killed by Israeli gunfire near the Sufa border crossing in southern Gaza, said Palestinian medical staff. The army said troops in the area had shot at a person acting suspiciously and crawling towards them. (Reuters)

Israeli forces arrested three Palestinians in Jerusalem and another in Qalqilya. (Wafa)

The military wing of the Popular Resistance Committees, the Al-Nasser Salah Brigades, claimed responsibility for launching three mortar shells at an Israeli military post east of Gaza City, two home-made projectiles at another military post, three projectiles at the southern Israeli town of Sderot, and two projectiles at the Israeli cities of Ashkelon and Kfar Azza. The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades claimed responsibility for launching a home-made projectile at an Israeli military base east of Deir Al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip. (Ma'an News Agency)

A Palestinian was wounded when an Israeli missile struck a police station in the southern Gaza Strip. Meanwhile, 18-year-old Muhammad Abu Hadayid was wounded by shrapnel from an Israeli artillery shell near the Kerem Shalom (Karim Abu Salim) crossing, in the Gaza Strip. (Ma'an News Agency)

Palestinian security services arrested seven Hamas members across the West Bank, Hamas announced in a statement. Five members were seized in Nablus, one in Jericho and one in Bethlehem. (Ma'an News Agency)

The Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine claimed responsibility for launching two home-made projectiles at Sderot.

(Ma'an News Agency)

A huge rally was held in the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip against the Annapolis Conference, which Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh insisted was "doomed to failure."

Smaller demonstrations were held in the West Bank. Several protests were violently dispersed by police, who fired bullets above protestors' heads, beat people with sticks and arrested dozens of others. Reporters covering the protests were also harassed by police. (AP)

A Palestinian demonstrator was killed during a protest against the Annapolis Conference in Hebron that drew fire from Palestinian security forces, local medics said.

Medical workers said that the 35-year-old killed had been shot in the chest and that 15 other protestors had been injured during clashes with security forces who were trying to disperse the rally. Witnesses said security forces shot the man. A police spokesman denied responsibility. (Reuters)

US President Bush said at the Annapolis Conference: "We meet to lay the foundation for the establishment of a new nation – a democratic Palestinian State that will live side by side with Israel in peace and security. We meet to help bring an end to the violence that has been the true enemy of the aspirations of both the Israelis and Palestinians." Mr. Bush then read out a joint understanding agreed on by the Israeli and Palestinian leaders:

"The representatives of the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization, represented respectively by Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, and President Mahmoud Abbas in his capacity as Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee and President of the Palestinian Authority, have convened in Annapolis, Maryland, under the auspices of President George W. Bush of the United States of America, and with the support of the participants of this international conference, having concluded the following joint understanding.

We express our determination to bring an end to bloodshed, suffering and decades of conflict between our peoples; to usher in a new era of peace, based on freedom, security, justice, dignity, respect and mutual recognition; to propagate a culture of peace and non-violence; to confront terrorism and incitement, whether committed by Palestinians or Israelis. In furtherance of the goal of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security, we agree to immediately launch good-faith bilateral negotiations in order to conclude a peace treaty, resolving all outstanding issues, including all core issues without exception, as specified in previous agreements.

We agree to engage in vigorous, ongoing and continuous negotiations, and shall make every effort to conclude an agreement before the end of 2008. For this purpose, a steering committee, led jointly by the head of the delegation of each party, will meet continuously, as agreed. The steering committee will develop a joint work plan and establish and oversee the work of negotiations teams to address all issues, to be headed by one lead representative from each party. The first session of the steering committee will be held on 12 December 2007.

President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert will continue to meet on a bi-weekly basis to follow up the negotiations in order to offer all necessary assistance for their advancement.

The parties also commit to immediately implement their respective obligations under the performance-based road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, issued by the Quartet on 30 April 2003 – this is called the road map – and agree to form an American, Palestinian and Israeli mechanism, led by the United States, to follow up on the implementation of the road map.

The parties further commit to continue the implementation of the ongoing obligations of the road map until they reach a peace treaty. The United States will monitor and judge the fulfillment of the commitment of both sides of the road map. Unless otherwise agreed by the parties, implementation of the future peace treaty will be subject to the implementation of the road map, as judged by the United States."

(AP, [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov))

After President Bush's remarks at the Annapolis Conference, PA President Abbas said, "Peace and freedom is a right for us, just as peace and security is a right for you and us.... It is time for the circle of blood, violence and occupation to end. It is time for us to look at the future together with confidence and hope. It is time for this tortured land that has been called the land of love and peace to live up to its name." Mr. Olmert promised that the negotiations would address all the issues that thus far had been evaded. "We will not avoid any subject. ... While this will be an extremely difficult process for many of us, it is nevertheless inevitable. I know it. Many of my people know it. We are ready for it," Mr. Olmert said. Speaking directly to the Arabs at the Conference without relations with Israel, Mr. Olmert said, "It is time to end the boycott and alienation toward the State of Israel.... We no longer and you no longer have the privilege of clinging to dreams which are disconnected from the suffering of our peoples." (AP, [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov))

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told the Annapolis Conference that it was time to "abandon piecemeal approaches" to resolving the Middle East conflict and start final status negotiations that dealt with all the issues in dispute. Mr. Ban said final status talks must "begin in earnest" and deal with such issues as Jerusalem, refugees, the borders, West Bank settlements, security and water. "The broad outlines of solutions to these issues are clear. ... There is no reason they cannot be resolved in 2008," Mr. Ban said in his speech. He called on the international community to help the Palestinian Authority "to rebuild, reform and perform," and also stressed the need for the situation on the ground to "improve, rapidly and visibly." "Without implementing long-standing commitments under the Road Map and the Agreement on Movement and Access, the diplomatic process cannot succeed. Progress requires parallel action and clear monitoring," he said. (UN News Centre)



US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, in her opening remarks at the Annapolis Conference said, "One of our most important goals today is to define as clearly as possible how our support for peace will proceed the day after Annapolis, just as the parties have described to us how they will embark on sustained efforts together to resolve their differences." ([www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov))

In a [statement](#), the EU Presidency (Portugal) welcomed "the pledge made by the Parties of reaching an agreement before the end of 2008 and underlines the importance of follow-up mechanisms." The Presidency reiterated "the EU's engagement to further strengthen its ongoing programmes to foster the economic and financial development of a future Palestinian State through the continuation of assistance and in close cooperation with the Quartet Representative. In this regard, it emphasizes the importance of the Paris Donors' Conference, in December, which represents an essential complement to the political process launched in Annapolis." ([www.eu2007.pt](http://www.eu2007.pt))

In her closing remarks at the Annapolis Conference, US Secretary of State Rice said, "With Annapolis behind us, we will now focus urgently on the next steps that are necessary from the international community. This will be one of the topics that we will discuss in upcoming meetings with our Quartet partners ... on or around 17 December. On or round that same day, the French Government will host a donors' conference in Paris to support Palestinian reform and institution building. ... Peace between Israelis and Palestinians is a national interest for the United States, and we now have a real opportunity to make progress..." ([www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)) UNRWA Commissioner-General Karen AbuZayd called for ending the Israeli constraints on free movement in the West Bank. She said that the Israeli checkpoints hampered UNRWA activity and threatened the lives of the Palestinians." ([Wafa](http://Wafa))

The United States called on Israel to fully implement an agreement allowing Palestinian Red Crescent ambulances into the Palestinian territory and through Israeli checkpoints. John Bellinger, legal adviser at the US State Department, who headed the US delegation to the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, also said that the Israeli relief organization Magen David Adom and the Palestinian Red Crescent were close to reaching an agreement for Palestinian ambulances to enter Jerusalem. "We have been urging the Israeli Government at the highest levels to cut through the red tape, still in accordance with their laws, but to try to move as quickly as possible to help the societies work out the agreement for the operation of these ambulances," Mr. Bellinger told a news conference in Geneva. ([Reuters](http://Reuters))

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Israeli Air Force missiles killed two Hamas naval police in a security position in the southern Gaza Strip, a Palestinian security force said. At least 10 other people were wounded. The IDF spokesperson confirmed that there had been an air strike at a Hamas position near Khan Yunis after militants had fired 11 mortar shells and Qassam rockets at nearby Israeli communities. One of the shells hit Kerem Shalom, causing damage to a structure there. Two other shells struck south of Kibbutz Erez. ([Ha'aretz](http://Ha'aretz), [Ma'an News Agency](http://Ma'an News Agency))

Palestinian police in the West Bank clashed with mourners at the funeral of a man killed during protests against the Annapolis Conference. Witnesses said that police shot into the air to disperse hundreds of mourners at the funeral in Hebron. At least 24 people were reported injured, one seriously, and a number of people were arrested. ([BBC](http://BBC), [Ha'aretz](http://Ha'aretz))

US President Bush invited PA President Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Olmert to the White House to ceremonially inaugurate formal, direct negotiations. On the Annapolis Conference, which President Bush described as "a hopeful beginning", he said: "One thing I have assured both gentlemen is that the United States will be actively engaged in the process... We will use our power to help you as you come up with the necessary decisions to lay out a Palestinian State that will live side by side in peace with Israel." ([AP](http://AP), [BBC](http://BBC), [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov))

In Washington, PA President Abbas said that the Annapolis Conference put back on track prospects for an independent Palestinian State after a seven-year hiatus.

He said, "The result we reached makes us optimistic. We came with an aim and we think we have attained it". ([AFP](http://AFP))

In Washington, Israel's Prime Minister Olmert said, "If the day comes when the two-State solution collapses, and we face a South African-style struggle for equal voting rights (also for the Palestinians in the territories), then, as soon as that happens, the State of Israel is finished." He added, "The Jewish organizations, which were our power base in America, will be the first to come out against us... because they will say they cannot support a State that does not support democracy and equal voting rights for all its residents." According to Mr. Olmert, Israel has a partner in President Abbas, adding "it is my job to do everything so that he receives the tools, and to reach an understanding on the guidelines for an agreement. Annapolis is not a historic turning point, but it is a point that can be of assistance." ([Ha'aretz](http://Ha'aretz))

Israel's Prime Minister Olmert said that Israel's sovereignty over the Al-Haram Al-Sharif (Temple Mount) was not up for discussion, adding that what occurred in Annapolis and Washington over the last two days had no bearing on the status of the holy site. ([The Jerusalem Post](http://The Jerusalem Post))

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announced the appointment of Marine Corps Gen. James Jones, former NATO Supreme Allied Commander, as her new Special Envoy for Middle East Security. Gen. Jones, who ended his 40-year career in the Marines in February, had been president of the US Chamber of Commerce's Institute for Energy since March. ([AP](http://AP), [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov))

The Israeli Cabinet was expected to approve the establishment of a "negotiations administration" that would include 14 working groups, before negotiations start on 12 December. The Israeli negotiating team had recommended re-establishing a body to oversee the negotiations, similar to that established seven years earlier by then Prime Minister Ehud Barak for the Camp David and Taba talks. ([Ha'aretz](http://Ha'aretz))

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said, "All [participants of the Annapolis conference] hailed our readiness to organize the next meeting in Moscow. Of course, we have yet to agree on its date and agenda." A donors' conference scheduled in Paris on 17 November would address "a plan reforming Palestinians institutions," he said. Russia would take part in this conference and make its own contribution "to the resolution of problems related to the establishment and efficient work of Palestinian institutions," he added. ([www.interfax.ru](http://www.interfax.ru))

Jordan's King Abdullah II told visiting US senators in Amman that it was vital to "keep up the momentum" in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. ([Petra](http://Petra))

British Foreign Secretary David Miliband told the House of Commons, "The [Annapolis] conference represents a determined attempt by both sides, and by the United States, to break the cycle of violence and discord. Its significance comes as much from the attendance list as from its results." ([AP](http://AP))

Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said that Arab nations, including Syria, had made a mistake by attending the Annapolis Conference. He said that Israel was doomed to "collapse" and "will not survive." ([AP](http://AP))

Syrian newspaper *Al-Baath* said that the Annapolis Conference could "achieve a lot if the US decides to restore its supposed role and make an effort to cover up the defeats, bitterness, and catastrophes of its foreign policy." Another Syrian newspaper, *Tishrin*, said that the Conference was a "chance to test the seriousness of the US administration to make peace." ([AP](http://AP))

Egypt's Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit said that Arab States would respond favourably to an Israeli freeze on settlements in the West Bank. "If Israel were to negotiate with the Palestinians with good intentions and start demonstrating intentions to reach an agreement, the Arab side would respond positively to it," he said. ([Ha'aretz](http://Ha'aretz))

Cardinal Renato Martino, head of the Vatican department that formulates refugee policy, said, "Palestinian refugees, like all other refugees, have a right to return to their homeland." The Vatican had sent a delegation to the Annapolis Conference. ([Ha'aretz](http://Ha'aretz))

At a press conference in Brussels, UNRWA Commissioner-General Karen Koning AbuZayd said that more political pressure was needed to resolve the split between Fatah and Hamas. When asked whether she felt a peace process that did not include Hamas was viable, she replied, "I don't think it's viable at all and I think that's what the Palestinians themselves are saying, including the Palestinian authorities in Ramallah." She said that following the Annapolis Conference and the donors' meeting in Paris, "we will have to be thinking about how to bring Gaza into the whole process". ([Reuters](http://Reuters))

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Hamas said that two of its fighters had been killed by Israeli artillery fire and two died trying to ambush an Israeli force in Khan Yunis. ([Ma'an News Agency](http://Ma'an News Agency))

PA security forces detained three members of Hamas in the West Bank, Hamas said in a statement. ([Ma'an News Agency](http://Ma'an News Agency))

Israel's President Shimon Peres said: "Many people thought [Annapolis] would end with nothing, but from the impossible, we achieved something," adding, however, that "there is still a long way to go, and it won't be simple." Mr. Peres said that for Israel, it was important because Israel had "won both time and identification. The attendance was a demonstration by a better part of the world to bring the conflict to an end." (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The Secretary-General informed the Security Council of his intention to appoint Robert H. Serry of the Netherlands as the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and his Personal Representative to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority. In this capacity, Mr. Serry will be the Envoy of the Secretary-General to the Quartet. (*UN News Centre*)

Secretary-General Ban appointed Vladimir Goryayev of the Russian Federation as Executive Director of the Office of the United Nations Register of Damage caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. (*UN News Centre, UN press release SG/A/1110-PAL/2092*)

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed at United Nations Headquarters in New York and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution [32/40 B](#) of 2 December 1977. At Headquarters, a special meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was held in observance of the Day. Statements were made, *inter alia*, by the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the President of the General Assembly, the [Secretary-General](#), the President of the Security Council, and the Secretary-General of the Executive Committee of the PLO, on behalf of PA President Abbas. (*UN News Centre*)

PA President Abbas told a rally in Tunis: "The time of extravagant promises by one rival trying to outbid another must go without a return. Now is a moment of truth [for Palestinian statehood], not one of illusion. The stark truth says that the whole world recognized our Palestinian State with its East Jerusalem as its capital." (*Reuters*)

Hamas called on the United Nations to rescind General Assembly resolution 181 (II), which brought about the founding of Israel, Israel's *Army Radio* reported.

Hamas said in a statement: "It is not shameful to correct a mistake. Palestine is Arab-Islamic land from the river to the sea, including Jerusalem, and Jews have no place there". (*Ha'aretz*)

King Abdullah II of Jordan talked to President Bush over the telephone and urged a resumption of peace talks on all tracks that lead to an end to Israel's occupation of all Arab lands, according to a Royal Court statement. (*DPA*)

The United States asked the Security Council to support a resolution endorsing the Annapolis Joint Understanding by Israeli and Palestinian leaders. US Permanent Representative Zalmay Khalilzad told reporters, after closed-door discussions on the draft resolution, that "there was enormous support" for the decisions made by PA President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert at the Annapolis Conference. (*AP*)

The Assembly of oil and gas companies owners in the Gaza Strip decided to stop receiving their daily fuel allocation in protest at Israel's reduction of the quantity of fuel sent to Gaza. (*Wafa*)

"Fatah will not remain idle in the face of an Israeli invasion of the Gaza Strip," a senior Fatah official in Gaza City said on conditions of anonymity. "We will definitely fight together with Hamas against the Israeli army. It is our duty to defend our people against the occupiers. The homeland is more important than all our differences." (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Israel's Supreme Court requested that the State grant four terminally sick Gazans unhindered passage to Jordan via Israel. In their decision, the judges wrote that "even if we were dealing with wicked people, no one has any right to prevent them from gaining access to life-saving treatment." The decision was delivered in the case of a petition presented by Doctors for Human Rights. (*Ynetnews*)

"What Olmert said [regarding the Temple Mount being non-negotiable] is absolutely false. I think he is not yet ready to tell the Israeli public and is waiting for the right time and he fears his coalition with religious extremists will fall apart if he announces it now," said a senior Palestinian negotiator on condition his name be withheld. He said that both sides had agreed that the Al-Haram Al-Sharif (Temple Mount) would be given to joint Egypt, Jordan and PA control. (*Ynetnews*)

The right-wing Ne'emanei Eretz Israel settler movement announced that it planned to establish three new outposts in the West Bank in response to the Annapolis Conference. (*Ynetnews*)

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More than 30 Israeli military vehicles invaded the Balata refugee camp near Nablus. Palestinian sources said that no one was seized during the incursion, but the Israeli army claimed to have detained two Palestinians. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Fatah said that Hamas-affiliated gunmen had kidnapped three leaders of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades in the Gaza Strip. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A group of fighters with the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, attempting to launch a rocket, survived an Israeli sea and air attack in the Gaza Strip, the Brigades said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Three bombs were found on Palestinian teenagers at an Israeli checkpoint near Nablus. (*Ha'aretz*)

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, the military wing of Fatah, claimed responsibility for launching three rocket-propelled grenades against an Israeli military base opposite the town of Al-Qarara in the southern Gaza Strip. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Palestinians threw a Molotov cocktail and stones at an Israeli car near Nablus. (*Ha'aretz*)

Palestinians fired five mortar shells at Israel; all landed inside the Gaza Strip. (*Ha'aretz*)

Israel's Supreme Court ruled that the Israeli Government can continue cutting fuel supplies to residents of the Gaza Strip but must postpone an electricity cut planned for next week. "We were not convinced that the decision to limit the amount of fuel transferred to the Gaza Strip harms, at this point, vital humanitarian needs in the Strip," the three-judge panel wrote in their decision. (*AP*)

Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit urged Israel to take serious measures to build confidence with the Palestinians after the Annapolis Conference, the *MENA* news agency reported. Israel should prove its seriousness by accepting a timetable for negotiations, creating a follow-up mechanism for peace talks, halting all settlement activities and releasing more Palestinian prisoners. (*AP*)

Palestinians in the Gaza Strip will be able to make the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca this year despite Israel's complete closure of the border crossings, Hussein Ash-Sheikh, an official with the PA Interior Ministry, said. Pilgrims would be allowed to leave through Israeli-controlled Erez (Beit Hanoun) border crossing on 4 and 5 December. He also said that a pre-approved list of Gaza Strip residents would be allowed to travel to Egypt for work, study, and medical treatment on 2 December. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Palestinian prisoners in Israel went on a hunger strike marking the 40 days that had passed since the killing of an inmate in Ketziot prison. In a statement the prisoners said that they were also protesting the Israeli reluctance to improve living conditions in the prisons. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli former State Prosecutor Talia Sasson, the author of a Government report on unauthorized settlement outposts, warned the Government against approving a new Justice Ministry proposal that would allow State funding for the outposts. In her letter to the Ministerial Committee on Unauthorized Outposts, which was formed to implement her report on the subject, Talia Sasson says the proposal would constitute "a clear and immediate violation of the Prime Minister's prior commitments to the President of the United States." (*Ha'aretz*)

During a Labour Party meeting, Israel's Defence Minister Barak said: "There is a silent majority that wants peace but the public is realistic. The problem is not with us. While I am indeed head of the peace camp, I am also responsible for the security of Israeli citizens." (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People issued a [statement](#) welcoming the holding of the Annapolis Conference and the Joint Understanding reached by Israeli Prime Minister Olmert and PA President Abbas. (*UN News Centre, UN press release GA/PAL/1070*)