

Division for Palestinian Rights

Chronological Review of Events Relating to the Question of Palestine

Monthly media monitoring review
May 2011

Monthly highlights

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- In major Middle East policy speech, President Obama says borders of Israel and Palestine should be based on the 1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps ([19 May](#))
- Council of the European Union calls for an urgent resumption of direct negotiations leading to a comprehensive solution of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process ([23 May](#))
- Palestine Investment Fund announces establishment of a \$1 billion investment fund for the reconstruction of Gaza ([26 May](#))
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- Spain announces recognition of a Palestinian State before September ([31 May](#))

1

Israeli soldiers assaulted two Palestinian workers trying to enter Jerusalem near an eastern checkpoint. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Hamas Deputy Political Bureau Chief Moussa Abu Marzouq was quoted as saying that Hamas would not recognize Israel's right to exist despite the agreement to form a Palestinian unity government. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The Party of European Socialists and the Socialists and Democrats Group in the European Parliament issued a joint statement welcoming Palestinian unity as a "brave step" on the path to recognition of statehood by the European Union. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Egyptian Foreign Minister Nabil Elaraby urged the US to support the declaration of an independent Palestinian State following reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah. (*BBC*)

Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal arrived in Cairo as head of a Hamas delegation, ahead of a meeting with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, who had arrived in the Egyptian capital earlier in the week. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel said that it had suspended tax transfers to the Palestinians in response to the PA President's agreement to forge an alliance with Hamas. Israeli Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz said that he had suspended a routine handover of 300 million shekels (\$88 million) in customs and other levies that Israel collected on behalf of the Palestinians. Asked about Israel's decision, member of the PLO Executive Committee Saeb Erakat said: "Israel has started a war even before the formation of the Government." PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad urged foreign powers to intervene. *(Reuters)*

Israeli and Palestinian business leaders shook hands in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem, as they pledged to create the Jerusalem Arbitration Centre. The Centre, which would be overseen by the International Court of Arbitration of the International Chamber of Commerce, could be running as soon as February 2012. *(The Jerusalem Post)*

Israeli forces attacked a non-violent protest near Qalqilya, injuring several international activists including a 60-year old American woman, who was hit in the head by shrapnel. Three international peace activists were arrested by Israeli forces and faced deportation and probable 10-year bans on travelling to Israel. *(IMEMC)*

2

Israeli forces had detained five "wanted" Palestinians overnight, the IDF said. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

Israeli forces, for unknown reasons, closed the village of Nabi Saleh, shutting down entrances with road blocks and restricting movement of residents. Eyewitnesses reported that dozens of soldiers entered the village and clashed with local youths who hurled stones at them. Military jeeps remained stationed at the entrances to the village well into the following morning, local residents said, who feared that several pending home demolition orders were about to be executed. *(Ma'an News Agency, IMEMC)*

Amid concerns over the Fatah-Hamas reconciliation agreement, Israel's defence establishment was reconsidering its approval to allow a battalion of Palestinian security forces to travel later this month to Jordan for training by the US. *(The Jerusalem Post)*

The IDF was preparing to significantly bolster its forces near West Bank towns and villages ahead of the *Nakba* Day events scheduled to take place on 15 May. *(Xinhua)*

The PA over the weekend launched a diplomatic campaign aimed at persuading the international community to support the Hamas-Fatah unity deal. *(The Jerusalem Post)*

PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad said that Israel's decision to withhold Palestinian tax revenue over the announcement of Palestinian unity would not deter reconciliation efforts. "The Palestinian Authority will never accept division as the price of financial support," Mr. Fayyad told reporters in Ramallah. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal met with Egypt's Security Chief, Murad Muwafi. They discussed the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the region and the Palestinian unity deal. *(IMEMC)*

Hamas leader Mahmoud Al-Zahhar said that the next PA Prime Minister should come from Gaza. He told *Al-Hayat* that leadership positions must be divided between the two territories. *(AP)*

French President Nicolas Sarkozy said in an interview with *L'Express* magazine: "If the peace process is still dead in September, France will face up to its responsibilities on the central question of recognition of a Palestinian State. ... The idea that there is still plenty of time is dangerous.

Things have to be brought to a conclusion [before September]." Mr. Sarkozy said European powers planned in the next few months "to relaunch the peace process along with the Americans, because Europe cannot be the main one paying for Palestine and yet remain a minor figure politically in the matter." *(AFP)*

Palestinian billionaire Munib al-Masri, who helped mediate the Hamas-Fatah unity pact, said that the Gaza leadership was willing to agree to a comprehensive peace deal based on the 1967 borders. *(Ynetnews)*

For the first time in five years, Fatah and Hamas will form a joint committee to prepare commemoration events for the *Nakba* Memorial Day. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

Israel, following the intervention of senior US officials, will transfer about \$89 million in tax revenue to the PA, Israeli officials said. *(Haaretz, UPI)*

Conditions for those seeking passage through Rafah remained stringent, requiring registration and documentation weeks in advance. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

Renowned conductor Daniel Barenboim was to conduct an orchestra of European musicians in a "peace concert" in Gaza City. The rare concert, which would take place the following day, at lunchtime, at the Al-Mathaf Cultural House, was announced in a statement by the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO). *(AFP)*

Richard Falk, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, said in a statement that the rapidly deteriorating human rights situation as a result of the prolonged Israeli occupation "disproportionately and adversely affects children". "Throughout the occupied Palestinian territory, the situation of human rights of children remains dire. The policies of land confiscation, expansion of settlements, home demolitions and forced displacement of families, revocation of residency permits and restrictions have a greater impact on children," he added. Mr. Falk made his remarks in a press conference in Amman on 2 May, following a visit to Jordan and Egypt to assess the human rights situation of the Palestinian population living in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. He also noted that 226 children remained in Israeli detention, including 45 in the 12 to 15 age bracket, and called on the international community to compel Israel to comply with its international human rights obligations and end the occupation. *(www.ohchr.org)*

3

A Palestinian was shot as Israeli soldiers raided Al-Uroob refugee camp in the north of Hebron. According to local sources, several military vehicles invaded the camp, claiming that an Israeli vehicle passing near the camp had been stoned by Palestinian youths. *(The Palestine Telegraph)*

Israeli troops arrested seven Palestinian civilians, among them two children, during incursions into a number of West Bank communities in Bethlehem, Nablus, Salfit and Jericho. *(IMEMC)*

Representatives of 13 factions, including Fatah and Hamas, as well as independent political figures, inked a reconciliation deal in Cairo. A formal signing ceremony would be held on 4 May and attended by Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal and PA President Abbas. Among the first tasks to be tackled would be the formation of a government and the establishment of a higher security council tasked with examining ways to integrate

Hamas and Fatah rival security forces and create a "professional" security service. The accord also calls for the creation of an electoral tribunal and for the release of a number of prisoners held by the rival movements in jails in the West Bank and Gaza. (AFP)

While Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh announced that he would be willing to resign as soon as a transitional government was formed, PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad said that it was for "Palestinian consensus" to determine whether he would remain in office. (AFP)

According to press reports, Damascus-based Hamas was looking for a new host, following the anti-Government uprising in the Syrian Arab Republic and the resulting strained relations between Hamas and the Syrian Government. Hamas officials acknowledged that relations with Syrian officials had been tense but denied rumours they would be leaving Damascus. (The New York Times)

During a meeting with Quartet Representative Tony Blair, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, "I call on [President Abbas] to annul the agreement with Hamas immediately and choose the path of peace with Israel. ... The agreement between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas is a hard blow to the peace process." Mr. Netanyahu's office said that he would make similar remarks during his meetings in London and Paris with British Prime Minister David Cameron and French President Nicolas Sarkozy. (www.pmo.gov.il)

British Foreign Secretary William Hague, who is currently visiting Egypt, said during a press conference with the Egyptian Foreign Minister Nabil Elaraby that they had held "in-depth discussions about the search for a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We renew our calls on both sides to commit to peace talks, leading to a Palestinian State that exists in peace and security alongside Israel. Britain hopes that the announcement of reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas will lead to the formation of a government that rejects violence and pursues a negotiated peace, and we will judge a future Palestinian Government by its actions and its readiness to work for peace." (www.fco.gov.uk)

PA Prime Minister Fayyad urged members of the European diplomatic corps in Ramallah to pressure Israel to release over \$100 million of monthly revenues Israel had collected on behalf of Palestinians for the PA to be able to function normally. (Wafa)

Around 260 truckloads of goods and limited amounts of cooking gas would be permitted into Gaza by the Israeli crossings authority. The goods, which would also include 12 loads of construction materials for projects sponsored by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), would enter via Kerem Shalom crossing. (Ma'an News Agency)

Ultra-orthodox settlers raided the West Bank town of Huwwara and according to the residents set fire to the prayer hall in the local school. Local residents reported the incident after hundreds of settlers entered Nablus heading to Joseph's Tomb for prayer. (Ma'an News Agency, Haaretz)

The Israeli Prime Minister's Office decided to postpone consideration of plans to build 930 homes in the "Har Homa" settlement and dozens in the "Pisgat Ze'ev" settlement in East Jerusalem, ahead of Mr. Netanyahu's trip to Washington, D.C. (Ynetnews)

Dozens of settlers assaulted a group of Palestinian construction workers in Hebron's city centre. (Ma'an News Agency)

A settler from "Alia" tried to stab a Palestinian farmer near Qaryut village, south of Nablus, according to a Palestinian official. The farmer fled, but the settler slashed the farmer's tractor. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli forces detained Palestinian Legislative Council member Ali Romanin at his home in Al-Ouja village north of Jericho. The legislator, elected with the Hamas Change and Reform Bloc, was released in October 2010 after more than four years in an Israeli prison. (Ma'an News Agency)

4

Israeli soldiers attacked with gas bombs and rubber bullets a non-violent procession of residents celebrating the signing of the Palestinian unity agreement in Nabi Saleh village near Nablus. (IMEMC)

Fatah and Hamas leaders formally ended their four-year rift at a ceremony in Egypt. "We announce to Palestinians that we turn forever the black page of division," PA President Abbas said in his opening address. Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal did not share the podium with Mr. Abbas and the ceremony was delayed briefly over where he would sit. Against expectations, neither signed the unity document. Deputy Hamas leader Moussa Abu Marzouq said after the ceremony that Hamas leaders would meet with Mr. Abbas next week, possibly in Cairo, to start work on implementing the accord. In his speech to the gathering, Mr. Mashaal said Hamas sought a Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza devoid of any Israeli settlers and without "giving up a single inch of land" or the right of return of Palestinian refugees.

The unity deal calls for forming an interim government to run the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and prepare for parliamentary and presidential elections within a year. (Reuters)

Hamas and Fatah leaders agreed to accelerate efforts to form a transitional government, in their first private meeting since the signing of a unity deal in Cairo. Izzat Ar-Risheq, a member of the Hamas Political Bureau, told Ma'an News Agency that following the formation of a transitional government, the leaders said that an agreement on a leadership framework would be reached, setting out the agenda for the new Cabinet. (Ma'an News Agency)

"Moscow welcomes the signing of this [unity] agreement, which resulted from efforts of various sides, especially Egypt," the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement. The statement said Russia encouraged all efforts to reconcile the two Palestinian movements. "It is our conviction that we must ensure that the process of overcoming the internal Palestinian split becomes irreversible," the Foreign Ministry said. The process should conclude with "free, transparent, and democratic elections," it added. (AFP)

"Our idea would be to use the donors' conference meeting at the end of June to hold a real political conference and restart the dialogue," French Foreign Minister Alain Juppé said. "Our idea is to try a last resort initiative, so that, in the month of September, when the question of recognizing [a Palestinian State] is raised, we can say we tried everything," he added. (AFP)

"The Elders believe that Palestinian political and geographical unity is an essential step on the path to statehood and lasting peace with Israel – and urge regional neighbours and the international community, especially the United States, Israel and the European Union, to give the unity Government, once it is formed, their full support," the group of elder statesmen said in a statement. (Wafa, www.theelders.org)

German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle said, "We want an inter-Palestinian dialogue, but whoever questions with force Israel's right to exist is no partner in our view." Mr. Westerwelle was due to meet President Abbas in Berlin later. Mr. Abbas was scheduled to meet with Chancellor Angela Merkel the following day. (DPA)

Quartet Representative Blair said that the international community supported Palestinian reconciliation but would demand that the new unity government recognize Israel's right to exist and renounce violence. (AP)

The Spokesman for Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon issued the following statement:

The Secretary-General has sent the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry, to Cairo for the marking tomorrow of the Palestinian unity agreement. Bearing in mind Security Council resolutions 1850 (2008) and 1860 (2009), the Secretary-General has continually supported efforts for unity and the work of Egypt and President Abbas in this regard. He wishes to see unity in the framework of the positions of the Quartet and the commitments of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Arab Peace Initiative. The Secretary-General therefore strongly appeals to all Palestinian parties to commit to these principles. (UN press release SG/SM/13539-PAL/2141)

A statement from PA Minister for Planning and Administrative Development, Ali Al-Jarbawi, said that Norwegian representative in Ramallah, Tor Wennesland, had pledged to continue providing \$140 million in annual support to the PA through 2012. (Ma'an News Agency)

The sole remaining commercial goods crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip was partially opened, allowing the delivery of 280 truckloads of goods into Gaza. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli soldiers uprooted dozens of olive trees in the Palestinian village of Nabi Samuel, north-west of Jerusalem, to turn the site into a park. (Wafa)

Settlers assaulted a Palestinian shepherd in Nablus, leaving him with bruises, and killed one of his sheep. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli troops detained four Palestinians in Hebron, including Issa Al-Ja'bary, a Palestinian legislator affiliated with Hamas. (IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency)

The Spokesman for Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon issued the following statement:

The Secretary-General is pleased that United Nations Messenger for Peace, Daniel Barenboim, and the Orchestra for Gaza, comprising musicians from leading European orchestras, performed a concert of works by Mozart today in Gaza. This cultural event, co-hosted by Palestinian NGOs, was attended by a wide range of Gazan civil society and students. Special Coordinator Robert Serry opened the concert, describing it as a "gesture of artistry, humanity, friendship and harmony". UNRWA Commissioner-General Filippo Grandi welcomed Mr. Barenboim and the Orchestra at the Rafah crossing and was also present at the concert.

The Secretary-General appreciates the efforts of Daniel Barenboim and the many musicians who gave their time and talent to bring music to Gaza. (UN press release SG/SM/13538-PAL/2140)

5

Israeli soldiers, in an unmarked car with Palestinian license plates, seized Tareq Qadan, an Islamic Jihad leader in the Jenin area, his family said. A total of five Palestinians were arrested near Qalqilya and Jenin. (Ma'an News Agency, Wafa)

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton did not rule out further negotiations with a Palestinian Government that included Hamas, but reiterated the Obama Administration's call for Hamas to accept basic conditions that included renouncing violence and recognizing Israel's right to exist. (The New York Times)

German Chancellor Angela Merkel warned against the recognition of a Palestinian State during talks with PA President Abbas in Berlin. "We do not think that unilateral steps are helpful," said Ms. Merkel, while encouraging an "urgent" return to peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. (Haaretz)

Israel could support a Palestinian State under the right conditions, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said after meeting with French President Sarkozy in Paris. "The heart of the conflict has always been the persistent refusal of the Palestinian leadership to recognize the Jewish State within any borders. We are prepared to recognize a Palestinian State, so why can't they return the favour if they want peace?" he said. He called on Hamas to clarify its position toward Israel before peace talks with Palestinians could resume. What I heard from President Sarkozy is that [Palestinians] must recognize Israel as the State of the Jewish people," Mr. Netanyahu said. While the French Presidency had yet to confirm or deny his remarks, sources at the Élysée Palace told DPA there had been no change in the French position. (DPA, Haaretz, Reuters, The Jerusalem Post, Ynetnews)

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh urged militant groups to keep the ceasefire with Israel, in a bid to give the reconciliation deal with Fatah "a chance".

Mr. Haniyeh also stated that he would not serve as the future unity Government's Premier, offering a clean slate to those "who want to serve their people". (Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency)

"Britain's clear and absolute preference is for a negotiation to take place between Israel and the Palestinians which leads to a two-State solution which everyone endorses," a senior diplomatic source was quoted by The Guardian as saying. However, the source stressed that at this point, "Britain is not ruling anything out. The more Israel engages seriously in a meaningful peace process the less likely it is that this question of unilateral declaration [of statehood] would arise." (Ynetnews)

The herding hamlet of Khirbet Amniyr saw Israeli forces demolish its 12 tent homes for the third time. The hamlet was said to be located in an Israeli military zone, which made up part of the 60 per cent of the West Bank that was inaccessible to Palestinians. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli forces demolished 10 Palestinian homes, uprooted hundreds of trees in Um Nir village and Yatta town near Hebron, and raided a nursery owned by a Palestinian farmer in Wadi al-Qif, north-west of Hebron. (IMEMC, Wafa)

UNRWA held the first-ever Gaza marathon; 9 runners went the full distance, with 1,200 schoolchildren joining for shorter stretches. Gaza runner Nader al-Masri, who hoped to qualify for the London 2012 Olympics, finished first. The marathon raised \$1 million for a summer camp for Gaza children. (BBC, www.unrwa.org)

In an interview with The Jerusalem Post, the head of the American advocacy group J Street, Jeremy Ben Ami, said that the policies of the new Palestinian Fatah-Hamas Government towards Israel should be tested before they are condemned. "... The real question is: what is this new alignment really going to stand for and what is it going to do, and that we don't know", he said. (The Jerusalem Post)

6

During a weekly protest against the Wall, Israeli soldiers arrested in Bethlehem two Palestinian and two Israeli activists, including local Palestinian

leader Mahmoud Zwahre. (IMEMC)

Fatah and Hamas delegations will reportedly meet in the coming few days in Cairo, to make final arrangements for the new unity Government. The delegations plan on discussing ways to deal with the effects of the four years of division, which may include compensation for the families of the victims, and putting an end to all forms of incitement and detention of each other's operatives. (IMEMC)

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told Prime Minister Netanyahu during a phone conversation that he hoped Israel would make "decisive moves" towards a historic agreement with the Palestinians. Discussing the Fatah-Hamas agreement, the Secretary-General noted that the UN had consistently supported Palestinian unity under the leadership of President Abbas and in the framework of the Arab Peace Initiative and the PLO commitments, in line with the Quartet principles. The Secretary-General also noted that Palestinian unity is a process which is just beginning now, and thus it would be best to assess it as it moves forward. (UN News Centre)

Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal told *The Wall Street Journal* that "negotiations with Israel, domestic governance, foreign affairs, domestic security and resistance and other field activities" against Israel would all be conducted in consensus with Fatah and other, smaller, Palestinian factions. (The Jerusalem Post)

The Palestinian Delegation in Cyprus had been upgraded to the status of Diplomatic Mission of Palestine, its head Walid Hasan told *AFP*. The change meant that he would present his credentials to the President instead of the Foreign Ministry and that he now assumed the rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary. (AFP)

The parents of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, in a letter to Prime Minister Netanyahu urged Israel to hold PA President Abbas responsible for Shalit's fate given the recent unity agreement between Fatah and Hamas. (Ma'an News Agency)

On the issue of the release of monthly revenues Israel collected on behalf of Palestinians, Israeli Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz told *Army Radio* that the hand-over of \$88.6 million had been postponed so that Israel could determine "whether the money would be relayed to Hamas" under a new unity deal, and that "the money is going to be transferred to the Palestinians next week". (Ma'an News Agency)

The European Commission had decided to provide an additional financial package worth €85 million for the Occupied Palestinian Territory under the 2011 budget. This was in addition to the €100 million already approved under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument. (www.ec.europa.eu)

The reconciliation agreement between Fatah and Hamas allowed for media crews in Gaza to broadcast again for the first time since 2007 into the West Bank, as *Palestine TV* began its live feed from Gaza. (Wafa)

7

Israeli troops would seal off the West Bank for three days starting 15 May as Israel celebrates the 63rd anniversary of its founding, the Army said. (Ma'an News Agency)

Hamas leader Khaled Al-Haj was arrested at an Israeli military checkpoint, the Ahrar Prisoners Centre said. Mr. Al-Haj, a spokesman for Hamas in Jenin, who was also involved in unity talks, had been recently released from Israeli prison. (Ma'an News Agency)

8

"We need your help with Congress [on aid to the PA]," President Abbas told representatives of the US J Street group. "I hear rumours that Hamas will be in the West Bank, or that it will share authority here. This will not happen. The new Government will comply with my policies, and I am against terror and violence." Jeremy Ben-Ami, President of J Street, said that he would urge the White House to offer a plan to create a Palestinian State based on the 1967 lines with agreed-upon land swaps, and a pause in settlement building for two to three months – two conditions under which Mr. Abbas told the group that he would return to negotiations. "If we were to start negotiations now, we would not pay any attention to September," Mr. Abbas added. (The New York Times)

The Fatah Central Committee welcomed the unity deal and created a committee to follow up on forming an interim Government. (AFP)

"We have agreed to hold our first meeting [with Hamas] on implementing the reconciliation deal after the end of the current round of sessions of the Fatah Revolutionary Council," Fatah official Azzam al-Ahmed told the *Voice of Palestine* radio. The meeting will discuss the forming of the Government as well as the candidates to head the Cabinet. (Xinhua)

Hamas official Mohammad Awad told *Ma'an News Agency* that Egypt was seriously considering opening a consulate in Gaza City to facilitate communication with Gaza officials. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli Information Minister Yisrael Katz called on the Government to reoccupy the West Bank should the PA unilaterally declare a State. (IMEMC)

The Jerusalem municipality began preparing for Israel's Independence Day, by imposing closure and harassing shop owners in Jerusalem's old city. Municipality employees, guarded by soldiers, broke into Arab shops and forcefully painted their facades in blue as per the Israeli flag. (Wafa)

Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons continued their hunger strike to end solitary confinement and improve conditions, a prisoner support group said. (Wafa)

Al Jazeera reported that Hamas had agreed in principle to a new Egyptian prisoner exchange proposal. "We have no information on this topic," Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri told *DPA*. (Haaretz)

A group of protesters from the Mavi Marmara Freedom and Solidarity Association demonstrated against Israeli participants who arrived in Istanbul to attend the Fourth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries. (Hürriyet)

9

Israeli forces detained three Palestinians from the same family near Bethlehem including an elderly woman, according to security sources. (The Palestine Telegraph)

PA President Abbas was "absolutely" still a peace partner for Israel, Israeli President Shimon Peres told *The Jerusalem Post*. He described the Fatah-Hamas accord as "a temporary bridge." In dealing with the new Palestinian leadership, Mr. Peres urged the international community to hold firm to the [Quartet] preconditions. He said Prime Minister Netanyahu should make that demand a centrepiece of his speeches and meetings in the US later this month. He added, "I'm in favour of recognizing [Palestinian statehood] provided they recognize Israel's security needs." (The Jerusalem Post)

Ma'ariv reported that during Prime Minister Netanyahu's visit to France the previous week, French President Nicolas Sarkozy had offered to host peace talks in Paris. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Fatah's governing body would evaluate possible strategies, including the September deadline for statehood, and a possible bid at the UN. The party's Revolutionary Council began meetings expected to last for three days, and headed by the party's leader, PA President Abbas, in Ramallah. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh said that there was an official commitment, especially from Qatar, to rebuild what Israel had destroyed during the war on Gaza. He added that the Islamic Bank in Jeddah had wired \$137 million that would be used in paving the roads, rehabilitating and constructing the sewage system, and for building schools. (*IMEMC*)

Israel Railways said that the German company Deutsche Bahn had quit a project to build a high-speed rail link between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem because the line would cut through the occupied West Bank, but the departure would not affect the link's scheduled 2017 launch. Deutsche Bahn confirmed that it had backed out of the project amid political pressure. Several German lawmakers had criticized its participation. (*AP*) The PA said it had not been able to pay salaries for the first time since 2007 because of Israel's decision to halt the transfer of funds it collects on its behalf. (*Reuters*)

France announced it would donate €10 million to the PA after Israel had frozen tax revenue transfers. In a statement, the French Foreign Ministry criticized Israel's decision. (*AFP*)

Palestinian youths in the Gaza Strip said that they would form a "shadow Cabinet" once the transitional Government had been formed. Muhammad Hasna, who helped initiate the project, said that it would be expected to exert pressure on the Government to serve the Palestinian people and their homeland. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs presented a report authored by Ray Dolphin and entitled *East Jerusalem: Key Humanitarian Concerns*. The report was the first comprehensive report on the humanitarian position of Palestinians in East Jerusalem, and examines such issues as residency rights, planning, zoning, and demolitions, to show how they are interrelated. Mr. Dolphin said that the separation wall not only had profound humanitarian consequences, but could ultimately have political implications, as well. (*UN News Centre*)

10

Israeli forces opened fire at international activists and Palestinians protesting Israel's establishment of a buffer zone in the northern Gaza Strip, according to local sources. No one was hurt. The peaceful demonstration came in response to Israeli measures in Gaza and in commemoration of *Nakba* Day. (*Wafa*)

The Israeli army invaded Fasayel village, north of Jericho, violently broke into a home, and interrogated residents. Troops also installed a roadblock at the southern entrance of Jericho. The army claimed that it was searching for farm tractors "illegally" owned by residents. (*IMEMC*)

Palestinian security sources said that Israeli forces had arrested three members of a Palestinian family and a Palestinian teenager in the town of Tarquniya, to the west of Hebron. According to sources, the four had been taken by Israeli soldiers for questioning by Shin Bet. The sources said that the Israeli forces raided the towns of Reihyeh, Halhoul, Dura and Al-Fawwar refugee camp in search of "wanted" Palestinian activists. (*Arab News*)

A new PA Government would be formed in 10 days, Fatah leader Nabil Sha'ath said. The Prime Minister had not yet been announced and he did not rule out Salam Fayyad. Fatah leader Hussam Khader called for Mr. Fayyad to retain his role as Prime Minister. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli Defense Minister Barak called on the international community to demand that Hamas recognize Israel. Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman called on PA President Abbas to reject the unity deal with Hamas and to resume direct talks with Israel. (*Haaretz, The Jerusalem Post*)

Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal said during a visit to Egypt that his movement was willing to give Israel a one-year extension on recognizing a Palestinian State within the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as its capital. He said that Hamas would not declare war on Israel at the end of the year, but rather, it would "add additional cards to the pack of resistance". (*Ynetnews*)

Israeli Defense Minister Barak revealed his plan for a peace accord, which includes: "A permanent border set according to security and demography concerns in a manner in which settlement blocs and [settlements] in Jerusalem remain under Israeli sovereignty, land exchanges that will leave in the hands of the Palestinians territory similar to that which was their land before '67; security arrangements which include a permanent [military] presence along the Jordan River and guarantee that the demilitarized Palestinian State does not become another Gaza or Lebanon; settlement of refugees in the Palestinian State, agreed-upon arrangements in the holy area of Jerusalem; and most importantly, an end to the conflict and the mutual demands, in addition to recognition of Israel as the nation State of the Jewish people, and the Palestinian State as the nation State of the Arab Palestinians." Mr. Barak said Israel was ready to take "courageous steps" for peace. (*Haaretz*)

PA Prime Minister Fayyad affirmed the growing European role in the international arena and expressed the hope that the Europeans would play a more effective role in the Palestinian cause. Mr. Fayyad said, "We believe that Europe's role is basic and vital for enabling us to make our national programme reach its final stages, which is allowing the people to live in freedom and dignity." (*KUNA*)

Gulf Cooperation Council leaders, at their 13th meeting in Riyadh chaired by King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, stressed the importance of the Palestinian reconciliation agreement, describing it as "a crucial step for the unification of the efforts of our Palestinian brothers to achieve and preserve the rights of the Palestinian people". They reiterated the Kingdom's resolute position in support of the legitimate Palestinian right to establish an independent State with Jerusalem as its capital. (*The Saudi Gazette*)

The investment firm Palestine Development and Investment Limited (PADICO) announced the first issue of Palestinian corporate bonds, worth \$70 million. (*AFP*)

Local sources reported that Israeli authorities had started the construction of a segment of the separation wall around Qalandiya. Reportedly, several army bulldozers supported by armoured military jeeps invaded the area and started levelling Palestinian lands. The wall will eventually divide Qalandiya – where at least 1100 Palestinians live – into two sectors while isolating dozens of *dunums* of Palestinian farmlands. (*IMEMC*)

Extremist Jewish groups and settlers organized provocative celebrations of the establishing of the Israeli State in Jerusalem's Old City and its

surroundings. Palestinian residents reported having been unable to sleep due to racist insulting chants and swearing against Palestinians and Arabs. Israeli police and military forces intervened, securing the withdrawal of the extremists toward the courtyard of the Western Wall. (Wafa)

Amnesty International reiterated its call to Israeli authorities to release or charge a Palestinian writer and academic held for almost three weeks in the West Bank. The Israeli Security Agency said that they wanted to keep Ahmad Qatamesh in detention in connection with allegations of involvement with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which he had denied. "We fear that Ahmad Qatamesh may be behind bars for no reason other than the peaceful expression of his political views," said Philip Luther, Amnesty International Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa. (www.amnesty.org)

Events in the Syrian Arab Republic had caused UNRWA to suspend or limit services in a number of areas across the country. The Agency was concerned about the continued delivery of services to the approximately 30,000 Palestine refugees in Dera'a and surrounding areas. (www.unrwa.org)

"Because of the safety risks linked with such an undertaking, we are formally warning French nationals not to embark on the vessels that aim to break the maritime blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip," the French Foreign Ministry said. (KUNA)

11

Two Palestinians and an Israeli arrested by Israeli forces in clashes in the settlement of "Havat Gilad". Reports said that a Palestinian had been injured by stones thrown. Settlers said that a Palestinian driving a tractor had attempted to run over an Israeli. (Ynetnews)

Israeli soldiers fired live ammunition at homes in Deir Al-Balah and Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip, causing damage but no injuries. Also, military bulldozers entered an area east of Gaza City and uprooted farmland. (MEMC)

Hamas leader Mahmoud Al-Zahhar said that Hamas was ready to recognize a Palestinian State "on any part of Palestine". He also said, however, that a formal recognition of Israel would "cancel the right of the next generations to liberate the lands." (Ma'an News Agency)

The PA appealed to Arab countries to pay the salaries of 155,000 government workers after Israel had decided to suspend the transfer of tax funds to the PA. "We say to our Arab brothers: save us. We need your help more than any time before. It is the moment of truth," Prime Minister Fayyad told a news briefing in Ramallah. (Reuters)

"The [PLO] Executive Committee decided to turn to all international bodies, including the UN Security Council, to demand that Israel unblock Palestinian Authority funds," PLO official Yasser Abed Rabbo told AFP after a meeting of the body. (AFP)

Israel had frozen the construction of the wall near the "Gush Etzion" settlement bloc over budget concerns, Army Radio said, adding that Defense Ministry documents showed construction could resume in late 2012. (Haaretz)

Around 140,000 Palestinians who left the West Bank to study or work had their residency rights revoked between 1967 and 1994, recently released Israeli documents revealed. (The Guardian)

Twenty-two Palestinian homes in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of al-Bustan would not be demolished until plans had been finalized and approved for a park to be built on the area, the Jerusalem District Court ruled. (Ynetnews)

Israeli soldiers handed demolition notices to seven Palestinians in the village of Walaja, south-west of Bethlehem. (Wafa)

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

Hamas was ready to renew talks on a prisoner swap, Al-Hayat reported. The paper said that Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal had agreed in Cairo to Egyptian-brokered talks if negotiations began where they had left off. (Haaretz)

An Israeli military judge extended the detention of a 15-year-old Palestinian from Bil'in, despite suspicions that the boy had been badly beaten by Israeli soldiers, because the court was closed for the holidays. The judge told military prosecutors he expected an explanation of the boy's injuries. (Haaretz)

Israel refused to release Atef Atta Hassan, a Gaza resident, following completion of his 18-year prison term, under the pretext of the Jewish holidays, Palestinian sources confirmed. (Middle East Monitor)

Israel's Finance Minister, Yuval Steinitz, said: "The delay in transferring funds is a yellow card for the Palestinian Authority after the signing of the agreement with Hamas... Until now, it is a delay of a week to 10 days, but it could become a red card," he said, explaining that Israel would decide what to do depending on "clarification" from the Palestinians. (Ahram Online)

Several EU Parliamentarians had pledged to take part in a new flotilla, with organizers saying that their status would help protect others on board. (DPA)

Palestinians in Tulkarm had called for a boycott of Israeli products in response to Israel's decision to withhold Palestinian tax revenues. (Wafa)

12

The IDF allowed foreign reporters rare access to a heavily guarded base south of Tel Aviv in what military officials described as an effort to showcase Israel's technological advancements in the field of air defence and to underscore the array of threats from rockets and missiles. (The New York Times)

The PA would not be able to prevent another intifada in the face of stagnant peace talks with Israel, senior Fatah official Abbas Zaki told Army Radio. (Haaretz)

A Fatah official, Azzam Al-Ahmad, said that Fatah and Hamas had agreed to demand that the upcoming technocratic Government postpone the elections so that they could be held simultaneously in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. (Xinhua)

PA President Abbas met with Egypt's Ambassador in Ramallah, who delivered a letter from Egyptian Foreign Minister Nabil Abdalla El-Araby. The letter called the reconciliation agreement signed in Cairo a "core step" and said that Palestinians were within their rights to make a declaration of independence. Egypt intended to hold an international conference to address Palestinian aspirations, the letter added. (Ma'an News Agency)

PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad said that the Palestinians have created all the conditions for establishing a Palestinian State. "The mission has been accomplished," Mr. Fayyad said in an interview with Haaretz in Ramallah. (Haaretz)

Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi declared that his country would not, in any way, support a unilateral declaration of Palestinian statehood. During a reception held by Israeli Ambassador Gideon Meir in Rome in honour of Israel's 63rd Independence Day, Mr. Berlusconi said, "Unilateral recognition isn't the way to make agreements between countries," adding that that was also the EU stance. (Ynetnews)

PA President Abbas said that a new Palestinian Government would be formed within days with a focus on rebuilding Gaza and holding elections. He also said that the PA would not give in to Israel's "blackmail" over withheld tax revenues. "We will not surrender to political blackmail in exchange for financial considerations," Mr. Abbas said, in remarks concluding a three-day meeting of the Fatah Revolutionary Council in Ramallah. (Ma'an News Agency)

PA Prime Minister Fayyad said that Israel was trying to break the will of the Palestinian people by seizing their tax revenues through an "act of piracy". "The will of people will not be broken; they are determined to gain their freedom and independence by September," he said. "Suspending their tax revenues is simply an act of desperation." (Ma'an News Agency)

A senior Palestinian official said that he hoped a Palestinian unity Government would be formed within a week. "I hope that within a week we will have a new Government installed by consensus," Nabil Sha'ath, a senior figure in the Fatah party, told reporters in Ramallah. (AFP)

A 17-year-old Palestinian died from an electric shock in a tunnel between Gaza and Egypt. (Wafa)

Israeli forces detained three Palestinians in Hebron, including a Hamas leader, Adnan Abu Tabanah. (Ma'an News Agency)

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics released [figures](#) showing that the worldwide Palestinian population had grown to eight times that of 1948. The population that year was 1.4 million, while at the end of 2010, it was estimated at 11 million globally, with 5.5 million in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza. (Ma'an News Agency)

B'Tselem released a [report](#) entitled "Dispossession and Exploitation: Israel's Policy in the Jordan Valley and Northern Dead Sea" "By legal manipulation, Israel has enlarged the inventory of 'State land' in the area, such that 53.4 per cent of the area, four times greater than pre-1967, is now deemed State land," B'Tselem said. (www.btselem.org)

Israeli forces closed the Nablus area Huwwara military checkpoint following incidents of rock-throwing at Palestinian cars, which local officials said had been done by settlers. A Fatah official charged with monitoring settlement activity in the northern West Bank said that dozens of settlers from the nearby "Yitzhar" settlement had thrown rocks at Palestinian cars, causing damage but no injuries. (Ma'an News Agency)

Members of the US Congress issued a letter to Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in which they urged him to stop the departure of another flotilla to the Gaza Strip. (Haaretz)

The right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes would not be compromised, PLO official Zakaria Al-Agha said. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli and Palestinian Olympic officials stepped up efforts to improve cooperation during a second round of talks with the International Olympic Committee. With free movement for athletes and coaches high on the agenda, Israeli officials promised to present to their Government a Palestinian proposal to help overcome imposed travel restrictions. (AP)

Palestinian sources in Gaza reported that Italian and Malaysian human rights activists had arrived in the Gaza Strip through the Rafah border terminal between Gaza and Egypt. The "Vittorio" convoy included nearly 50 activists, including friends of Italian activist Vittorio Arrigoni, who was kidnapped and killed in Gaza in mid-April. (IMEMC)

Egypt was urging activists to cancel a rally aimed at crossing from Egypt into Gaza to show support for the Palestinians. In a statement, authorities called on activists to give priority to internal issues and "to prevent any repercussions that might result from this march". A Facebook campaign called for rallies on Friday and a march toward the border on Sunday. (AP)

13

Riots broke out in East Jerusalem and the West Bank ahead of Nakba Day. In Silwan, protestors clashed with security forces that entered the neighbourhood. They hurled stones while police officers responded with crowd dispersal means. (Ynetnews)

IDF Northern Command sources say that there were expectations that Palestinians in Lebanon would travel to the border to participate in Nakba Day protests. (The Jerusalem Post)

Smugglers of arms into the Gaza Strip were operating almost freely after a change of leadership in Egypt, Israel's Shin Bet security agency said. (Reuters)

An agreement, reached between Fatah and Hamas earlier this month, calls for holding presidential and parliamentary elections within a year of the establishment of a unity government. (The Jerusalem Post)

Scores of Palestinian Muslims performed dawn prayers outside the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem after Israeli police prevented them from entering the city to reach Al-Aqsa Mosque, witnesses said. Witnesses added that the police clashed with residents outside the Old City who attempted to reach Al-Aqsa Mosque. Two people were reported to have been hurt and required hospitalization. (DPA)

Israel admitted that it had cancelled the residency status of 140,000 Palestinians travelling abroad between 1967 and 1994, allegedly without warning. In response, PLO Executive Committee Member Saeb Erakat said that the report "confirms our claims that Israel is engaging in a systematic policy of displacement." He termed the policy a "war crime". (Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency)

The outgoing head of Shin Bet said that he was "very worried" about Palestinian plans to ask for UN General Assembly recognition of their State in September. "Personally I am very worried about what is more or less expected in September," Yuval Diskin told a conference at Tel Aviv University. He warned that such a step could trigger a "deterioration" of the situation, and hoped for a last-minute development "of one kind or another" in the Israeli-Palestinian arena, ahead of the planned UN resolution. (DPA)

Thousands of people gathered in Tahrir Square in Cairo, rallying for different causes. But many of those gathered were there to show their support for Palestinian unity, ahead of Nakba Day. (Al Jazeera)

Palestinians had announced plans to begin a series of marches and rallies on Friday leading up to Sunday's commemoration of the Nakba. Palestinian organizers have planned processions through the West Bank and Gaza. (Voice of America)

Heeding a call from Palestinian Facebook organizers, several hundred Jordanians have taken to the streets of the capital demanding a sovereign Palestinian State and that refugees be given the right to return. About 500 protesters marched in Amman's downtown market district also demanding an end to Jordan's 1994 peace treaty with Israel and the expulsion of the Israeli ambassador. (AP)

A new Amnesty International [report](#) said that Israeli forces had killed 33 Palestinian civilians in the West Bank and Gaza in 2010. It also said

that at least 264 Palestinians were held "without charge or trial under administrative detention orders, some for more than two years". It added that around 6,000 Palestinians remain in Israeli jails and that many are kept imprisoned after unfair military trials. (www.amnesty.org, *The Jerusalem Post*)

14

Milad Ayyash, 16, was shot and killed in East Jerusalem in Silwan during a clash between Israeli police and Arab youths. Palestinian residents said that during the clash, a window had opened in the "Beit Yonatan" settlement and several shots were fired, one of them hitting Mr. Ayyash. (*Haaretz*)

15

An 18-year-old Gazan was shot and killed by Israeli troops near Erez while he was trying to plant an explosive, according to Israeli military sources. (*The New York Times*)

Israel's Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz confirmed that Israel would renew the transfer of suspended tax transfers to the PA, saying: "We decided to renew the revenue transfers after we got confirmation from the Palestinians that no money will be transferred to Hamas or to terrorist operations." Mr. Steinitz added that "Israel reserves the right to stop the transfer of revenues once again if in the next few months Hamas becomes part of the Palestinian Government." (*Haaretz*)

A dozen people were killed and scores injured when clashes erupted on Israel's borders as thousands of Palestinians coordinated protests by marching from the Syrian Arab Republic, Lebanon, Gaza, and the West Bank to mark the *Nakba* Day. On the Lebanese border, hundreds of Lebanese, joined by Palestinians from more than nine refugee camps, headed toward Maroun al-Ras. There, Israeli troops shot at them as they tried to force their way across. The Lebanese military said that 10 protesters were killed and more than 100 wounded. Israel said it was investigating the casualties. In the Golan Heights, about 100 Palestinians living in Syria breached a border fence and crowded into the village of Majdal Shams, waving Palestinian flags. Israeli troops fired on the crowd, killing four people. An Israeli military spokesman said that troops had fired only at infiltrators trying to damage the security barrier and equipment. Some 13 Israeli soldiers had been lightly wounded by thrown rocks. In the West Bank, about 1,000 protesters carrying Palestinian flags and throwing stones and occasional firecrackers and gasoline bombs fought with Israeli troops near the military checkpoint between Ramallah and Israel. Scores were injured, local medical officials said. In Hebron, Red Crescent medics said that 1 Palestinian was treated for fractures after he was beaten by Israeli forces, 9 were treated for wounds from rubber-coated bullets, and 18 were treated for tear-gas inhalation after Israeli forces quashed the protest. In Gaza, Hamas police stopped buses carrying protesters near the main crossing into Israel, but dozens of demonstrators continued on foot to the border fence, drawing Israeli fire wounding dozens. In Jordan and Egypt, Government security forces thwarted protesters headed to the border. (*Ma'an News Agency*, *The New York Times*)

PA President Abbas saluted the protesters in a televised speech, referring to the dead as martyrs. "The blood of the *Nakba* fatalities was not spilled in vain," he said. "They died for the Palestinian people's rights and freedom" (*The New York Times*)

The Syrian Arab Republic condemned Israel's "criminal activities." *SANA* quoted the Syrian Foreign Ministry as calling on the international community to hold Israel responsible for the incidents, the deadliest such confrontation along the borders in years. Hezbollah lawmaker Hassan Fadlallah condemned the "Israeli aggression on unarmed civilians in Maroun al-Ras in South Lebanon and on the Golan, which constitutes a dangerous violation of human rights. United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) Spokesman Andrea Tenenti urged the parties involved in the *Nakba* Day shooting to show "maximum restraint" to prevent casualties. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said that Israel was determined to defend itself and its sovereignty. He said the *Nakba* Day protests had not been about the 1967 borders, but rather about "undermining the very existence of Israel". He said that he hoped peace and quiet would return quickly. (*Haaretz*)

In an interview on television *Channel 2*, Israeli Defense Minister Barak said that IDF soldiers had succeeded in defending Israel's sovereignty when Palestine refugee demonstrators breached the border. Mr. Barak cautioned, however, that Israel would in the future have to deal with similar and perhaps more complex incidents. He also said that the incident on the Syrian border where the IDF forces opened fire on demonstrators apparently killing several of them would have to be investigated. He said: "There were deaths there in several places and we regret the deaths. Those responsible for this are those who attempted to violate Israel's sovereignty and those who sent them, if there are any." (*Haaretz*)

In a [statement](#), Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressed deep concern that a significant number of people had been killed or injured in *Nakba* Day clashes. He called on all concerned to show restraint and refrain from provocations so as to prevent escalation of tensions and ensure civilians were not killed or injured. The Secretary-General stressed "the urgent need for a just, lasting and comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace, which ensures dignity and security for all, including an end to occupation, an end to conflict, and a just and agreed solution to the plight of Palestinian refugees." UNRWA Commissioner-General Filippo Grandi [deplored](#) the deaths of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, the occupied Golan Heights, and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Major-General Alberto Asarta Cuevas, UNIFIL Force Commander, said that he was in personal contact with the command of the Lebanese and Israeli parties to prevent further casualties. "Immediate concrete security steps on the ground are necessary," he said in a statement. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos voiced extreme concern about the clashes. "The situation cannot continue in this way. It is innocent people who are losing their lives," she said. (*UN News Centre*)

Under-Secretary-General Amos visited Ramallah, East Jerusalem, and Area C of the West Bank. In Ramallah, she met with PA President Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, reiterating the determination of the UN and the humanitarian community to continue to assist those in need in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in areas where the PA cannot fully operate. She reaffirmed the UN commitment to the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, statehood, sovereignty, and freedom from occupation. (www.unocha.org)

Israel's opposition leader, Tzipi Livni, commented on the border protests during her meeting with Italian President Giorgio Napolitano, saying, "The attempt to infiltrate into Israel is a clear manifestation of the lack of acceptance of Israel's sovereignty as a country." (*The Jerusalem Post*)

16

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu told the Knesset that Israel would be prepared to compromise and "cede parts of our homeland" for true peace with the Palestinians, but added that he did not believe the latter were ready to be a true partner for peace. A Palestinian Government that comprises representatives of Hamas, that refuses to recognize Israel's right to exist, is not a Government with which it would be possible to make peace, he said. (*Haaretz*)

In a press statement released in Amman, Azzam al-Ahmad, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, said that Hamas and Fatah would begin a three-day meeting in Cairo to discuss the implementation of the reconciliation agreement. They would also discuss the formation of a new national unity government and the issues of detainees in both Gaza and the West Bank. (*Almasryalyoum.com*)

PA President Abbas wrote in an [op-ed](#): "Palestine's admission to the United Nations would pave the way for the internationalization of the conflict as a legal matter, not only a political one. It would also pave the way for us to pursue claims against Israel at the United Nations, human rights treaty bodies and the International Court of Justice." (*The New York Times*)

Israeli Vice Prime Minister Silvan Shalom warned Prime Minister Netanyahu against making dramatic statements during his upcoming visit to Washington. "We'll lose the elections and disband should you stray from the Likud way," he told Mr. Netanyahu during a Likud faction meeting. (*Ynetnews*)

Jordan's King Abdullah II underlined America's pivotal role in the peace process and the region, stressing that despite the current regional developments, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict would remain the region's core issue. The King said that his meetings in Washington, D.C. with President Obama and other US officials would focus on means to bring the Palestinians and Israelis back to the negotiating table. (*The Jordan Times*)

Israel's current status at the UN was at an all-time low, former Ambassador Gabriela Shalev told the Knesset. "Israel has no chance of dealing with the Palestinian move in the General Assembly," Ms. Shalev said, adding "the United States is not interested in vetoing the UN's recognition of a Palestinian State." (*Haaretz*)

President Giorgio Napolitano of Italy announced, during a joint news conference in Bethlehem with PA President Abbas, Italy's plans to upgrade the level of the Palestinian representation in Rome from general delegation to full diplomatic status. (*Haaretz, JTA*)

EU Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid, and Crisis Response, Kristalina Georgieva, met with PA President Abbas and with Prime Minister Salam Fayyad while on a four-day visit to the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel, accompanied by UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos. Following her visit with Prime Minister Fayyad to Jahalin School in Area C, in the West Bank, and East Jerusalem's neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah, Commissioner Georgieva said: "I am particularly moved by the plight of ordinary Palestinian families whom I met in the West Bank's Area C and in East Jerusalem. Notably, women and children live under the constant threat of harassment, eviction and disruption of their lives. There is an issue of protection. Any action that leads to forced displacement must stop." (www.europa.eu)

Israel's Finance Minister, Yuval Steinitz, warned that Israel would halt tax funds to the PA if it formed a new Government with Hamas. An Israeli official said there would be consequences if Hamas did not accept the Quartet principles. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Palestinian crossings liaison official Raed Fattouh said that the Israeli authorities had announced the partial opening of the Kerem Shalom crossing. He said that 300 truckloads of aid and commercial goods would be let into the Gaza Strip. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Jordan signed a memorandum of understanding with the German Development Bank. The €7.5 million deal aims at constructing, expanding, and rehabilitating the social and economic infrastructure at refugee camps run by UNRWA. (*The Jordan Times*)

Hamas condemned Israel's clashes along its borders with Syria and Lebanon, adding that the world community must bear responsibility. "We say to the entire world that the return of the Palestinian refugees to their homeland will remain a central part of the Palestinian question," the statement said. (*AFP*)

PA President Abbas declared three days of mourning for the people killed in mass marches toward multiple Israeli borders on *Nakba* Day. (*AP*)

White House Press Secretary Jay Carney told reporters that US Administration officials "regret the loss of life, and our thoughts are with the families of loved ones of those killed and wounded. Israel like all countries has the right to prevent unauthorized crossings at its borders. Its neighbours have a responsibility to prevent such activity." He also said that the Administration was "strongly opposed to the Syrian Government's involvement in inciting yesterday's protests in the Golan Heights". (*ABC News*)

British Foreign Secretary William Hague urged restraint after *Nakba* Day clashes left 16 protesters dead and dozens wounded. Mr. Hague said: "I am deeply concerned by the violence on Israel's borders today and saddened by the loss of life. I call on all parties to exercise restraint and ensure that civilian life is protected." (www.walesonline.co.uk)

A French Foreign Ministry statement [said](#), "France condemns these incidents which caused several deaths and very numerous wounded." (*diplomatie.gouv.fr*)

The Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations announced that it would submit a complaint to the Security Council against the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon for their breach of Council resolutions and violation of international law following the *Nakba* Day events. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Hundreds of protestors, including orthodox Jews, marched from Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza to Times Square in New York City to commemorate the *Nakba* Day. Pro-Palestinian protests commemorated the Day also by reaching Israeli embassies and consulates around the world. (*The Jerusalem Post, www.demotix.com*)

Settlers from "Kiryat Arba" in Hebron threw four Molotov cocktails at a home adjacent to the settlement, setting it on fire. Inside the house were 30 members of a Palestinian family, observers from TIPH said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

At an emergency meeting of Knesset members from the Likud Party and settler activists at the Knesset, Likud MK Danny Danon announced that he had sponsored a poll that found that more than half of the Israeli public would support responding to the unilateral declaration of a Palestinian State at the General Assembly by annexing the West Bank settlements. The meeting was intended to pressure Prime Minister Netanyahu not to make concessions when he goes to Washington later this week. When asked whether they would support annexing "settlement areas in Judea and Samaria in response to the unilateral formation of a Palestinian State," 54.5 per cent of respondents said yes, 30.4 per cent said no, and 15 per cent had no opinion. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Richard Falk, issued [a statement](#) in which he urged the international community to take action to compel Israel to end its occupation and confiscation of Palestinian land. "This is a reminder that the *Nakba* continues," he said. ([www.unog.ch](#))

The IDF fired warning shots at the "Spirit of Rachel Corrie", a Malaysian ship carrying aid to Gaza, forcing it to withdraw into Egyptian waters, a statement by the sponsor, the Perdana Global Peace Foundation, said. (*thestar.com.my*)

17

Israeli forces opened fire at Palestinian farmers east of Khan Yunis, according to witnesses. No injuries were reported. (*Wafa*)

Israeli forces arrested six young Palestinians, including a 14-year-old boy, from the village of al-Khadr, south of Bethlehem, according to security sources. (*Wafa*)

Palestinian workers said that the Israeli army had been using attack dogs to hunt down anyone trying to enter Israel illegally. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

After a number of controversial posts on Facebook in recent months, promoting incitement and featuring images of soldiers abusing Palestinians, the Israeli military had cut off Internet access for nearly every computer accessed by soldiers. (*IMEMC*)

"Do we have a partner to make peace in Israel? We don't," PLO Executive Committee member Saeb Erakat said. "I believe negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians are over." (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Fatah official Nabil Sha'ath said that the President of Slovenia, Danilo Türk, during the visit of the delegation of Fatah leaders to the country, had indicated that Slovenia would recognize an independent State of Palestine before September. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

PA President Abbas discussed with visiting Maldivian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmed Naseem, issues concerning the peace process and the Palestinian reconciliation agreement. Mr. Naseem expressed support for the declaration of the Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and the reconciliation agreement. (*Wafa*)

President Barack Obama [said](#), following his meeting with King Abdullah II of Jordan in the White House: "Despite the many changes, or maybe because of the many changes that have been taking place in the region, it's more vital than ever that both Israelis and Palestinians find a way to get back to the [negotiating] table." ([www.whitehouse.gov](#))

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, responding to an op-ed by PA President Abbas, said that the Palestinians were the ones who had rejected a UN partition plan in 1948. Mr. Netanyahu said, "Arab armies assisted by Palestinian forces were those who attacked the Jewish State with the aim of destroying it", adding that "one can deduce that the Palestinian leadership views the establishment of the Palestinian State as a means to continue the conflict rather than end it". (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli Vice Prime Minister Moshe Ya'alon criticized Prime Minister Netanyahu over his Knesset speech the previous day, which suggested that Israel could evacuate settlements in the Jordan Valley and leave it solely under IDF patrol. "There is broad consensus that the settlement blocks must remain within the State of Israel," Mr. Netanyahu had said. Israel was willing to make compromises for peace, he said. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The PLO distributed a statement to all 535 members of the US Congress which explained the agreement between Hamas and Fatah, and refuted Israeli claims and calls made by some members of Congress to boycott the PA. Ambassador Maen Areikat, Chief Representative of the PLO General Delegation to the US, met with more than 60 Congressional aides in Washington and explained the Palestinian viewpoint. (*Wafa*)

The PA announced that it was postponing local elections, scheduled for July, until 22 October, giving time to organize the vote in the Gaza Strip. (*Haaretz*, [www.palestinecabinet.gov.ps](#))

UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos completed a four-day visit to the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel. "I hope, following my discussions with the Israeli authorities, that they will look carefully at the key humanitarian concerns of demolitions and displacement in the West Bank," she said. On Gaza, Ms. Amos called for an end to the man-made and protracted humanitarian situation through a lifting of the blockade. (*OCHA press release*)

During her visit to EU-funded projects in Gaza, EU Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response Kristalina Georgieva [underscored](#), the importance of implementing the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access: "The blockade maintains people in Gaza in a state of humanitarian vulnerability and dependency. The impediment of movement of people and import and export of goods leaves hardly any prospect for development. For example, it is very difficult to bring construction materials into Gaza, where they are urgently needed to build houses and schools as well as health and sanitary facilities". ([www.europa.eu](#))

Israel's policy of demolishing Palestinian homes have so far displaced 149 children in the West Bank this year, UNRWA figures show. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Seven masked settlers had damaged property and killed two sheep in a Palestinian village near Hebron, Christian Peacemaker Teams reported. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Settlers, escorted by the Israeli military, reportedly stormed a school for orphans in Jerusalem, assaulting a number of students and detaining the headmaster and his deputy. Three of the students were reportedly injured in the attack. (*ABNA News Agency*)

Turkey and Israel "have failed to reach an agreement" on reconciliation proposals by a UN commission investigating the flotilla raid last year, a Turkish diplomat told *AFP*. (*AFP*)

The Malaysia-sponsored humanitarian aid to Gaza, which had been turned away by Israeli gunboats, would likely be sent by land, Perdana Global Peace Foundation adviser Datuk Mukhriz Tun Mahathir said. (*New Straits Times*)

18

Israeli forces arrested six Palestinian youths between the ages of 14 and 19 from Azzun, a town east of Qalqilya, according to their families. In addition, Israeli soldiers arrested 12 Palestinians from the governorates of Jenin, Qalqilya, and Ramallah. They raided several Palestinian homes in Husan, a village west of Bethlehem, and arrested two Palestinians, according to security sources. (*Wafa*)

According to *Ahram Online*, PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad was no longer being put forward as a candidate for premiership in the forthcoming transitional Government. Fatah and Hamas delegations have reportedly agreed upon two names, both technocrats and deemed acceptable by both parties. (*Ahram Online*)

Imprisoned Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti urged his party and Hamas to quickly implement the reconciliation agreement signed in Cairo: "Hamas and Fatah should work loyally and faithfully to accurately implement the agreement. They should also use the 2005 prisoners' document as their guide because it offered substantial solutions to the most complicated cases." Mr. Barghouti also backed Palestinian moves to declare statehood in September, adding that the US and Israel could not stop it. (*Ma'an News Agency, The Jerusalem Post, IMEMC*)

Hamas leader Mahmoud al-Zahhar insisted that Hamas would not negotiate with Israel despite a statement to the contrary by Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal. Mr. Mashaal's statement "does not represent the movement's official stance, which was based on a plan of resistance and not negotiations," he said. He added that Hamas had not given PA President Abbas permission to negotiate with Israel after a joint Hamas-Fatah Government was formed. (*ynetnews*)

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged Israel to be more flexible in dealings with the Palestinian leadership and offer "incentives" to get deadlocked talks started again. The Secretary-General told *AFP* in an interview that he was also pressing Palestinians to get Hamas to recognize Israel and renounce violence. But the new Hamas-Fatah unity must be given a chance, he said. "I am asking and urging Israelis to engage in dialogue, lift sanctions and the blockade in Gaza, provide good opportunities for the wellbeing of people in the West Bank," he said. "At the same time I am also urging the Palestinian leadership to return to the dialogue table without conditions. This is the best way to avoid any confrontation." He added that he was deeply concerned by recent violence involving Palestinian protesters. (*AFP*)

Israel criticized Michael Williams, the UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon, for blaming Israeli forces for the fatal shootings of 10 Palestinian protesters at a demonstration at the Lebanese border. Mr. Williams had said that Israel had used "disproportionate, deadly force" during the demonstration. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The World Bank released a [report](#), commending the PA for its work in creating strong public institutions, while recommending continued reforms to prevent corruption and ensure better public services. (www.worldbank.org)

Amnesty International called for a "full, impartial, and independent investigation" into the Israeli military's use of force against Palestinians and Syrian Druze during *Nakba* protests which saw 13 killed. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Amnesty International's annual global human rights report for 2011 slammed Israel's human rights record both in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, condemning Israel's conduct in multiple areas including the justice system, the Gaza blockade, human rights accountability, housing demolitions and settlement activity, torture and excessive use of force, freedom of movement and freedom of speech. (www.amnesty.org, *IMEMC*)

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Israeli soldiers invaded a village south of Nablus and imposed a curfew, officials said. The troops entered Madama shortly after two Molotov cocktails were thrown at a military jeep, the IDF said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A Palestinian group, believed to be responsible for a series of abductions and attacks, had been labelled a foreign terrorist organization in a designation issued by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Known as the Army of Islam, the group "has been responsible for numerous terrorist acts against the Governments of Israel and Egypt, as well as American, British and New Zealand citizens," the State Department said. (*CNN*)

In the weekly march in Bil'in organized by the Popular Committee Against the Wall, with the participation of the Palestinian Ambassador to Viet Nam, two young men were injured and dozens of people suffered from the effects of tear gas fired by Israeli soldiers. (*IMEMC*)

In a policy [speech](#), US President Obama said: "The borders of Israel and Palestine should be based on the 1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps, so that secure and recognized borders are established for both States The full and phased withdrawal of Israeli military forces should be coordinated with the assumption of Palestinian security responsibility in a sovereign, non-militarized State. The duration of this transition period must be agreed, and the effectiveness of security arrangements must be demonstrated." He added: "For the Palestinians, efforts to delegitimize Israel will end in failure. Symbolic actions to isolate Israel at the United Nations in September won't create an independent State. Palestinian leaders will not achieve peace or prosperity if Hamas insists on a path of terror and rejection. And Palestinians will never realize their independence by denying the right of Israel to exist." (www.whitehouse.gov)

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who was set to meet US President Obama today, said that Israel would object to any withdrawal to "indefensible" borders, adding that he expects Washington to allow it to keep major settlement blocs in any peace deal. (*Haaretz*)

Hamas rejected President Obama's speech, accusing him of leaning towards Israel. (*Xinhua*)

Turkey's President Abdullah Gül applauded US President Obama's reference to creating a Palestinian State based on Israel's pre-1967 borders: "The fact that there was a reference to the borders of 1967 was a very important step in itself", he said, in an interview with *The Wall Street Journal* in Ankara. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Following a meeting with PA President Abbas in Ramallah, delegates from the independent Israeli Peace Initiative group met with newly-appointed Secretary-General of the Arab League Nabil Elaraby. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Denmark could be among the countries to recognize a Palestinian State if the opposition wins this year's general election. "We have thought for many years that the Palestinians have a right to a State and when they are now asking the other countries of the world to recognize them, we also

want to do so," the Social Democrat foreign affairs spokesperson, MP Jeppe Kofod, said. (*The Copenhagen Post*)

In a monthly briefing to the Security Council, UN Special Coordinator Robert Serry called for a "meaningful political initiative" before September for a two-State solution. He stressed that the Israelis and Palestinians themselves along with the international community, "must show purpose, rather than paralysis, as we approach a critical period in the search for peace in the Middle East." "In the absence of an initiative, it is too early to assess whether September will bring a new and more effective paradigm for resolving the conflict through negotiations, or renewed confrontation between the parties in the diplomatic arena or on the ground," he said. Acknowledging concerns about Hamas, while noting the maintenance of calm out of Gaza, Mr. Serry counselled against reaching a hasty view of the unity accord's merits or prospects: "Reunification of Gaza and the West Bank is a vital goal for all interested in peace, and the process should not be undermined in its infancy." (*UNSCO press release*)

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak urged Prime Minister Netanyahu to make a "daring" peace initiative as the latter prepared for his Washington visit. In an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, Mr. Barak warned that maintaining the status quo could isolate Israel further and cause mass popular protests. He said that Netanyahu had made "clear movement" in outlining his peace vision by stressing Israel's insistence on maintaining settlement blocs as well as a military presence along the Jordan Valley, but that Israel still lacks "a sense of direction". The Defense Minister believes that a peace deal is closer today than it was during the Camp David talks in 2000. He also warned that US military aid could be at risk if no deal is reached. (*Ynetnews*)

According to *Ynetnews*, Chairman of the [Knesset] Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, Shaul Mofaz, met with EU Ambassadors in Israel and told them that the EU function is "to break the freeze" and encourage direct negotiation between Israel and the Palestinians. He added that the EU should not back a Palestinian unilateral declaration of State as this would only engender "another round of violence". (*Ynetnews*)

Egypt's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Maged Abdelaziz, said that President Obama's backing of a key Palestinian demand on the borders of its future State would help win UN recognition of a Palestinian State. But the Egyptian Ambassador said President Obama missed an opportunity to address other key issues including Israel's continued settlement activities, water, ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the return of refugees "which is a critical issue," and the Palestinian demand for East Jerusalem as its capital. (*AP*)

The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem condemned in the strongest terms the raid and sealing off of the Ibn Qudamah Mosque in East Jerusalem. The Israeli forces smashed the mosque's speakers and ordered the Palestinian public to avoid the mosque. (*Gulf News*)

A spokeswoman for Ir Amin said that the Israeli Interior Ministry planning committee gave final approval for the building of 620 homes in the East Jerusalem settlement of "Pisgat Ze'ev." (*AFP*)

UK Foreign Office Minister for the Middle East, Alistair Burt, called on Israel to "cease unhelpful and destabilizing activity" of settlement construction, in the wake of a decision to build 1,500 new Jewish-only homes in East Jerusalem. "I am deeply disappointed with Israel's announcement on 19 May to build up to 1,500 settlement units in the East Jerusalem settlements of Har Homa and Pisgat Ze'ev," the Minister said in a statement, noting that settlement activity is an obstacle to the path to peace. "It is illegal under international law and should stop", he said.

(*Ma'an News Agency*)

Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal said that Egypt had renewed its efforts to secure the release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in exchange for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners. (*Arab News*)

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Two young Palestinians were moderately wounded in Gaza when Israeli troops opened fire at a protest near the border fence, a medical source said. (*AFP*)

PA President Abbas called an urgent meeting of the PA leadership following President Obama's speech, a PLO official said. PLO Executive Committee Member Saeb Erakat said President Abbas affirmed his appreciation for President Obama's efforts to reach a comprehensive solution to the conflict and his remarks on the right to self-determination and dignity. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

President Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu held talks at the White House. In the [remarks](#) after the meeting, Prime Minister Netanyahu rejected a call by Mr. Obama to Israel to accept a return to territorial lines in place before the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, with mutual land swaps: "While Israel is prepared to make generous compromises for peace, it cannot go back to the 1967 lines - because these lines are indefensible". (www.whitehouse.gov)

A senior Israeli official said that President Obama demonstrated in his latest Middle East policy speech that "Washington does not understand what we face." The official said that Prime Minister Netanyahu was disappointed the speech did not address the Palestinian demand to repatriate to Israel millions of Palestinians. (*AP*)

Jordan today welcomed President Obama's call for the establishment of a Palestinian State based on the 1967 borders, saying it hoped that the speech would lead to an immediate resumption of direct talks between Israel and the Palestinians. "Obama's assertion that the establishment of a fully independent Palestinian State with the 1967 lines as its borders and which has frontiers with Jordan, Israel and Egypt is of paramount importance," Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh said. "This is the first time an American President states unequivocally the US vision of an independent Palestinian State within the June 4, 1967, borders," he said. (*DPA*)

Aides to President Obama were cited as saying today that President Obama did not think Prime Minister Netanyahu would ever make the concessions necessary to achieve a Middle East peace deal. (*The New York Times*)

The members of the Middle East Quartet issued a [statement](#) expressing "strong support for the vision of Israeli-Palestinian peace outlined by [United States] President Barack Obama on 19 May 2011. The Quartet agrees that moving forward on the basis of territory and security provides a foundation for Israelis and Palestinians to reach a final resolution of the conflict through serious and substantive negotiations and mutual agreement on all core issues". (www.un.org)

The Foreign Ministers of Poland, Germany and France said that they supported US President Obama's appeal to create a Palestinian State based on 1967 borders. (www.monstersandcritics.com)

Representatives of Fatah and Hamas would be in Moscow to discuss the recognition of a Palestinian State, a Palestinian official told Russian reporters. (*The Voice of Russia*)

Israeli opposition leader Tzipi Livni criticized Prime Minister Netanyahu's resistance to President Obama's vision for peace negotiations with the Palestinians. "An American President that supports a two-State solution represents the Israeli interest and is not anti-Israeli," Ms. Livni said. "President Obama's call to start negotiations represents Israel's interests." (*CNN*)

The Office of the Spokesperson for the UN Secretary-General issued [statement](#), which said: "On the Middle East peace process, the Secretary-General believes that President Obama has offered important ideas which could help the peace talks move forward, consistent with international positions and responding to the legitimate core concerns of both parties. He encourages Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas to respond as statesmen and peacemakers to this important speech. He hopes all sides will demonstrate a renewed determination to achieve a peace agreement that provides for two States living side by side in dignity, security and peace". (*UN News Centre*)

Israeli authorities have announced that Gaza's main borders would be closed today and Saturday. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel's Interior Minister, Education Minister, Environmental Protection Minister, and Science and Technology Minister, as well as the Knesset Speaker and Jerusalem's Mayor, were all set to participate next week in a festive ceremony celebrating "Ma'aleh Hazeitim", a Jewish compound in the heart of the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Ras al-Amud. (*Haaretz*)

Palestinian officials condemned an Israeli plan to build 1,550 housing units on annexed land around Jerusalem. PLO Executive Committee Member Saeb Erakat said that the Israeli move further hampered US efforts to revive Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. "When the whole world and US President Barack Obama are working to revive the negotiations and the peace process, the Israeli government is determined to undermine and sabotage these efforts," Mr. Erakat said. (*Reuters*)

The IDF will apparently seek the death penalty for the murderers of five family members in the West Bank settlement of "Itamar" in March. This would be the first time it had sought a sentence of death since the mid-1990s. (*Haaretz*)

The Turkish charity whose ship was raided by Israeli commandoes last year said that a new flotilla to deliver aid to Gaza was set to set sail next month with more than 1,500 activists in 15 ships. Humanitarian Aid Foundation (IHH) President Bülent Yildırım said in a press conference that IHH planned to set sail with participants from more than 100 countries "for humanity". (*Today's Zaman*)

As a new aid convoy to Gaza gets ready to sail at the end of June, organizers say that they are willing to have their cargo inspected and their ships escorted by international observers. Israel dismissed the move as a "publicity stunt", while supporters of the flotilla in the EU questioned the legal necessity of such an escort. (*Hürriyet*)

A Facebook campaign urging Palestinian refugees to march in Jerusalem has won tens of thousands of supporters. Activists urged people to mass on the frontiers after noon prayers as they seek to force the issue of Palestinian refugees back on to the world agenda. (*The Daily Telegraph*)

Internal PLO documents show that the PA considered asking the UN to recognize a Palestinian State with the 1967 borders as early as a week before Prime Minister Netanyahu took office in March 2009. But over the two years since, Palestinian negotiators have repeatedly cautioned PA President Abbas that such a move could damage Palestinian interests. (*Haaretz*)

Human Rights Watch said that Israel should conduct prompt, thorough, and independent criminal investigations into the killings of protesters by military forces during the commemoration of the *Nakba* Day. (www.hrw.org)

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Israeli forces shot dead a Palestinian teenager in Gaza. According to a military spokeswoman, the forces opened fire when the teenager crawled toward a border fence in Al Bureij refugee camp. (*Ma'an News Agency, IMEMC*)

Fatah official Nabil Sha'ath said that the campaign to win UN endorsement for a Palestinian State would continue despite US opposition. "Now that [Israeli Prime Minister] Benjamin Netanyahu has proved that he rejects the peace process, there is no doubt that we shall continue with the strategic objective of turning to the United Nations in September", he said, referring to Mr. Netanyahu's declaration in the Oval Office on 19 May.

He continued by saying that the goal of the Palestinians was to win United Nations recognition of their State on the 1967 borders. (*AFP*)

According to reports, eight Palestinian factions affiliated with the PLO indicated that they would not nominate candidates for the Government of technocrats proposed in a unity deal signed in Cairo. The factions were protesting what was being called a "bilateral monopoly" between Fatah and Hamas in discussions over the unity Government. Signatories included the Democratic and Popular Fronts for the Liberation of Palestine, Palestinian People's Party, the Palestinian Democratic Union, the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front, Palestinian Liberation Front, the Arat Liberation Front, and the Palestinian Arab Front. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Eight Palestinians, including four children, were injured in clashes with settlers near the West Bank city of Hebron. According to witnesses, settlers threw stones and the army fired tear-gas canisters and stun grenades. (*Ma'an News Agency, IMEMC*)

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US President Obama, in his [speech](#) to the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), reiterated his call for an Israeli-Palestinian peace based on their pre-1967 borders. Mr. Obama said his position has "been misrepresented several times", adding that mutually agreed swaps means that Israel would not be returning to the pre-1967 lines, but rather that the lines would form the basis for talks. President Obama also promised to fight any efforts to isolate Israel at the United Nations, repeating that Palestinian efforts to win recognition as an independent State at the UN will fail. He also sought to reassure Israel's supporters of general US backing for Israel's security: "Even while we may at times disagree, as friends sometimes will, the bonds between the United States and Israel are unbreakable, and the commitment of the United States to the security of Israel is ironclad", he said, adding that Washington is going "beyond" regular military assistance to Israel in order to help "maintain Israel's qualitative military edge". (www.aipac.org)

In a response to President Obama's speech to the AIPAC, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu pledged to work for renewed peace talks: "I would like to express my appreciation of President Obama's speech before the AIPAC conference. I am a partner to President Obama's wish to promote peace and I appreciate his efforts in the past and present to achieve this goal. I am determined to work with President Obama to find ways to renew peace talks". (*Haaretz*)

Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri slammed President Obama's speech to the AIPAC, saying a call to Hamas to recognize Israel would go

unanswered. The Hamas spokesman said that the speech showed the US administration was "not a friend to the people of the region". (*Ma'an News Agency, Haaretz, IMEMC*)

President Obama said in an interview that a unilateral UN recognition of an independent Palestinian State would be a meaningless empty gesture, adding that Hamas and Fatah must consolidate to form a clear stance on Israel before peace talks could resume. (*BBC*)

In an interview with ABC Television's "This Week", Jordan's King Abdullah II warned that the prolonged stalemate in the Middle East peace process would lead to another war between Israel and the Palestinians. "I just have a feeling that we're going to be living with the status quo for 2011... Whenever we accept the status quo, we do so until there is another war", he said. "If you look to the past 10 years, every two to two-and-a-half years, there is either the intifada or a war or a conflict. So looking back over the past 12 years, my experience shows me that if we ignore the Israeli-Palestinian issue, something will burst". (*AFP*)

PA President Abbas met with Jordanian Prime Minister Marouf al-Bakhit in Amman. President Abbas said that the Palestinians "are not trying to isolate Israel by attempting to achieve UN recognition of the Palestinian State", but were in fact asking for the recognition of Palestine as an occupied State". (*Petra News Agency, The Jerusalem Post*)

Palestinian leaders had asked the League of Arab States to hold a special meeting to discuss US President Obama's latest speech on peace talks with Israel, according to media reports. The meeting would focus on Israel's rejection of the proposals raised by President Obama and on the Arab response to the address. (*RIA Novosti*)

The Israeli non-governmental organization Peace Now reported that Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak had approved construction of 294 new homes in the West Bank settlement of Beitar Ilit. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Town officials from Salfit reported that a group of Palestinian women from the village of Iskaka were assaulted by a group of 15 settlers near the Kfar Tappuah settlement. The women were on the main road between Za'atara and Yasuf, when a group of settlers chased them, throwing stones and causing panic as the group sought shelter. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

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Gaza police arrested a man they said was attempting to plant an explosive device outside a supermarket in Gaza City. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman said that Israel was ready to resume peace negotiations with the Palestinians "at any moment with no preconditions". (*Haaretz*)

British Foreign Secretary William Hague said after meeting with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in London: "I particularly welcome President Obama's clear message that the borders of Israel and Palestine should be based on 1967 lines with agreed land swaps. We have called on the US to make such a commitment as part of the process of re-establishing negotiations on the basis of clear parameters. This is to us a significant and valuable act of American leadership." (*www.fco.gov.uk*)

Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon told journalists that Israel had a moral and legal obligation to demand the 850,000 Jews who had fled Arab lands after the 1948 war be given attention equal to that afforded to Palestinian refugees. He said that if a Palestinian State was created, then that country, not Israel, must assume responsibility for the Palestinian refugees. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Egyptian Ambassador to the PA, Yasser Othman, said that Egypt would counter any external pressure that could endanger the progress of the Palestinian unity process. Speaking with *Ma'an News Agency*, the Ambassador said Egypt "hopes all foreign players try to bolster Egypt's efforts to secure Palestinian reconciliation, and maintain the ceasefire [agreement] between the Palestinians and Israel." (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Council of the European Union, in its Conclusions, called for an urgent resumption of direct negotiations leading to a comprehensive solution of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. It reiterated its readiness to recognize a Palestinian State "when appropriate", stressing that negotiations were the best way forward. The Council also welcomed intra-Palestinian reconciliation. (*www.consilium.europa.eu*)

At their regular monthly meeting, European Union ministers said they would back US President Obama's call for a peace treaty between Israel and the Palestinians based on the 1967 borders. Catherine Ashton, Vice-President and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, said that the EU's position has been that of support for the peace talks that should be based on the 1967 lines, with land swaps. Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt said that on some of the key issues, President Obama was "very much on the European line". He also criticized Prime Minister Netanyahu's rejection of the 1967 borders as "indefensible", saying "the only defence that is possible is peace." (*Haaretz*)

Several names had been agreed upon for the new technocrat Government being compiled by Fatah and Hamas officials in Cairo. Fatah national relations official Diab Al-Loh said none of the names would be announced until the Government had been established, and meetings between all factions had been concluded. The next meeting between Fatah and Hamas in Cairo was "soon", and will focus on the restructuring of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Fatah member Azzam al-Ahmed said that the Russian Federation supported the Palestinians submitting the independent State idea for a vote at the United Nations, although he failed to specify whether Moscow had also promised to vote yes. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov reaffirmed Russia's backing for the Palestinian reconciliation process. He said rival Fatah and Hamas leaders had further bridged their differences and signed a new statement detailing how a future State involving all the Palestinian factions will work. He also welcomed municipal elections scheduled for October, saying they would provide for the democratic and efficient building of a new peaceful regime in the region. "We do not intend to unilaterally declare independence", Mr. Ahmed said after meeting Foreign Minister Lavrov. The Moscow meeting represented one of Russia's most serious involvements in the stalled Middle East process in recent years. (*AFP, The Voice of Russia*)

At a meeting in Jerusalem, the World Bank announced that it would be overseeing the creation of a \$45 million Hebron wastewater treatment plant. Mariam Sherman, Country Director for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, said: "We are very proud to be able to support the Palestinian Authority in this important project." (*The Jerusalem Post*)

A 32-year-old Palestinian was killed and another injured when a smuggling tunnel under the Gaza-Egypt border collapsed. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel's military judges issued a six-month jail sentence to a 15-year-old Palestinian boy from Bil'in. He was detained in January for participating

in non-violent protests against the separation wall. (*Ma'an News Agency, WAFA*)

Israeli forces arrested a 74-year-old Palestinian woman in the village of Arura, north of Ramallah, after raiding her house. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli soldiers arrested five Palestinians in Hebron. (*WAFA*)

PA Prime Minister Fayyad suffered a heart attack in Austin, Texas, where he was attending his son's university graduation, PA Spokesperson Ghassan Khatib said. A hospital spokesperson said that he was in good condition. (*Reuters*)

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Addressing a special joint session of the US Congress, Prime Minister Netanyahu said that he was willing to make "painful compromises" to reach a deal. For the first time, he acknowledged that some settlements would end up beyond Israel's borders and hinted at a softening of his line on Jerusalem. "Jerusalem must remain the united capital of Israel, but I believe that with creativity and with goodwill, a solution can be found".

He said Israel would be "generous" with the size of a Palestinian State, but "will not return to the indefensible boundaries of 1967". He also emphasized that no negotiations would happen with Hamas in the Palestinian Government and placed the blame for a stalled process on the Palestinians' refusal to accept a Jewish State. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Israeli security services decided to cancel the planned visit of Knesset members to Joseph's Tomb in Nablus due to Palestinian threats to forcefully prevent the visit. (*Haaretz*)

Israeli soldiers handed several Palestinian farmers demolition orders for four wells and agricultural facilities in the western area of Beit Ula, a town west of Hebron. (*WAFA*)

Israeli troops arrested 12 Palestinians in the West Bank and the Jordan Valley. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

In a press conference following last week's visit to Israel and the Gaza Strip, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos said that Israel should end the forced eviction of Palestinians from their homes in the occupied Palestinian territory. "Palestinians are utterly frustrated by the impact of Israeli policies on their lives," she said. "Their homes are regularly demolished. They cannot develop their communities. ... Freedom of movement is imperative for Palestinians to develop their economy and reduce dependence on humanitarian assistance." (*UN News Centre*)

Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad has been released from a Texas hospital and is expected to make a full recovery after a procedure to open a clogged artery. (*AP*)

25

PA President Abbas slammed the peace vision presented by Prime Minister Netanyahu and suggested that Palestinians now have their sights firmly set on seeking UN recognition of a Palestinian State in September. He added that Mr. Netanyahu's speech to the US Congress was filled with "falsehoods and distortions". Abbas told leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organization and his Fatah movement: "He did not say anything we can build on positively." (*AP*)

The outgoing Secretary-General of the Arab League, Amr Moussa, said Prime Minister Netanyahu's comments on what is necessary for peace with the Palestinians, "are unworkable and do not allow for peace". Mr. Moussa made the remarks on his Twitter account, saying that "when Netanyahu says Jerusalem will remain Israeli and will never be given to the Palestinians, I say that there will never be peace." (*The Jerusalem Post*)

In [remarks](#) to the British Parliament in London, President Obama said, "We share a common interest in resolving conflicts that prolong human suffering and threaten to tear whole regions asunder. ... And in the Middle East, we stand united in our support for a secure Israel and a sovereign Palestine." (*The White House*)

In London, President Obama's campaign to persuade Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron not to endorse a Palestinian bid for statehood was met with a noncommittal response. Mr. Cameron said that the time was not yet right for European leaders to decide on the Palestinian bid for UN recognition, adding, "We want to discuss this within the European Union and try and maximize the leverage and pressure [that] the European Union can bring on both sides to get this vital [peace] process moving". (*The Los Angeles Times*)

During a meeting in Paris with his French counterpart, Alain Juppé, Israel's Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman said that a Palestinian State could only be achieved through talks, urging European leaders to reject a unilateral statehood bid. The meeting was on the sidelines of the annual meeting of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. On his part Mr. Juppé urged Israelis and Palestinians to relaunch the peace process before September, adding that the status quo was untenable. He also pledged France's support for that process. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Egypt announced that beginning 28 May the Rafah border crossing would be open each day from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. except Fridays and holidays. Palestinians, except men aged 18 to 40 would not require a visa to enter Egypt, *MENA* said. The EU monitoring mission (EUBAM Rafah) would only be able to resume its work at the formal invitation of Israel and the PA and not as a result of unilateral action by Egypt. Benoit Cusin, the Spokesman for EUBAM, expressed concern that without the European monitors, international standards for security checks and passengers' rights might not be upheld. He also said that the Mission had not received a request to leave. Hamas released a statement welcoming Egypt's decision. Israel expressed concern, with Deputy Defense Minister Matan Vilani telling *Israel Radio* that Egypt's decision "symbolizes the first stage of a very problematic system for Israel." (*Haaretz, The Jerusalem Post*)

Palestinian liaison official, Raed Fattouh, said Israel opened Kerem Shalom crossing for the limited import of building materials designated for international development projects. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat and Israeli Interior Minister Eli Yishai announced that Jerusalem's municipal territory would expand by 250 dunums (25 hectares), incorporating part of the fields of Kibbutz Ramat Rahel, to build 1,600 apartments. The new project, which would be called Moradot Amona, lay within the pre-1967 Green Line, but 23 per cent was in what was formerly the no-man's land between Israel and Jordan. The plan still needed to be approved by the Jerusalem District Building and Planning Committee. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

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The Israeli navy opened fire at Palestinian fishing boats operating off the coast of Gaza, local sources said. No injuries were reported. (*WAFA*)

Sources close to PA President Abbas said that he will seek to form a Government of technocrats by mid-June which will accept the demands of

the Quartet, including recognition of Israel. (*Haaretz*)

French President Nicolas Sarkozy said that a Palestinian unity deal was "good news" for the Middle East peace process and that France would do everything it could to revive Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. (*AP*)

Quartet Representative Tony Blair told an audience of business leaders that President Obama's initiative was "an attempt to fill a vacuum which he sees as dangerous, particularly dangerous for Israel in the run-up to September." (*AP*)

In Gaza, Palestine Investment Fund President Mohammad Mustafa announced the establishment of a \$1 billion investment fund for the reconstruction of Gaza. He said that the reconstruction of the enclave would be a priority project, which would be launched as soon as details of the 4 May reconciliation agreement had been ironed out. Mr. Mustafa was accompanied by Azzam Ash-Shawwa, Al-Quds Bank manager in Ramallah, and Abdullah Al-Efranj, member of the Fatah Central Committee. The fund had global contributions, including \$200 million from Palestinian investors. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Dozens of Palestinians, along with international and Israeli activists, protested against the inauguration of the new settlement of "Har Hazeetim" in the East Jerusalem neighbourhoods of Silwan and Ras Al-Amoud. The IDF fired tear gas at the protestors and sent for reinforcements. Several Palestinians, including women, children, and the elderly were severely hurt by inhaling the gas. The inauguration ceremonies were attended by Israeli ministers, parliament members, and heads of political parties. (*Wafa*)

At a meeting with UNRWA Director of Operation in Jordan, Sandra Mitchell, Jordan's Director General of the Palestinian Affairs Department (PAD), Wajih Azaizeh, urged UNRWA to maintain the level of services provided to the refugees and called on donor countries to fulfil their obligations towards UNRWA. Ms. Mitchell said that she would work towards increasing UNRWA's budget in Jordan, stressing the importance of the cooperation and support the Agency receives from the PAD as well as other official departments. (*Petra*)

27

In a statement, the G8 called for a renewal of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians and expressed support for US President Obama's speech. "We are convinced that the historic changes throughout the region make the solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through negotiations more important, not less. ... The time to resume the peace process is now". (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Palestinian sources said that PA President Abbas appeared determined to see Salam Fayyad appointed as Prime Minister in the unity Government, despite widespread objection, as he believed that without Mr. Fayyad, the international criticism he had received because of the reconciliation agreement with Hamas could not be countered. (*Haaretz*)

More than a dozen Israeli intellectuals and public figures have signed a letter urging European leaders to officially recognize a Palestinian State, as "the peace process has reached its end". "As Israeli citizens, we announce that if and when the Palestinian people declare independence of a sovereign state that will exist next to Israel in peace and security, we will support such announcement of the Palestinian State with borders based on the 1967 lines, with needed land swaps on a 1:1 basis. In a statement on its website, the group wrote that "the Palestinian appeal to the United Nations to recognize a Palestinian State does not harm the Israeli interest and is not at odds with the peace process." The letter was initiated by the Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity Movement, a group which also organizes the weekly demonstrations in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah. (*Haaretz*)

The Council of the European Union has adopted a decision extending the European Union Border Assistance Mission for the Rafah Crossing Point between Egypt and Gaza, until 31 December 2011. (www.consilium.europa.eu)

The 118-nation Non-Aligned Movement in a statement demanded that Israel release a "substantial number" of Palestinian political prisoners as a "positive step" towards peace. At the end of a ministerial meeting in Indonesia, the movement reiterated its support for the creation of a Palestinian State based on the 1967 borders, a position it shares with the United States but which was rejected by Israel. They called on Israel to release Palestinian "political prisoners" including 300 under the age of 18, and 10 members of the Palestinian Legislative Council. "The issue is a central one and a practical and effective benchmark in the construction of a just peace in the region," the statement said. (*AFP*)

At the G8 Summit in Deauville, the Secretary-General spoke *inter alia*, about the Middle East peace process. He urged the international community to act urgently together to push the process, building on the vision laid out by US President Obama, and asked the parties directly concerned to seize the moment and take risks for peace. (*UN News Centre*)

General Assembly President Joseph Deiss briefed the press at UN Headquarters. Asked about the PA's bid for statehood, he said he could not speculate on a matter that was not yet before the Assembly. "The General Assembly cannot take the initiative, but we are ready to do our work, based on any recommendation from the Security Council," he said, adding that he was holding "very intensive" conversations to ascertain "whether this momentum exists or not". Hopefully, the situation would become clearer in June or July, he said. (www.un.org)

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The Arab League had endorsed a Palestinian bid to seek recognition at the UN of a Palestinian State within the 1967 borders. The League said that it would prepare documents to support the bid at the next General Assembly meeting in September in New York. Egypt's official MENA news agency said that the announcement came after an Arab ministerial meeting in Qatar. (*AP*)

After a four-year blockade, Egypt permanently opened the Rafah crossing point, now the Gaza Strip's main gateway to the outside world. (*AP*)

29

India affirmed a "continuing commitment to Palestine" and voiced support for "the Palestinian people's struggle for a sovereign, independent, viable, and united State of Palestine." Addressing the Non-Aligned Movement Committee on Palestine in Bali, India's Minister of State for External Affairs, E. Ahamed, added: "India welcomes the recent reconciliation agreement between Fatah and Hamas on the West Bank and Gaza." (*The Hindu*)

The PA criticized the Israeli Government for holding a special meeting in East Jerusalem to commemorate the 44th anniversary of the city's unification. The Israeli Government held its weekly meeting at the Tower of David Museum, which is located near the south-eastern part of Jerusalem's Old City. (*Arab News*)

A [statement](#) from *The Free Gaza Movement* welcomed a call from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urging Israel to end its blockade on Gaza, but responded to his call on nations to stop aid ships by insisting the mission would go ahead as planned. "We are not engaged in illegal activity in the Mediterranean; it is Israel's blockade of 1.5 million Palestinians that is illegal," a statement from organizers read. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli President Shimon Peres told UN Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiros that Israel supported the creation of a Palestinian State but maintained that the only way for it to be created was through negotiations with Israel. "The gaps between the sides are not so great and there is no doubt that at the end of negotiations, there will be significant differences between the opening and closing positions," Mr. Peres told Ms. Migiros, who was on an official visit to the region. (*Haaretz*)

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Israeli soldiers clashed with Jewish worshippers who tried to enter a religious site in Nablus without permission, the IDF said. The disturbances erupted when scores of religious Jews attempted to visit Joseph's Tomb without authorization shortly after hundreds of others had travelled there on an army-escorted tour. (*AFP*)

PA President Abbas was in Egypt for talks with the country's leadership on efforts to seek UN recognition for a Palestinian State, a military source said. Mr. Abbas also briefed Field Marshall Hussein Tantawi on his recent trip to Doha. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad said that the Palestinian State would be established on all territories occupied in 1967. His remarks came during a visit to Hebron, where he inaugurated a new community centre. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

An agreed-upon solution between Israel and the Palestinians is the only way to put an end to the status quo, the French Embassy in Israel said in a [statement](#), announcing the visit to the region of French Foreign Minister Alain Juppé. This issue was expected to be a main focus of Mr. Juppé's talks in Israel – his first as Foreign Minister – with Prime Minister Netanyahu, Foreign Minister Liberman and Defense Minister Barak. Mr. Juppé will arrive on Wednesday evening from Rome, where he is scheduled to meet with PA President Abbas. During his two-day stay, he is also scheduled to meet in Ramallah with PA Prime Minister Fayyad. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said that no one can prevent the recognition of a Palestinian State in the UN in September. "No one has the power to stop the decision to recognize a Palestinian State in the UN General Assembly in September. It can also be possible to make the decision there that the world is flat," he said. "It is impossible to recognize a Palestinian State without passing through the Security Council and such a move is bound to fail," he added. (*Haaretz*)

Palestinians south of Nablus reported seeing dozens of settlers set fire to plots of agricultural lands, an official said. Village officials said Palestinian fire crews were able to access the area and put out fires before significant damage was done. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

At a press conference held aboard the Mavi Marmara, organizers said 1,500 activists and 15 ships were set to take part in the "Freedom Flotilla II - Stay Human II," which would set sail in late June. (*DPA*)

Democratic Governments cannot stop their citizens from launching another pro-Palestinian flotilla to Gaza, Turkey's Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, said. (*Reuters*)

A vocal crowd of tens of thousands gathered in Istanbul to commemorate the anniversary of Israeli forces' attack on the aid flotilla headed to Gaza. (*DPA*)

Israeli forces demolished a building supplies shop in the northern West Bank village of Jinsafut, east of Qalqilya. Earlier the same day, Israeli forces demolished a home and a barn in the Bedouin village Arab Abu Farda, south of Qalqilya. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

PA Minister of Prisoners Affairs Issa Qaraqe urged the 137 State representatives at a meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement to support Palestinian efforts at the UN General Assembly to request an advisory opinion by the International Court of Justice on the issue of prisoners. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The IDF raided a restaurant in Ramallah and detained five Palestinians. (*Wafa*)

In an opening [statement](#) to the Human Rights Council's seventeenth Session in Geneva, High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay said "The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory remains of serious concern. I should like to note that I was disturbed by reports on events that transpired on 15 May when Palestinians commemorate 'Nakba Day.' I would like to remind the Government of Israel of its obligation to ensure that its security forces avoid the use of excessive force against civilians." (www.ohchr.org)

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Three Gazans were killed in a mysterious blast at a training camp used by militants of the Popular Resistance Committees near the Egyptian border, medics said. (*AFP*)

Spanish Consul-General in East Jerusalem, Alfonso Manuel Portales, announced that Spain would recognize a Palestinian State before September, after a meeting with Fatah Executive Council member Nabil Sha'ath. Mr. Portales also said that Spain was encouraging other European countries to recognize a Palestinian State at the UN in September.

The Ministerial Council of the Arab League decided to form a higher committee that would be tasked with supervising and monitoring the implementation of the reconciliation agreement between Fatah and Hamas. The committee will be headed by Egypt, and its members are the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, Yemen, Algeria and Morocco. (*IMEMC*)

The PA plans to approach the UN Security Council in July to begin the process of getting Palestine recognized as a full member of the UN and to assure a vote on the matter by the General Assembly in September, *Haaretz* has learned. (*Haaretz*)

The EU granted €6 million to the PA to support the development, cultural, educational, health, humanitarian and human rights sectors in Jerusalem. (*Wafa*)

The German Government pledged to support the PA with approximately €42 million in 2012. (*Wafa*)

PA Prime Minister Fayyad and Finland's Representative, Pia Rantala-Engberg, signed a contribution agreement of €2 million to support the PA. (*Wafa*)

Speaking at a press conference with Japan's Representative to the Palestinian Authority, PA Prime Minister Fayyad said that the PA was facing a financial crisis because funds pledged by donor nations were not arriving on time. (*AFP*)

Israel allowed 280 trucks of goods and aid into Gaza through the Kerem Shalom terminal. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics said that Palestinian exports during March 2011 increased by 20.7 per cent compared to February 2011 to reach \$68.3 million. (*Wafa*)

PA Prime Minister Fayyad, a representative of Japan and a representative of the EU jointly marked today the \$3.8 million (€2.5 million) contribution by the Japanese Government to the fourth payment under the PA's "Private sector reconstruction in Gaza" programme. The programme was the largest initiative of direct financial support of the private sector in the Gaza Strip since Israel's "Operation Cast Lead". (*reliefweb.int*)

A bill had been initiated in the Knesset calling for neighbourhoods in Jerusalem to be referred to by Hebrew names only. The bill had been endorsed by many Knesset Members. (*ynetnews*)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said in his speech on the eve of "Jerusalem Day" commemorating the 1967 annexation of East Jerusalem that he planned to authorize more building in the city and that Jerusalem would never be divided. (*AP*)

The Association for Civil Rights in Israel called on Jerusalem's new police chief to "fundamentally change" what it said was his officers' violent treatment of the city's Palestinian residents. In a report timed to coincide with the anniversary of Israel's 1967 occupation of East Jerusalem, the group said that over the past two years it had received a rising number of complaints and mounting evidence of abuses suffered by Palestinian residents. "Residents do not view the Jerusalem Police District Police as a body meant to serve and protect them. ... Rather in their eyes, it is a hostile, alien force whose power is chiefly used against them, ignoring basic needs and security and instead favouring the interests of Jerusalem's Jewish population," the group said in the report. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli settlers injured two Palestinians in the Sinjil village near Ramallah. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel was preparing to block the next flotilla, with the Israel Navy holding takeover drills and mobilizing reserve combatants, on the assumption that the large number of vessels planning to take part in the flotilla would require reinforcements. The preparations included intelligence surveillance, based mainly on open communications and Internet sites. The navy was focusing on riot control measures this time, saying they would use force as a last resort. (*Haaretz*)

Israeli troops arrested 12 suspected members of Islamic Jihad near the northern West Bank town of Jenin, the IDF said. Palestinian security forces confirmed the arrests, saying two of those detained were women. (*AFP*)

Israeli forces detained Hamas PLC member Nizar Ramadan at a checkpoint near Bethlehem. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli authorities extended the administrative detention of former Palestinian minister and legislator for the Hamas party Nayef Rajoub for an additional six months. He had spent six months in detention. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Following the example of this month's *Nakba* Day marches, Palestinians and their supporters were preparing to launch another multi-pronged campaign this week to mark the *Naksa*, or setback, which refers to the Arab defeat and territorial losses in the 1967 Six-Day War. The website "Third Palestinian Intifada" and its Facebook page, "Countdown to the Third Palestinian Intifada," have posted detailed plans for marches on Israel's borders with Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Gaza, as well as processions to Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque, on three separate dates before and during the war's anniversary. The group's "plan of action" calls for mass rallies on 3, 5 and 7 June. (*The Jerusalem Post*)
