

Division for Palestinian Rights

Chronological Review of Events Relating to the Question of Palestine

**Monthly media monitoring review
August 2011**

Monthly highlights

- Israeli Supreme Court orders dismantling of largest illegal settlement outpost in the West Bank ([2 August](#))
- Israel approves construction of 900 new homes in Har Homa ([4 August](#))
- Jailed Fatah leader warns of massive regional protests if Washington vetoes Palestinian membership at the United Nations ([10 August](#))
- Israel's Interior Minister approves construction of 1,600 new settler homes in East Jerusalem ([11 August](#))
- Syrian forces attack Palestine refugee camp in Latakia with heavy gunfire ([14 August](#))
- Israeli Defense Minister approves the building of 277 apartments in the West Bank settlement of "Ariel" ([15 August](#))
- Quartet issues statement on Israel's announcements to advance planning for new housing units ([16 August](#))
- Four successive attacks by Palestinians kill 7 and injure 30 Israelis along the Israel-Egypt border ([18 August](#))
- Israel carries out air strikes over the Gaza Strip following attacks in southern Israel ([19 August](#))
- Quartet condemns attack on southern Israel ([20 August](#))
- China and India confirm support for the Palestinian bid for recognition by the United Nations in September ([24 August](#))
- El Salvador and Honduras recognize Palestine as an independent State ([25 and 26 August](#))
- Palestinians handed legal opinion warning of risks involved with its bid for statehood and membership at the United Nations ([25 August](#))
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I

Israeli forces shot dead two Palestinians during an early morning raid on the Qalandiya refugee camp near Ramallah in the central area of the West Bank. Witnesses told *Ma'an News Agency* that soldiers stormed the camp at dawn and that, as they ransacked homes, confrontations erupted between the soldiers and local residents. A spokeswoman for the Israeli military told reporters that a riot broke out during a "routine arrest procedure".

Soldiers had opened fire after five of them had been injured by stones, she added. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas had taken a strategic decision to go to the United Nations, and that Israel did not expect him to back down from it. Mr. Netanyahu, who spoke before the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee of the Knesset, said that President Abbas would get what he wanted from the United Nations without negotiations with Israel. He added: "The Palestinian request will be considered by the Security Council. We are working on an American veto, but the veto will not stop Palestinians from getting a majority vote in the UN, which will increase Palestinian intransigence, and no Israeli Government is willing to accept the Palestinian terms." (*Wafa*)

Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Executive Committee member Saeb Erakat said that the international community's approval of Palestinian membership in the United Nations supports the two-State solution. In individual meetings with the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, Roberterry, the Representative of the European Union to the PA, Christian Berger, and the US Deputy Consul-General, Mr. Erakat stressed that the Palestinian

bid for full United Nations membership did not conflict with the peace process or its terms of reference, nor did it conflict with the signed agreements, relevant international resolutions, the Road Map for peace or the Arab Peace Initiative. (*Wafa*)

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat released a new report entitled "[Displacement and insecurity in Area C of the West Bank](#)". Acting United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator Ramesh Rajasingham said: "This new report, based on field visits to 13 communities in Area C, found that in most of these communities Palestinian families are being forced to leave due to the restrictive policies and practices of the Israeli authorities, including movement and access restrictions, settlement activity and restrictions on Palestinian construction, along with insufficient law enforcement on violent settlers. All of this is increasing the vulnerability of these communities." (www.ochaopt.org)

2

Israeli warplanes struck two targets in the northern and southern Gaza Strip, with no casualties reported. Israeli aircraft fired at a target in Beit Lahiya in the northern Gaza Strip causing material damage but no human casualties, medical sources told a *Ma'an News Agency* correspondent. Israeli jets had also fired missiles at a smuggling tunnel in the Al-Brazil neighbourhood of Rafah, in southern Gaza, causing material damage only. An spokeswoman for the Israeli army said: "The sites were targeted in response to the rocket fired from the Gaza Strip at Israel's southern communities during the previous day, moderately injuring a woman." (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel was willing to begin new Middle East peace talks using the 1967 lines as a basis for negotiations if the Palestinians dropped their bid for United Nations membership, an Israeli Government official confirmed. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that Israel had been working with Washington and members of the Quartet to draw up a new framework that could relaunch stalled talks. But the Palestinians were unimpressed, dismissing the reports as a public relations exercise. PLO Executive Committee member Saeb Erakat said that Mr. Netanyahu should announce that the 1967 borders are the basis for negotiations and announce a halt to the building of settlements on Palestinian land, including East Jerusalem.

(*AFP*)

Senior Palestinian official Yasser Abed Rabbo called for "millions" to take to the streets to call for United Nations membership. "This is the people's battle," he told *AFP*. "We want popular campaigns and public activities and media campaigns coordinated in cities across the world and in the Palestinian territories to support the Palestinians in going to the United Nations in September," he said. "The campaign would be called 'Palestine 194' since the Palestinians hope to become the 194th Member of the United Nations," he added. Mr. Abed Rabbo assured that the mobilization would be entirely peaceful, with protesters "not throwing a stone or even a flower". (*AFP*)

A senior official said that Israel might have to call up military reservists to deal with the mass demonstrations that the Palestinians were expected to stage next month as they seek United Nations membership. Shaul Mofaz, head of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, told a military radio station that the possibility that Israel would be required in September to mobilize its reservists was very high. The Israeli military was looking at various scenarios involving Palestinian demonstrations and was preparing for the possibility, he added. (*AFP*)

PLO Central Committee member and special envoy to PA President Abbas, Hanan Ashrawi said that she had urged US officials this week to support, or at least not block, the Palestinian bid for statehood in September, adding that the US leaders should "not use their veto against something which is part of their own policy and part of international law, namely the Palestinian right to independence and self-determination and statehood".

(*AFP*)

Speaking to members of the PA diplomatic corps, Fatah Central Committee member Nabil Sha'ath said that Palestine's bid for United Nations membership would improve the chances of negotiations with Israel, and added: "By seeking recognition, we make negotiations more possible, more equal and more doable." He dismissed criticisms that the United Nations bid was a unilateral move, saying that every country had the right to declare independence unilaterally, which would be followed by recognition through bilateral relations; finally, world recognition could be achieved multilaterally. (*Wafa*)

The Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee said in a report prepared by a team led by Knesset member Yonathan Plesner of Kadima, that the recognition of a Palestinian State at the United Nations this September would harm Israel's standing in the international arena and could lead to a continued state of escalation, *Israel Radio* reported. In the report, the Committee also stated that the Israel Security Agency believed that if the peace process were restarted, it would be possible to prevent the Palestinian initiative, adding that the Palestinian strategy had worked and predicted that the General Assembly would agree to recognize a Palestinian State. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Following a [statement](#) the previous day by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, Roberterry, calling "upon the Israeli authorities to exercise maximum restraint and thoroughly investigate the incident", the European Union (EU) urged Israel to carry out an inquiry into the killing of two Palestinians by Israeli soldiers in the Qalandiya refugee camp in the West Bank. "We call on the Israeli authorities to exercise restraint and thoroughly investigate the incident," said EU Spokesman Michael Mann. The incident took place during the night Sunday and Monday after soldiers entered the camp before dawn and clashes broke out, Palestinian officials said. (*AFP*)

The EU announced that it would contribute €22.5 million to help the PA pay salaries and pensions for around 83,000 Palestinian public service workers and pensioners. The EU announced that the money would be channeled through PEGASE, a European mechanism of support to the Palestinians, a statement said. "This is a clear message of our solid commitment toward the Palestinian people at this critical time," said the EU representative to the occupied Palestinian territory, Christian Berger. (*Ma'an news*)

Israel announced that it would permit the export of textiles and furniture from the Gaza Strip for the first time since it had imposed the blockade.

The goodwill gesture for the month of Ramadan, which was approved by Defense Minister Ehud Barak had been recommended by Major-General Eitan Dangoth, coordinator of Government activities in the Territories. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The Israeli Supreme Court issued an unprecedented ruling ordering the State to dismantle the largest illegal settlement outpost in the West Bank by April 2012. The decision followed a petition filed by the Peace Now Movement. Supreme Court President Dorit Beinisch harshly criticized the Israeli Government for failing to dismantle the outpost of Migron, which was home to some 50 families, despite earlier promises that it would do so. "There is no doubt that according to Israeli law, no settlements can be built on private lands of Palestinians," Ms. Beinisch said. It was the first time the Supreme Court had ordered the State to dismantle an outpost in the West Bank, and the move brought the subject back onto the Court's agenda. (*Haaretz*)

Forty-two ministers and members of the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee of the Knesset signed a petition demanding that Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu resolve the housing crisis in Israel by expanding settlements in the OPT, including Jerusalem. In the petition, they stated: "Due to the housing crisis in the country, we demand the Israeli Government to start building in the West Bank and Jerusalem to resolve the problem."

Thousands of Israelis set up tents in cities, protesting the housing crisis and the high cost of living. (*Wafa*)

Israeli police issued restraining orders against the residents of several West Bank settlements, including the settlement of "Yitzhar", for their alleged involvement in attacks against Palestinians. Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Central Command Chief Major-General Avi Mizrahi signed the orders on the recommendation of the Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency). (*Xinhua*)

House demolitions by the Israeli authorities in the West Bank escalated alarmingly. Figures released by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) showed that 700 people had been displaced in the first six months of 2011, compared with 594 in the whole of 2010. UNRWA was concerned that 15 per cent of those displaced were Palestine refugees. The vast majority of demolitions had been carried out in Area C, which made up 60 per cent of the West Bank and was under full Israeli control for the purposes of security, planning and zoning policy, and for assessing where building could take place. The United Nations estimated that there were more than 3,000 demolition orders were outstanding in Area C, including 18 issued to schools. Most demolitions had targeted already vulnerable Bedouin and herding communities, leaving those communities facing a real risk of complete destruction. (www.unrwa.org)

UNRWA Spokesman Chris Gunness said that the link between Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank and the displacement of Palestinians was "abundantly clear". He said that many displacements had taken place where settlements were expanding and that they had been accompanied by an upturn in attacks by settlers. Palestinians "were being thrown off their ancestral lands to make way for settlers", which was destroying the fabric of those communities and ultimately contributing to a demographic shift in terms of the ethnic make-up of the West Bank. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Legal Aid Unit of the Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR) was able to ensure reparation for the family of Raya Salama Abdul Karim Abu Hajjaj, 64, and Majeda Abdul Karim Abu Hajjaj, 37, from Juhor al-Dik area, southeast of Gaza City, who had been killed by Israeli forces during Operation Cast Lead, which had taken place from 27 December 2008 to 18 January 2009. The PCHR was able to reach a settlement with representatives of the Israeli military prosecution by which an amount of NIS 500,000 (approximately \$147,000) would be paid to the victims' families in return for closing the claim. That set a judicial precedent, as it was the first time that PCHR was able to ensure compensation for victims of Operation Cast Lead in the Gaza Strip. PCHR was following up on hundreds of claims on behalf of other victims of the Operation. (www.pchrgaza.org)

3

Two Grad rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip on southern Israel. The first rocket exploded in an open area between Sderot and Kiryat Gat and the second near Ashkelon. No injuries or damage were reported. (*Ynetnews*)

An Israeli military court convicted Hakim Awad, an 18-year-old Palestinian, after he admitted that he and his brother, 19-year-old Amjad Awad, had killed a Jewish couple and three of their children in their home in the settlement of "Itamar", an army spokeswoman said. (*Reuters*)

Addressing an Arab Peace Initiative subcommittee gathering in Doha, the Minister of State for International Cooperation of Qatar, Khalid bin Mohamed al-Attiyah, said that Qatar would support a bid for the recognition of Palestinian statehood at the United Nations in September. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Palestinian Central Elections Commission announced its schedule for the upcoming municipal elections to be held in the West Bank on 22 October. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, there were 144 Israeli settlements and 518,794 settlers in the West Bank in 2010. (www.pcbs.gov.ps)

4

The IDF launched air strikes against two Gaza City training facilities operated by the armed wing of Hamas. Hamas reported that the two facilities had been destroyed. Two Palestinian children were slightly injured in the first strike. The IDF said that an Israeli Air Force aircraft had targeted two "terror activity sites" in the northern Gaza Strip and a smuggling tunnel in the southern Gaza Strip in response to rocket fire. (*Haaretz, Wafa, www.idf.il*)

Israeli soldiers arrested Mohammed Abu Ayash, a 25-year-old Palestinian, after beating him at the entrance of the town of Beit Ummar, north of Hebron, according to witnesses. (*Wafa*)

IDF soldiers arrested two wanted Palestinian terror suspects in the West Bank. The suspects were taken in for questioning by the security forces. (*Ynet News*)

American-Israeli photojournalist Mati Milstein filed a complaint against the Foreign Press Association of Israel. He said that he was covering a Palestinian protest in Nabi Salih when tear gas canisters were fired directly at the reporters covering the protest, who were clearly visible with yellow jackets labelled "PRESS" or "TV". When Mr. Milstein went to complain to the soldiers about their actions, he was threatened with being arrested and told to stand against a wall. Mr. Milstein told *The Jerusalem Post* that "this event is the product of a military environment that increasingly sees the media as an enemy or a fifth column rather than as one of the key elements required for the maintenance of a democratic, transparent State" and that many reporters had had their rights violated but had decided not to complain out of fear of losing their credibility or of harming their career. (*IMEMC*)

The Arab Ministerial Subcommittee of the Arab Peace Initiative, at the end of its meeting in Doha, issued a statement affirming "the Arab decision to go to the UN, and inviting its members to recognize Palestine as a State on the basis of the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and move to request its full membership in the UN". A follow-up meeting was scheduled for the second week of September. (*Wafa*)

PA Foreign Minister Riad al-Maliki said that the Palestinian bid for United Nations membership was the right path to take even though the PA leadership had been presented with a reformulated framework for negotiations. He said: "US and European efforts are being made recently in an attempt to reach a formula that meets our ambitions and we are waiting. But even if this formula is presented, we will not backtrack on the September bid." (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Zimbabwean Government formally announced its support for the right of the Palestinians to self-determination and to form an independent Palestinian State on the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as its capital, based on international law and relevant international resolutions. (*Wafa*)

Israel summoned the Ambassador of Honduras during the week to protest a statement by President Porfirio Lobo according to which his country would support the Palestinian bid for recognition as a State. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Lebanese Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Minister Adnan Mansour met a visiting Palestinian delegation headed by the Hamas representative in Lebanon, Ali Barakeh, requesting the formation of a Lebanese ministerial committee tasked with drafting a strategy in support of Palestinian refugees' right of return to their homeland, Palestine. Mr. Barakeh said: "Mansour showed full understanding to our cause. He deemed the refugees' issue the main essence of the Palestinian issue. He also stressed Lebanon's strong attachment to the Palestinian's right of return." (*Iloubnan.info*)

The Israeli Interior Ministry announced that the Zoning Commission of the Municipality of Jerusalem had authorized the construction of 930 housing units in the "Har Homa" settlement. It was estimated that construction would commence within two or three years. (*Ynetnews*)

Israel's Interior Ministry gave final approval for the construction of 900 new homes in the East Jerusalem settlement neighbourhood of "Har Homa", a Ministry spokeswoman said. (*AFP*)

Israel released some 200 Palestinian security prisoners who had almost completed their terms to ease overcrowding in the prisons. Among those

released was one of Hamas' founders and top leaders in the West Bank, Sheikh Hassan Yousef, who had been imprisoned for five years and had six weeks remaining in his prison term. The Israel Prison Service said that it had released the prisoners as a gesture honouring the Ramadan holiday. (Haaretz)

5

Israeli police deployed in force in Jerusalem's Old City after limiting access to the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound ahead of the first Friday prayers during Ramadan. "More than 2,000 police and border guards were deployed in Jerusalem," said a police spokesman, adding that access had been blocked to the esplanade for Muslim men under the age of 45. "Among those aged 45 to 50 years, only the fathers of families with a permanent entry permit for Israel will be allowed to go on the esplanade," he said. Those measures were imposed as a precaution due to the risk of violence. Israel also closed Qalandiya checkpoint near Ramallah, which provides access to Jerusalem for the northern West Bank, from 9 p.m. on 4 August to 7 p.m. on 5 August. (AFP, Ma'an News Agency, ANASamed)

Israel carried out air strikes against targets in the Gaza Strip for two consecutive nights. Medical sources said five people were injured in the attacks.

An Israeli army spokeswoman said that forces targeted three tunnels in central Gaza Strip and a terror activity site, as well as a terror activity site in the southern Gaza Strip. The Israeli strikes took place hours after Palestinian militants fired rockets at an Israeli town situated 30 kilometres from the Gaza-Israel border. The attacks were "a response to four rockets fired into Israel in the past week," she said. (BBC News, Ma'an News Agency)

After days of heightened rocket fire from Gaza into Israel, the IDF redeployed the Iron Dome missile defence system near Ashkelon. The redeployment came a day after Ashkelon Mayor Benny Vaknin sent Prime Minister Netanyahu and Defense Minister Barak a letter imploring them to redeploy the missile defence system. (Haaretz)

The Foreign Ministry delayed the return of Israel's Ambassador to Honduras, Elyahu Lopez, in protest over the Honduran Government's announcement last week that it would recognize a Palestinian State at the UN. The Foreign Ministry said that the Ambassador would remain in Israel "for further consultations over the next few days". (Ynet News)

Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erakat said that an Arab delegation had set out to drum up support for the Palestinians' bid for United Nations recognition. Mr. Erakat said that at a meeting of Arab officials held that week in Qatar it had been decided to dispatch the delegation to meet individual Security Council members to urge them to accept Palestine as a full Member State in September. (AP)

South Sudan's Foreign Minister Deng Alor Kuol announced that his country intended to recognize an independent Palestinian State within the 1967 borders in a General Assembly vote. (WAFAP)

The PA ordered its security forces to prevent demonstrations planned for September from escalating into violent confrontations with Israel, especially on points of potential friction like the roadblocks and settlements. In similar messages relayed to the IDF, the PA made clear that it intended to prevent large-scale violent protests which would heighten tensions and undermine security cooperation between the two sides. The previous week PA President Abbas had called on all Palestinians to participate in non-violent marches as part of a series of events planned by the Authority for late September. Earlier that week, the General Secretary of the PLO Executive Committee, Yasser Abed Rabbo, announced plans to hold a mass rally on 20 September at the start of United Nations deliberations in New York. (Haaretz)

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton issued the following [statement](#):

I have been following the situation in East Jerusalem with concern and I am profoundly disappointed by yesterday's approval of more than 900 housing units in the settlement of "Har Homa" in East Jerusalem. The EU has repeatedly urged the Government of Israel to immediately end all settlement activities in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem. All settlement activities are illegal under international law. ... I believe there can be no sustainable peace in the Middle East without a two-State solution with the State of Israel and a viable and contiguous Palestinian State living side-by-side in peace and security. Settlement activity damages this prospect." (www.consilium.europa.eu)

Britain's Minister for the Middle East and North Africa, Alistair Burt, said: "I condemn yesterday's announcement by the Government of Israel to approve the construction of over 900 housing units which will expand significantly the illegal settlement of 'Har Homa' in East Jerusalem. Unilateral actions such as this undermine international efforts to build lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians and make the two-State solution harder to achieve. At a time when Israel's friends are working to restart negotiations, this decision is deeply concerning." (www.fco.gov.uk)

6

Israeli forces raided Beit Ummar, north of Hebron, and detained four Palestinians during a ceremony to honour Palestinian prisoners. Israeli soldiers fired tear gas and live ammunition during the raid. (Ma'an News Agency)

Hamas said in a statement that its security forces had detained two members of Tawhid wal-Jihad, a Salafist organization suspected of firing rockets at Israel. (AFP)

PA Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki said that numerous States would recognize a Palestinian State in the upcoming days and weeks. He named Honduras and South Sudan, saying they would be the first to declare their recognition. He also said that 122 States had recognized Palestine thus far. (Ynetnews)

During a meeting with Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki, Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla stressed Cuba's full support for the Palestinians' right to self-determination and sovereignty. He also assured Cuba's support of a Palestinian State based on the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital by voting on the issue at the upcoming session of the General Assembly. (WAFAP)

The Lebanese newspaper *An-Nahar* reported that Lebanon was set to recognize a Palestinian State "in the next few days". (The Jerusalem Post)

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

The Secretary-General is deeply disappointed by the recent approval by the Government of Israel to build more than 900 housing units in East Jerusalem. He reiterates that settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is contrary to international law, and he is concerned by provocative actions on the ground. The Secretary-General supports ongoing efforts to find a way to resume peace talks, and underlines that creating an environment that is conducive to progress is vital. (UN News Centre)

7

Three mortar shells fired from Gaza hit southern Israel, causing damage to a fence. No injuries were reported. (Haaretz)

Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said that he intended to ask the senior ministers comprising the "forum of eight" to cut all ties with the PA.

He said: "The Palestinian Authority is stepping up its efforts to try Israeli officers and senior officials at the International Tribunal in The Hague. [...] I will demand breaking off all ties with it – no treasury officials, not the water authority and no Foreign Ministry officials [will maintain ties with the PA]. You can't get security coordination [with Israel] and also try IDF soldiers at The Hague." (Haaretz)

Hamas and Fatah delegations met in Cairo to discuss ways to implement the reconciliation agreement the two factions had signed in April. Fatah Central Committee member Azzam al-Ahmad represented Fatah, while Hamas was represented by Political Bureau Deputy Chief Mousa Abu

Marzouk. Following a lengthy meeting, the parties agreed on the release of all political prisoners held in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. They also agreed to form a joint committee to supervise the reinstatement of joint institutions, the majority of which were shut down after Hamas' takeover of Gaza. Both parties agreed to meet again in early September. (*Ynetnews*)

Hamas Finance Ministry official Ismail Mahfouz said that civil servants in Gaza would not receive their July salaries until the end of August due to Government cash shortages. Mr. Mahfouz said that the Government of Gaza paid salaries to 40,000 employees. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli police entered the Haram al-Sharif compound and forcibly removed worshippers. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli security forces arrested two settlers from "Yitzhar", near Nablus, accused of violence against Palestinians, the Israeli news site *Walla* reported. The Israeli internal security service Shin Bet suspected that both men, aged 16 and 22, could be linked to a string of attacks on Palestinian mosques in the West Bank. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

8

Three mortar shells were fired from the Gaza Strip and exploded on Palestinian territory near Eshkol Regional Council, prompting the activation of the "color red" rocket alert system in Ashkelon Coast Regional Council, before the incident was declared a false alarm. (*Ynet News*)

Israeli Border Police officers prevented a Palestinian man from carrying out an attack with a knife in Hebron, police reported. The police said that during an initial investigation, the man admitted that he had gone to the Israeli Border Police post in order to stab soldiers. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Israeli forces delayed an ambulance from treating the victims of a car crash near Zatar checkpoint, south of Nablus in the northern West Bank, in which Anhar Sandouk, a 13-year-old girl died, witnesses and medics told *Ma'an News Agency*. Four other people, including Anhar's parents, were injured in the crash. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Supreme Court of Israel rejected a petition asking that the Government be ordered to deploy the Iron Dome rocket defence system along the border with Gaza. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

PLO Executive Committee member Saeb Erakat denied news of a Palestinian deferment of the plan to gain full United Nations membership and recognition of a Palestinian State within the 1967 borders. Following individual meetings with the US and Spanish Consuls-General, Mr. Erakat denied US offers or talks with the US Administration on formulas to resume negotiations, and indicated that the Palestinian bid to gain United Nations recognition did not contradict the terms of the peace negotiations. He called on European Union member States and the US Administration to oblige the Israeli Government to halt all settlement activities in the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to accept the two-State principle based on the 1967 borders to resume the peace process. (*Wafa*)

"Israel is prepared to make concessions, but the Palestinians have shown no indication of willingness on their own for compromise", Prime Minister Netanyahu told a group of 18 ambassadors from Asian, European, African and Latin American countries who were in Israel for a week of high-level meetings. "Six prime ministers, including myself, have come out in support of a Palestinian State, and two offered far-reaching concessions, but this hasn't helped," Mr. Netanyahu said, in reference to the concessions made by Ehud Barak in 2000 and Ehud Olmert in 2008. Mr. Netanyahu's comments came within the context of trying to get the ambassadors to convince their Governments not to support the Palestinian bid for recognition as a State at the United Nations in September. Mr. Netanyahu said that efforts were still underway to come up with a formula that would enable negotiations and keep the PA from turning to the UN. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The Deputy Foreign Minister, Gamini Peiris, affirmed his country's support of the PA intention to seek recognition of a Palestinian State at the United Nations in September. During his meeting with the Ambassador of Palestine to Sri Lanka and Maldives, Anwar al-Agha, Mr. Peiris said that Sri Lanka would continue its support for the Palestinian cause and the establishment of a Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as its capital. (*Wafa*)

Fatah member of the Palestinian Legislative Council Ashraf Jomah said that four committees would begin work the following week on outstanding areas in the reconciliation agreement between Fatah and Hamas. Mr. Jomah told *Ma'an News Agency* that the committees would tackle issues related to prisoners, passports, social reconciliation and the institutions shut down in Gaza and the West Bank following the 2007 infighting that divided the Palestinian territories under separate governments. He added that consideration of each issue should be completed before the next meeting between Fatah and Hamas, to be held in Cairo in early September. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A Nablus thoroughfare to An-Naquara village was reopened by Israeli forces after a nine-year closure. Residents in An-Naquara had been forced to travel on bypass roads to access the south, and farmers with land on either side of the road had been blocked from accessing their property. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

9

A 75-year-old Palestinian woman was injured by Israeli fire in the central Gaza Strip, medics said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Confrontations between Israeli soldiers and Palestinians erupted in Iraq Burin, a village near Nablus, witnesses said. No injuries were reported. (*Wafa*)

Ma'ariv reported that a jet with 15 Belgian horses to be used for riot control had arrived in Israel. According to a senior police source, Israel was to procure for September two vehicles mounted with water cannons, a special gun that fires multiple tear gas canisters at large distances and a machine that emits a disruptive sound. Police were also stocking up on tear gas, rubber-coated bullets and smoke grenades in anticipation of massive demonstrations when the Palestinians turn to the United Nations to seek recognition. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Palestinian security sources and Israel media reported that an IDF unit had arrested a number of Hamas operatives in the Hebron area. The sources said that Ayid Doudin, a senior member of the group, who had spent the previous five years in Israeli administrative detention and had been released in June, was among them. Among the other detainees were Yousef Abdul Aziz Mahmoud Haddosh, Ahmad Mazin Kalbouna from Nablus, Rami Yousef Darwish al-Qawasma and brothers Jalal and Mohammad Yaghmour. All were transferred to Etzion prison in the southern West Bank. The IDF confirmed the report. (*Ynet News, Xinhuanet, Ma'an News Agency*)

The Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, Riyad Mansour, said that the option of changing Palestine's status from observer entity to non-Member State was still being studied. Mr. Mansour told the Italian news agency Adnkronos International that becoming a non-Member State did not invalidate the right to become a Member State as recommended by several United Nations resolutions, such as resolution 181 II of 1947. He said that the ultimate goal was to obtain full United Nations membership like South Sudan, but that if that objective was not met, then Palestine would seek a status similar to that of the Vatican. The predictable US veto of the Palestinian bid would not end the process, he added, as the Palestinians could go back to the Security Council at an appropriate time. (*Ma'an News Agency, Ynet News*)

The PA had been seeking the support of Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries in its effort to get the United Nations to recognize Palestine as an independent State. PA Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki had visited Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago seeking support. Mr. Al-Maliki told the Caribbean Media Corporation that he was confident of the region's support for his country's bid for nationhood. "All responses were very encouraging to us and this really raises our expectations that things would move into the right direction," he said. CARICOM and Central American countries are expected to discuss the issue of Palestinian recognition at the third summit of CARICOM and the Central American Integration System, to be held in San Salvador on 19 August 2011. (*Caribseek - Daily Nation*)

Two Arab States will head the Security Council and General Assembly in September, when it is expected that a vote on the recognition of a Palestinian State will take place. Lebanon will hold the Presidency of the Security Council in September and Qatar will hold the Presidency of the General Assembly for one year starting next month. (*Ynet News*)

The head of the PLO General Delegation in Washington, D.C., Ambassador Maen Rashid Areikat, affirmed the need for the Palestinian community in the United States and US citizens to put pressure on the Administration and the Congress to support the Palestinian move at the United Nations in September. In a meeting with Palestinian community members, he said that the Delegation had prepared booklets on how to support the Palestinian bid. (Wafa)

The US Department of State said that it was deeply concerned by Israel's approval of new [settlement] construction in East Jerusalem. It said in a statement that such "unilateral actions work against efforts to resume direct negotiations and contradict the logic of a reasonable and necessary agreement between the parties". (Haaretz)

In a statement, Palestinian civil society groups said that Veolia, a French multinational company at the centre of a global boycott campaign, had announced major financial losses and that it would scale back its operations in several countries after a net loss of €67.2 million in the first half of 2011. It had also suffered a set back the previous week after a local council in London failed to select the company for a £300 million contract. "Veolia's loss of this contract, following its failure in a number of significant bids, is a clear sign that Veolia is paying a high price for its complicity in Israel's occupation and violations of international law," said Sarah Colborne, Director of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign. The news of Veolia's financial losses came shortly after Israeli agricultural exporter Agrexco, another target of the boycott campaign, had announced that it was facing a bankruptcy hearing in a Tel Aviv court. (Ma'an News Agency)

10

IDF Chief of the General Staff Lieutenant-General Benny Gantz visited the West Bank to inspect troop readiness in view of the potential violence that could follow the Palestinian bid for membership at the United Nations in September. (The Jerusalem Post)

"Palestinian security has taken all necessary measures to prevent [September] demonstrations from turning into violence," Adnan Dameri, spokesman for the PA security forces, told AP. The plan would allow marches and rallies in West Bank cities, but demonstrators would be kept away from Israeli settlements and military checkpoints. (AP)

The armed wing of Hamas reported that one of its fighters had been killed in an explosion at his home in Rafah, apparently while preparing explosives to use against the Israeli army. (MEMC)

Israeli soldiers injured 3 Palestinians and arrested 10 foreign activists participating in non-violent protests against the separation wall and Israeli settlements in Al-Walaja, a village north-west of Bethlehem, according to a member of the Popular Committee Against the Wall and Settlement. (MEMC, Wafa)

The Israeli army said that it was investigating Palestinian accusations that it was behind the cut in mobile communications, telephone and Internet services in the Gaza Strip. (Xinhua)

Israeli President Shimon Peres told a delegation of visiting Democratic members of the US Congress that he believed that it was still possible for Israel to reach peace with the Palestinians, *Israel Radio* reported. Mr. Peres said that both sides understood that they needed to overcome differences and renew negotiations before the General Assembly met in September. (Haaretz)

Prime Minister Netanyahu convened his senior ministers to discuss how Israel planned to cope with Palestinian efforts to secure United Nations recognition of a Palestinian State. Several of the ministers urged pre-emptive sanctions against the PA, but Defense Minister Barak objected, warning that such sanctions could lead to the collapse of the PA. Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz proposed a halt in the transfer of the customs duties that Israel collects on behalf of the PA. (Haaretz)

PLO Executive Committee member Saeb Erakat told *Ma'an News Agency* that there had been no coordination between Fatah and Hamas over the Palestinian bid at the United Nations in September, "but the door is open and we welcome them any time". (Ma'an News Agency)

Jailed Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti warned Washington that vetoing Palestinian membership at the United Nations would spark massive regional protests, *MENA* reported. (Ma'an News Agency)

Hamas official Kamel Abu Madi said: "The working procedures at the Rafah crossing are as usual and no improvement has occurred." He said that Egyptian authorities were still preventing Palestinians who had fled from Libya from entering Gaza. (Ma'an News Agency)

PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad presented the Cabinet with a report on the financial situation, which was described as "still difficult due to the shortage in foreign aid". He presented initial ideas on ways to lower the deficit. The Cabinet renewed calls on donors, mainly Arab countries, to provide financial support. (Wafa)

Hamas official Moussa Abu Marzouq said in an interview with *Al-Hayat* newspaper that internal pressure in Israel and changes in the composition of the Israeli negotiating team would lead to positive movement toward reaching a prisoner exchange deal that would include the release of captured IDF soldier Gilad Shalit. (Haaretz)

11

A Qassam rocket fired from the Gaza Strip exploded near a kibbutz. No injuries or damage were reported. (Ynetnews)

PA President Abbas held a telephone conversation with Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh on ways to make progress on the reconciliation agreement among Palestinian factions. (AnsaMed, Ma'an News Agency)

PA President Abbas met with a delegation of Democratic members of the Congress currently visiting the region and told them that the security of the future Palestinian State would be handled by a third party, suggesting the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. He also stressed that he was seeking a Palestinian State without settlements. (Ma'an News Agency, The Jerusalem Post)

A delegation of Arab foreign ministers headed by the Foreign Minister of Qatar will meet with representatives of the five permanent members of the Security Council the following week to persuade them to vote in favour of Palestinian membership in the United Nations, PLO Executive Committee member Saeb Erakat said. (AFP)

The Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, Riyad Mansour, said that recognition of an independent Palestinian State would be "an investment in peace". "If there is a global consensus on the two-State solution," he said, "then what is the problem with legislating the existence of the State of Palestine?" (Haaretz)

Indian Minister of State for External Affairs E. Ahamed said that India would vote in favour of the Palestinian request to gain full United Nations membership as an independent Palestinian State within the 1967 borders at the General Assembly in September following a meeting with the Ambassador of Palestine to India, Adly Sadeq. (Wafa)

Palestinian Christian leaders from the Bethlehem District called on Honduras to recognize the State of Palestine and support its admission to the UN, in a letter to the Honduran Foreign Minister Mario Canahuati. (The Palestine Telegraph)

Israel's Interior Minister Eli Yishai gave final approval for the construction of 1,600 new settler homes in East Jerusalem, his spokesman told *AFP*.

"He has approved 1,600 homes in 'Ramat Shlomo' and will approve 2,000 more in Givat Hamatos and 700 in Pisgat Ze'ev," he said. (AFP)

"This ['Ramat Shlomo'] approval and the reported plan for additional expansion in illegal settlements across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially occupied East Jerusalem, is further proof that this Government is committed to investing in occupation rather than peace," said Chief Palestinian Negotiator Saeb Erakat. (PLO Negotiations Affairs Department)

"Unilateral actions by the Israelis or Palestinians that appear to prejudice the outcome of the negotiations are counterproductive [...] these types of

[settlement] construction are illegitimate and not in the best interest of getting back to negotiations," a US Department of State official said. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Fatah said that it would fight Israeli settlement plans through legitimate means. Fatah rejected in a statement attempts by the Israeli Government "to solve its social and economic problems at the expense of the Palestinian peoples' rights and their occupied territory." (*Wafa*)

Robert H. Serry, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, expressed alarm at the announcement by the Government of Israel that it would develop new settlement units in East Jerusalem. The Special Coordinator would engage with Quartet partners on the issue. (www.unesco.org)

According to *Israel Army Radio*, Prime Minister Netanyahu reportedly agreed to apologize to Turkey for "tactical mistakes" made during the 2010 flotilla operation and to pay restitution to the families of those killed. In return, Turkey would agree to not pursue any additional claims against either Israel or IDF soldiers, but the deal fell apart. The failed agreement was reportedly the main point of conversation between Mr. Netanyahu and US President Obama in a telephone call the previous night. The White House said that the two leaders consulted "on regional issues and efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East". (*The Jerusalem Post*, www.whitehouse.gov)

Sweden would contribute SEK40 million (€4 million) in 2011 via PEGASE in direct support to the PA. An agreement had been signed by PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad and Swedish Consul General in Jerusalem Axel Wernhoff. Mr. Fayyad called on donors, especially Arab countries, to provide emergency aid to the PA. (www.sweden.gov, *Ma'an News Agency*)

The US Department of State sent a message through an intermediary to Gaza's Hamas leaders communicating that the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) would withdraw some \$100 million that it was currently spending in Gaza on health care, agriculture and water unless Hamas dropped its demand to audit US-based non-profit organizations. The message was sent after Hamas suspended the operation of the US-financed International Medical Corps for its refusal to submit to a Hamas audit. (*AP*, *The New York Times*)

UNRWA announced the indefinite suspension of its operations in Jenin and its refugee camp beginning that day. The organization called the step regrettable and said that it had come in response to continued threats to its employees and staff in the area. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

12

Dirar Abu Sisi, a Palestinian engineer reportedly abducted in February in Ukraine, told Israeli investigators that he had helped Hamas boost its rocket capabilities, according to information that emerged after an Israeli court lifted its gag order. (*Haaretz*, *Ynetnews*)

A spokesman from the French Foreign Ministry said: "Settlements in East Jerusalem, as in the West Bank, are illegal under international law, regardless of the justifications, including their claimed response to socioeconomic imperatives. This decision represents an additional obstacle to a just and lasting peace in which Jerusalem must become the capital of States, Israel and Palestine." (*The Jerusalem Post*, www.diplomatie.gouv.fr)

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton issued [a statement](#) on the Israeli settlement expansion in East Jerusalem. (www.consilium.europa.eu)

According to *Ma'ariv*, Israel offered \$100,000 to the families of the nine people who died during the Gaza flotilla incident in May 2010. In exchange, Turkey should rescind its demand for an apology and accept a statement that Israel deeply regrets the deaths. Turkey had not yet responded to the offer. (www.globes.co.il)

13

PA President Abbas told participants in a Fatah meeting that he had held four secret meetings with Israeli President Shimon Peres in Amman and London in a bid to revive stalled peace talks, a Palestinian official said. (*AFP*)

PA Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki said: "Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas will personally present the request [for membership] to United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at the opening of the [General Assembly] sixty-sixth session," on 20 September. Mr. Abbas "will insist on this historic initiative and Ban Ki-moon will present the request to the Security Council," he said. Mr. Malki added that the PA chose September because Lebanon, which will hold the Presidency of the Security Council during the month, would be in a strong position to push the bid forward. (*AFP*)

The world should respond to Israel's settlement policy in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in East Jerusalem, by supporting the Palestinian bid to get the United Nations to recognize Palestine as a State in September, said PLO Executive Committee member Saeb Erakat. Mr. Erakat's statements came after he had held separate meetings with Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, Robert Serry, and the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Filippo Grandi. (*Wafa*)

Palestinian-Americans were planning to participate in rallies throughout the US on 20 September in support of the Palestinian bid to seek full United Nations membership, said John Dabeet, President of Americans and Palestinians for Peace. He said that his organization was coordinating with similar groups in the US to hold a massive rally at United Nations Headquarters. (*Wafa*)

A spokesman for Hamas, Ihab Ghussein, said that foreigners must now obtain visas to enter the Gaza Strip. (*Gulf News*)

14

Israeli forces arrested two Palestinian children and one teenager from the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Silwan. Jerusalem police spokesman Shmuel Ben Ruby said: "They threw stones at our police force." Local committee member Al-Karim said Israeli actions such as these were designed to intimidate residents. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri accused Fatah of violating a reconciliation agreement by opening voter registration for local elections due to be held in October in the West Bank. (*Reuters*)

UNRWA Spokesman Chris Gunness issued a [statement](#) expressing grave concern about reports that Syrian forces had used heavy gunfire against a Palestine refugee camp in Latakia, killing or injuring a number of camp residents. (www.unrwa.org)

The PA Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs said that the Israeli forces had seized 33 Palestinian females, 15 of whom were imprisoned in Hasharon Prison, 17 held in Damon prison and 1 in Neve Tirza prison. The Ministry said that the Israeli occupation forces had tightened the conditions of the female prisoners and escalated their racism towards them. (*Alresalah*)

The US resumed the operations of the aid organizations it funds in the Gaza Strip after Hamas retracted its demand to scrutinize confidential documents about their work, said a US official, who declined to be named. A Hamas official said: "We've reached a compromise with USAID through the United Nations." (*Ma'an News Agency* , *Reuters*)

Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, Robert Serry, in a [statement](#), welcomed the reopening of the International Medical Corps in Gaza. He recognized the important work of non-governmental organizations in Gaza and was confident that a way forward had been reached in the interest of the people of Gaza. (www.unsco.org)

15

Israeli forces shot a 20-year-old Palestinian in the southern Gaza Strip from a military tower east of Khan Yunis, injuring him, medical officials said. An Israeli military spokeswoman said she was unaware of the incident. (*Ma'an News Agency* , *Ynetnews*)

"I was very satisfied [...] We expect all the support from them [the Bosnian authorities]," PA President Abbas told journalists in Sarajevo after his meeting with the Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sven Alkalaj. He would not say, however, if he had been promised support for Palestine's bid for membership in the United Nations. Mr. Abbas also met the members of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. (*AFP*) Prime Minister Netanyahu recently sent a personal letter to over 40 Heads of State urging them to oppose the Palestinians' request for membership at the United Nations in September. Some of Mr. Netanyahu's letters were delivered by ministers, among them Moshe Ya'alon, who visited Peru and Brazil, Dan Meridor, who visited Mexico and Jamaica, and Yossi Peled, who travelled to Guatemala, Costa Rica and Uruguay, sources reported. In addition, Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman, his deputy Daniel Ayalon and Foreign Ministry officials had telephone conversations and held meetings with Heads of State, members of Parliament, ambassadors and opinion-makers. (*Ynetnews*)

The Saudi Arabian newspaper *Al-Watan* published an appeal by PA President Abbas for Arab financial support to help the Palestinians deal with "pressures and threats" from Israel and its allies, which he said were a risk to his plan to seek membership at the United Nations in September. "We have not enjoyed the Arab political and financial support needed to get through this delicate period," Mr. Abbas said. (*Reuters*)

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak approved the building of 277 apartments in the West Bank settlement of "Ariel". Nabil Abu Rudeineh, spokesman for President Abbas, told *Reuters* : "This act is condemned and is an Israeli attempt to obstruct and destroy what is left of any effort to revive the peace process." (*Haaretz*)

US Department of State Spokesperson Victoria Nuland stated at a [press briefing](#) that the approval for the construction of 1,600 new settler homes in East Jerusalem was deeply troubling and counterproductive to the resumption of direct negotiations. (www.state.gov)

Israeli activists tried to prevent Palestinians from visiting relatives held in a jail in southern Israel to protest the ongoing captivity of Gilad Shalit. (*AFP*)

The imprisoned Secretary-General of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Ahmad Saadat, urged Palestinian leaders to put prisoners on the agenda at the United Nations in September, alongside Palestine's bid for membership. He said that the United Nations should recognize Palestinians detained in Israel as prisoners of war and protect them under the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

During a press conference held in Gaza, a group of wounded Gaza residents demanded that the PA recognize them as the "Second Intifada wounded", a status applied to those injured in the West Bank. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A new watchdog organization was launched in Gaza to monitor the performance of UNRWA. Named UNRWA Watch, the new group will monitor the work of the Agency in the fields of education, health, housing, small businesses and employment services. The Secretary-General of UNRWA Watch, Issam Adnan, told reporters that his organization would open five offices in the Gaza Strip, with the head office in Gaza City, and would issue biannual reports to be distributed nationally and internationally. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

16

According to Palestinian medical sources and the Israeli army, one Hamas operative was killed and seven other Palestinians were injured, including a 6-year-old child, as Israeli warplanes struck targets in the central and southern Gaza Strip, hours after a rocket fired from Gaza exploded north of Beersheba. (*AFP* , *Ma'an News Agency* , *UPI*)

Israeli forces shot dead a Palestinian teenager near the central Gaza Strip city of Deir Al-Balah, medical officials reported. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A Jerusalem resident was killed after deliberately being run over by a military Israeli jeep in an area close to "Har Homa" settlement, witnesses said. (*Wafa*)

According to security sources, Israeli soldiers set up checkpoints at the entrance of Fawwar refugee camp, south of Hebron, near Halhul, and at the western entrance to Hebron. They also closed off the road to the eastern Carmel area of Yatta. (*Wafa*)

The Quartet issued the following [statement](#) : "The Quartet is greatly concerned by Israel's recent announcements to advance planning for new housing units in Ariel and East Jerusalem, and reiterates its position in this regard, in particular its statement of 12 March 2010. The Quartet reaffirms that unilateral action by either party cannot prejudice the outcome of negotiations and will not be recognized by the international community." (www.un.org)

Settlers have begun expanding an outpost south of Nablus. Ghassan Daghlis, a PA official in the northern West Bank, said: "They have placed four caravans on the site and are proceeding to add more." (*Wafa*)

US Senator Patrick Leahy was promoting a bill to suspend US assistance to three elite IDF units, one of which was involved in the deadly raid on a Gaza-bound flotilla in 2010, saying that they were involved in human rights violations. According to Mr. Leahy's proposal, US military assistance to Israel would be subject to the same restrictions that apply to countries such as Egypt, Jordan and Pakistan. (*AFP* , *Haaretz* ,)

During a news conference in Sarajevo, PA President Abbas said: "The application will be submitted to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. [...] There is no date. Any time during the United Nations session, we can submit the application." (*Reuters*)

Speaking to reporters in Sarajevo, PA President Abbas said that if the US vetoed the bid at the Security Council in September, Palestinians would still continue cooperating with Washington as they do not want confrontation. (*Reuters*)

Hungary's Government has not yet formed a position on the vote on the independence and United Nations membership of Palestine at the upcoming General Assembly in September, Foreign Ministry State Secretary Zsolt Németh said after talks with Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister, Daniel Ayalon.

(*Budapest Business Journal*)

Egypt's Foreign Minister, Mohamed Kamel Ali Amr, said that his country would support the Palestinian bid for United Nations recognition of Palestine as an independent State in September. Speaking to journalists, he said that Egypt, as the head of the Non-Aligned Movement, had sent messages to all countries around the world urging them to back the Palestinian bid. (*Middle East Monitor*)

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom, Henry Bellingham, condemned the decision of the Israeli Government to build housing units in the illegal West Bank settlement of "Ariel". (www.fco.gov.uk)

Israeli settlers set fire to farm land in the evacuated settlement of "Homesh", near Nablus, PA settlement affairs official Ghassan Daghlis said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Hundreds of Israeli settlers participated in a demonstration in Hebron demanding that more Palestinian land be confiscated in order to expand settlements to encourage Israelis to live in the West Bank, said Palestinian activist Issa Amro, member of Youth against Settlements. (*Wafa*)

Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal was due to arrive in Cairo to begin a third round of indirect talks with Israel over a prisoner swap deal, *Al-Hayat* reported. Palestinian sources reportedly said that the Israeli negotiators had been showing willingness to compromise and that an agreement had been reached over the number of prisoners to be deported from the West Bank after release. (*Haaretz*)

According to Khalil Shaheen, a Gaza rights activist, Hamas security officials detained 25-year-old Mohammed Matar after he had been repeatedly interrogated over his participation in a French conference about Palestinian activism. Mr. Matar was among a group of activists who had held rallies in March urging Gaza's Hamas rulers to reunite with Fatah. (*Ynetnews*)

The Gaza-bound aid convoy "Miles of Smiles" arrived today in Alexandria, Egypt. Sources told *Ma'an News Agency* that the convoy would enter the Gaza Strip later during the day through the Rafah crossing, adding that another, similar, convoy would be transferred to Gaza on 26 August. Local sources said that 35 solidary activists from Bahrain, Spain and Britain participated in the humanitarian convoy carrying 30 tons of medicines and medical equipment. (*Ma'an News Agency, The Palestine Telegraph*)

Prime Minister Netanyahu refused requests by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to apologize to Turkey for the deaths of nine activists aboard the Mavi Marmara in May 2010, *Israel Army Radio* reported. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

17

The military court of Ofer handed down a 20-year sentence to a Ramallah woman accused of stabbing an Israeli guard at a checkpoint three years earlier. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

"When Lebanon heads the Security Council in September, first priorities will be to recognize the Palestinian State," said Lebanese Foreign Minister Adnan Mansour. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sven Alkalaj, said that his country's Presidency was still divided on the issue [Palestinian membership in the UN]. Local media reported that the Presidency's Bosnian Muslim and Croat members supported the Palestinian drive, while their Serbian colleague was opposed. (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*)

Hanan Ashrawi, PLO Executive Committee member, told the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, Robert Serry: "We look forward to constructive cooperation with all Quartet members leading up to and during the Palestinian quest for United Nations membership this September." Mr. Serry stressed the difficulties that lay ahead in the absence of negotiations, and emphasized his desire not to see the United Nations become a theatre for division. He expressed hope that events at the United Nations in September would prove to be both positive and strengthen prospects for a Palestinian State. (*Wafa*)

On the first day of a two-day visit to Lebanon, PA President Abbas inaugurated the Embassy of Palestine, and hoisted the flag of "the State of Palestine" in the presence of Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati and senior Palestinian officials after the upgrading of the Palestinian diplomatic mission by the Government of Lebanon. (*AFP*)

The IDF had prepared recommendations for a Government review of confidence-building measures towards Palestinians aimed at keeping order during and after the upcoming session of the General Assembly. The Defense establishment recommended allowing in more weapons for the PA from Jordan, increasing water supply to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, granting permits for the construction of new desalination facilities, increasing the number of Palestinian merchants allowed to enter Israel and allowing more Palestinians to participate in an EU agricultural training programme. The IDF also recommended returning the remains of 30 Palestinian prisoners to the PA and removing various roadblocks. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

In a statement, the European Union [called](http://ec.europa.eu/delegations/westbank) on Israel to allow the Palestinians to reopen offices in East Jerusalem that were closed in 2001 and said: "The EU missions in Jerusalem and Ramallah deeply regret the recent Israeli decision extending once again the closure order against the Orient House and the Chamber of Commerce." (ec.europa.eu/delegations/westbank)

Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, issued [a statement](http://www.consilium.europa.eu) expressing deep regret over the announcement that over 200 building permits had been granted for "Ariel". (www.consilium.europa.eu)

Israeli guards at "Beit Ein" settlement, constructed on Palestinian land belonging to Beit Ummar, a village north of Hebron, shot at Palestinian farmers to drive them from their land adjacent to the settlement, Spokesman of the National Committee against the Wall and Settlements Mohammad Awad said. (*Wafa*)

A wave of racist extremism against Palestinian prisoners was spreading in Israeli society due to incitement by the Israeli Government and the media, leading to further medical negligence of prisoners and assault against them and their families, said PA Minister for Prisoners' Affairs Issa Qaraqe. (*Wafa*)

The Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland and StandWithUs UK are taking a stand against Lush, a cosmetics chain with 600 stores in 43 countries, for supporting the "OneWorld: Freedom for Palestine" campaign. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The Gaza-based Palestinian Center for Human Rights condemned new Hamas rules requiring people going to the West Bank or abroad under the auspices of a non-governmental organization to submit their trip details two weeks before travel. (*AFP*)

18

At least 7 people were killed and 30 injured when Palestinians launched four attacks in quick succession approximately 20 kilometres north of Eilat, near the border with Egypt, officials said. The assailants targeted a passenger bus, a military patrol and a private car. "We are talking about a terror squad that infiltrated into Israel," said IDF Spokeswoman Lieutenant-Colonel Avital Leibovich. Israel's Defense Minister, Ehud Barak, said: "The terror attacks originated in Gaza. We will exhaust all measures against them." (*Haaretz, Ynetnews.com*)

The Israeli military confirmed carrying out air strikes over the Gaza Strip following a deadly series of attacks in southern Israel. Palestinian sources said that at least six people were killed in the air strikes. (*BBC*)

The Popular Resistance Committees said that an Israeli air strike had killed their leader, Kamal al-Nairab, and their military chief, Immad Hammad, along with three others members, in the southern Gaza Strip, hours after Israel blamed gunmen from the territory for cross-border attacks. A sixth fatality in the attack on Rafah town was a nine-year-old boy who had been in the same house as the militants, local Palestinians said. (*Reuters*)

Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister Daniel Ayalon told a conference of Jewish community leaders that Israel was trying to form a bloc of between 60 and 70 States to oppose a Palestinian bid for statehood at the United Nations in September. He said: "The Palestinians enjoy an automatic majority but our strategy is to form collations of major powers." He was referring to "first-world countries which will not only vote according to conscience

but according to the interest of stability and security in the Middle East". (*Ynetnews.com*)

On the last day of his visit to Lebanon, PA President Abbas said that Palestine had been able to get the support of nine Security Council members for its September bid at the United Nations. He told reporters that he rejected an offer to get observer status similar to the Vatican's, and said: "We want to obtain full membership." (*Wafa*)

Foreign Ministry sources said that Turkey planned to launch a diplomatic and legal campaign on Israel after Prime Minister Netanyahu had refused the previous day to issue an apology to Turkey for the raid on the Gaza aid flotilla in May 2010, including an anti-Israel campaign in United Nations institutions, with an emphasis on the International Court of Justice, and encouraging the families of the raid's victims to file suits against senior Israeli figures in European courts. (*Haaretz*)

Israel's Foreign Minister, Avigdor Liberman, said that Turkey's Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, had been trying to "undermine Israel's legitimacy" by demanding an apology for the 2010 deadly flotilla raid. (*AFP*)

The League of Arab States issued a statement condemning an Israeli plan to expel 384 prominent Palestinian figures and political activists from Jerusalem for their anti-occupation political stance and activism for the bid at the United Nations in September. (*Wafa*)

At the Baqa'a UNRWA School in Jordan, the Japanese Ambassador to Jordan, Junichi Kosuge, and UNRWA Commissioner-General Filippo Grandi signed an agreement by which Japan donated \$7.7 million to the Agency's social safety net programme for 2011 and 2012. The donation consisted of food for Palestinian refugees. ([UNRWA press release](#))

The following statement was issued by the Spokesman of United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon:

The Secretary-General strongly condemns today's coordinated terror attacks in southern Israel. He expresses his condolences to the families of the victims and wishes a speedy recovery to the injured. The Secretary-General hopes that the perpetrators are swiftly identified and brought to justice. He is concerned at the risk of escalation and calls for all to act with restraint. (*UN News Centre*)

19

A 13-year-old Palestinian boy was killed and 17 others were injured when a missile fired by an Israeli jet hit a house in Gaza City. A strike in the eastern part of Gaza City killed a 22-year-old man, the eighth Palestinian to die in Israeli air strikes following the attacks in southern Israel the previous day. A strike on the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip moderately injured two Palestinians, including a pregnant woman, and cut power lines, leaving many areas in central Gaza without electricity. Missiles also hit a training camp of the armed wing of Hamas. The office of the IDF spokesman said in a statement that Israeli planes had targeted weapon manufacturing centres in the central Gaza Strip and two more sites in the north and south. (*Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency, Wafa*)

Palestinians fired some 20 Grad and Qassam rockets into southern Israel. Most of the rockets fell in open areas, but one rocket fired at Ashdod exploded in the courtyard of a yeshiva and injured 10 people, two of them seriously. (*Haaretz, Ynetnews*)

An official of the Egyptian Interior Ministry official said that five Egyptian security personnel had been killed as Israeli soldiers pursued militants after an attack along the border in the Sinai Peninsula. The official said that "most probably" the Egyptian security personnel had been caught in the crossfire. (*AP*)

A suicide bomber blew himself up next to a group of Egyptian soldiers on the Israeli-Egyptian border, injuring some soldiers. The man was thought to be part of a group that had carried out attacks the previous day. (*Haaretz*)

A 31-year-old Palestinian, who had been seriously injured in an Israeli air strike on the Zeitoun neighbourhood of Gaza City on 16 August died of his wounds. (*Wafa*)

Fatah's Election Commissioner Mohammed al-Madani said that Fatah would consider delaying elections in the West Bank to allow Hamas to prepare for a vote in Gaza. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

20

Israeli soldiers entered the southern West Bank city of Hebron, broke into and searched dozens of homes and arrested more than 35 residents, including elected legislator Mohammad Abu Jheisha and a number of Hamas political leaders. (*IMEMC*)

Syrian forces scrambled to destroy evidence of the crackdown in Latakia that had killed dozens of civilians and sent Palestinian refugees fleeing, activists said, as United Nations investigators arrived in Damascus. Security forces had been seen scrubbing blood off the streets and walls in Al-Ramel refugee camp. A European diplomat said that the last-minute cleanup confirmed existing suspicions and appeared timed to coincide with the arrival of United Nations officials.

The diplomat said: "It fitted perfectly with the version of events which the regime was denying: that there was an attack on the Latakia camp, home to thousands of United Nations-registered Palestinian refugees who were forced to flee as they came under fire." (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In an assault claimed to have been carried out in revenge for the killing of eight Israelis on 18 August, a group of 15 Israeli settlers surrounded a 10-year-old Palestinian child and beat him nearly to death. They also attacked three farmers. The attacks took place near the settlement outpost of "Ramat Migron", near Ramallah. The boy was taken to the hospital in a critical condition, suffering from serious head wounds and brain trauma, according to medical sources. Israeli media sources reported that 13 people, mainly teenagers, had been arrested by Israeli police in relation to the incident. (*IMEMC*)

In a statement, the Quartet condemned the attacks in southern Israel, as well as all acts of terrorism, and urged all parties to exercise restraint, stating that the attacks were "cowardly acts of premeditated terrorism" and expressed the hope that those responsible for planning and carrying out the violence would be brought to justice quickly. In the statement, the Quartet said that it remained concerned about the unsustainable situation in Gaza as well as the risk of escalation, and called for restraint from all sides. The Quartet also voiced concern over the security situation in the Sinai Peninsula. (*UN News Centre*)

21

Gazan militants agreed to a ceasefire with Israel, reaching an informal truce agreement in talks brokered by Egypt to stop four days of violence after a deadly attack on Israelis near the Egypt-Israel border set off a round of Israeli air strikes and rocket barrages from Gaza, a Hamas official said. Palestinian rocket fire and Israeli air strikes continued hours after the ceasefire that was to take effect at 9 p.m. local time. Gaza's Popular Resistance Committees agreed to halt rocket fire on Israel and abide by an Egyptian-brokered truce after four days of deadly clashes. At a press conference in Gaza City, the Committees said that their militants would respect a temporary ceasefire. "We have temporarily stopped firing rockets at Israel according to the national consensus," a masked spokesman said. But the Committees, whose leader was killed in a series of Israeli air strikes last week, said talk of a more permanent truce was out of the question: "We have an open account with the enemy until it leaves Palestinian soil." (*Al Jazeera, AFP, AP, The Jerusalem Post*)

A medical source reported that 15 Palestinians killed during Israeli air strikes on Gaza reached the hospital all torn apart and charred, raising questions about the quality of weapons used by the Israeli forces against civilians. The source said that a number of the Palestinians had had their lower or upper limbs cut off while the others had been burned in different parts of their bodies, echoing events during the 2008-2009 war on Gaza, during which hundreds of civilians suffered from permanent disabilities. (*Wafa*)

Israeli troops arrested 120 Hamas members in the southern West Bank, just hours after the faction's Gaza branch fired rockets into southern Israel,

lightly wounding two children, Palestinian police said. "Between 100 and 120 people have been arrested," Samira Halaika, a Hamas MP from Hebron told AFP, adding: "In terms of size, there has never been such an arrest operation on this scale in the Hebron area before." The Israeli military had no immediate comment on the reported arrests. (AFP)

A senior Israeli general arrived in Cairo for talks with Egyptian officials, including senior members of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, in an attempt to contain the crisis that erupted over the killing of five Egyptian soldiers on the border with Israel while Israeli forces were pursuing alleged militants, according to official Egyptian sources. (Ahram)

The League of Arab States issued a statement in which it condemned Israeli air strikes on the Gaza Strip and called on Israel to cease military action in both the Strip and Egypt immediately. The League also urged the United Nations to take action to end the attacks, in which 15 people had died.

The Government of Jordan too condemned the Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip as well as the killing of Egyptian policemen by Israeli troops in the Sinai border area. (Haaretz)

Israeli policemen and members of a border guard unit closed the Bas al-Amoud area, one of the main gates of Jerusalem, while more than 1500 Palestinian youths were protesting in the Al Aqsa Mosque in Old Jerusalem in condemnation of the Israeli assault against the Gaza Strip. The army claimed that the closure was enforced after an Israeli soldier had been stabbed during a night-time protest march from Bab al-Amoud to Salaheddin Street. Israeli policemen arrested several youths and violently attacked Palestinian medics in the area. The arrested youths were moved to the Al Maskobiyya interrogation centre, west of Jerusalem. (IMEMC)

Tzipi Livni, member of the Kadima party, Shaul Mofaz, Head of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, and Yohanan Pilsner, Kadima's acting Head, are pushing the Government of Israel to carry out a large-scale military offensive against the Gaza Strip. Mr. Mofaz said that the Government had to start targeting the leadership of Hamas and its infrastructure in order to eventually remove it from power in Gaza. (IMEMC)

The US blocked a Palestinian demand for an emergency meeting of the Security Council to discuss the Israeli military escalation on Gaza, a Palestinian official said. "The United States has managed to obstruct holding a meeting of the UNSC. We could not even get a UNSC Presidential statement to condemn the Israeli crimes in Gaza," the Permanent Observer of Palestinian to the UN, Riyadh Mansour, told the radio station *Voice of Palestine*. (Xinhuanet)

"Spain hopes a meeting of EU foreign ministers on 2 September will bring progress towards the recognition of a Palestinian State", said Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs Trinidad Jiménez. "There's the feeling that now is the time to do something, to give the Palestinians the hope that a State could become reality," she said in an interview with *El País*. (The Jerusalem Post)

The Ambassador of Egypt to the PA, Yasser Othman, told the radio station *Voice of Palestine* that Israel was using the escalation in the Gaza Strip to complicate the PA bid for statehood at the United Nations next month, *Israel Radio* reported. The Egyptian ambassador added that Israeli operations in Gaza were also complicating Cairo's efforts to stabilize the Sinai Peninsula. (The Jerusalem Post)

PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad denied reports that Washington had threatened to cut financial aid if the Palestinians insisted on seeking recognition as a State at the United Nations. A statement by Mr. Fayyad's office said that the Palestinian Prime Minister and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had discussed the fiscal crisis of the PA and agreed that donor nations should meet their financial commitments to the PA. (Xinhuanet)

Settlement affairs official Ghassan Daghlis said that Israeli settlers from the Esh Kodesh outpost had stormed a Palestinian village near Nablus and uprooted 80 olive trees. (Ma'an News Agency, IMEMC)

22

Three rockets fired from Gaza fell on southern Israel. One of the rockets, which fell near Ashkelon, led to a brush fire. (Haaretz)

The Israeli army surrounded the Freedom Theatre in Jenin, beating members of staff and raiding the home of a security guard, a statement from the theatre said. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli soldiers imposed strict military restrictions on the Bethlehem governorate, putting up checkpoints along the main roads and impeding Palestinians' movement, security sources said. Israeli soldiers stationed at the "container" checkpoint, which links the north of the West Bank to the south, obstructed and inspected Palestinian vehicles, creating a mass traffic jam on both sides of the checkpoint and preventing Palestinians from reaching their places of work. (Wafa)

Dr. Abdullatif al-Zayyani, Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, condemned the Israeli violations of the borders with Egypt and the recurrent aggression on the Gaza Strip. He reaffirmed the supportive stance of the Council towards the Palestinians in their legitimate struggle for self-determination and statehood. (KUNA)

Israel would not respond to the attacks from Gaza with a large-scale operation, Prime Minister Netanyahu and his cabinet ministers concluded today at a meeting about the security situation. Diplomatic sources expressed concern that an escalation in the south could upset Egypt and hurt Israel during the vote for Palestinian statehood at the United Nations in September. "Hamas is trying to draw Israel into fighting in the [Gaza] Strip so as to weaken its power in the international arena in preparation for the Palestinian statehood decree in September," one senior diplomatic source told *Israel Army Radio*. "This way, Hamas will be seen as leading the way for the establishment of a Palestinian State." (The Jerusalem Post)

The European Commission [announced](http://www.europa.eu) an additional €115 million in financial support to the Occupied Palestinian Territory for State-building, water management and sanitation, as well as education and health services for refugees. (www.europa.eu)

Palestinian families in the OPT were facing increasing financial woes this Ramadan as the PA juggled its dwindling budget. The August salaries for the estimated 150,000 PA employees were paid late and it was unclear when the September salaries would be paid. "The PA's financial situation has deteriorated due to shortfalls in donor financing, and revenue collection has been lower than budgeted," a representative of the International Monetary Fund told IRIN. "Mostly Arab donors are not paying," Ghassan Khatib, spokesperson for the office of Prime Minister Salam Fayyad told IRIN.

The PA budget had been missing about \$35 million monthly in donor payments since the start of the year, said Mr. Khatib. Experts say that Arab nations had been focused on other concerns since the revolution that had erupted in Egypt in January and the crises that had taken place in other parts of the Arab world. In response to the crisis, PA President Abbas ordered PA institutions to stop holding official Ramadan iftar dinners and to divert the allocated funds to poor Palestinians. (IRIN)

"Recent Israeli settlement announcements undermine international efforts aimed at bringing the parties back to negotiations," the Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People said in a statement, voicing deep alarm at Israel's recent approval of 5,200 new housing units in occupied East Jerusalem. The Bureau strongly condemned Israel's "illegal and provocative acts", which it said were aimed at encircling and separating East Jerusalem from the rest of the OPT behind a wall of settlements. The Bureau called on Israel to immediately cease and reverse these unilateral actions, to freeze all settlement activity in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, including so-called "natural growth", and to dismantle outposts erected since 2001, obligations that Israel had undertaken in accordance with the Road Map. The statement also called on the international community to take "credible and decisive action" to compel Israel to halt its settlement activity. (UN News Centre)

PA President Abbas delayed local elections without setting a new date. Mr. Abbas said in a decree that the decision had been taken to postpone the local elections until better conditions were available and to enable the election commission to work in all parts of the country. Ismail Alashkar, a Hamas official in Gaza, said: "We welcome [President] Abbas' decree postponing [the elections]." (AP)

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon agreed to a request by Turkey to delay, by between 7 and 10 days, the publication of a report by the panel of inquiry established by the Secretary-General on the IDF raid on a flotilla bound for Gaza in May 2010, in which nine Turkish activists had died during clashes with Israeli troops. The panel, headed by former Prime Minister of New Zealand Geoffrey Palmer, had been due to publish the report, also known as the "Palmer report", on 23 August. The US showed support for the delay, and Israel did not express opposition. An Israeli official said that a delay in the publication of the report would allow Israel and Turkey to renew negotiations aimed at ending the diplomatic crisis between the two countries, and Israel to formulate an apology to Turkey that would be acceptable to Prime Minister Netanyahu. (*Haaretz*)

The Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, Robert Serry, arrived in Cairo and met Egypt's Foreign Minister Mohamed Kamel Ali Amr and Chief of Intelligence General Murad Muwafi. Mr. Serry expressed concern about the death of Egyptian security personnel and the escalation of violence in Gaza and southern Israel. He said that the United Nations was actively engaged in an endeavour to restore normality and supported Egypt's important efforts in that regard. Mr. Serry also met the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Nabil el-Araby. (*UN News Centre*)

UNRWA announced in a statement that it would resume operations in Jenin: "This follows positive interventions by the notables, heads of [community-based organizations] and officials in Jenin City and the camp." (*Ma'an News Agency*)

23

The Israeli army arrested nine Palestinians from the city of Hebron, in the southern West Bank, during raids and searches across the city's neighbourhoods, security sources said. (*Wafa*)

In Doha, PA President Abbas received US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Jeffrey Feltman. The two men discussed Palestinian developments, the Israeli attacks and settlement activities. Mr. Abbas was in Doha to participate in the meeting of the follow-up committee on the Arab Peace Initiative of the League of Arab States to discuss preparations for recognition of a Palestinian State at the United Nations. (*Wafa*)

The follow-up committee on the Arab Peace Initiative confirmed its support for the Palestinian bid for United Nations membership. The committee convened in Doha and ratified a plan previously set by a reduced committee to recruit international support for the Palestinian statehood bid. A group of Arab ministers, headed by Qatari Foreign Minister Hamad bin Jassem al-Thani, agreed to ask the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Nabil el-Araby, to continue to contact international organizations and political bodies to secure support for the United Nations campaign. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In a statement, Malaysia's Foreign Minister, Datuk Anifah bin Haji Aman, said that Malaysia strongly condemned Israel's continuing military assault and air strikes on Gaza which had resulted in 15 deaths to date, and called on the Security Council to take immediate action to halt Israel's offensive against Gaza. (*Newstraitstimes.com*)

"Fatah member Nabil Sha'ath met with a Foreign Ministry official in Bangkok, but no official guarantee was made [about support for the UN bid].

The decision has to be made by Thailand's new Cabinet, which has yet to convene," said a Thai Foreign Ministry official. (*Ynetnews*)

Texas Republican Congresswoman Kay Granger, currently visiting Jerusalem with a delegation of 25 Republican members of Congress, said that the US would suspend about \$500 million in aid to the PA if it went ahead with its bid at the UN. The delegation was scheduled to meet with PA President Abbas the following day with the intention of telling him that there was a strong bipartisan desire in Congress to see a return to peace talks with Israel "in a very serious way", Ms. Granger said. (*UPI*)

Public sector workers union head Bassam Zakarneh announced that the PA would pay workers the other half of their June salaries before the end of Ramadan. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Israeli Supreme Court rejected the Palestinian village of Walajeh's appeal to reroute a section of the wall, currently under construction, because its path cuts them off from their farmlands, cemetery and water sources. The village, a community of 2,000 on Jerusalem's southwest edge, is almost entirely surrounded by settlements. The Court said that the petitioners failed to prove that the barrier would smother the village. (*AP*)

Dozens of settlers from the "Beit Ayin" settlement, north of the southern West Bank city of Hebron, attacked Palestinian orchards and farmlands and uprooted dozens of olive trees, plum trees and grapevines in the area of Wad Abu Al Reesh. Mohammad Awad, spokesperson for the Popular Committee against the Wall and Settlements, reported that the settlers had uprooted and cut 50 trees that belonged to resident Hammad Abdu-Hamid al-Sleiby, and his brothers. (*IMEMC*)

The Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights, according to a press release, submitted a letter of allegation to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions concerning the Israeli killing by Israelis of five men and one child during recent Israeli air strikes on the Gaza Strip. (*Wafa*)

Reporters Without Borders condemned what it described as "the complete failure to punish abusive treatment of Palestinian journalists by the IDF in the West Bank". It said in a statement that Israel had carried out "many arbitrary arrests" in the previous two months, arresting five journalists. Cases of Israeli soldiers deliberately firing on media personnel had also been reported. In the statement, Reporters Without Borders added: "We urge the Israeli authorities to investigate these serious violations of physical integrity and to free all the detained journalists." (*Wafa*)

24

The Middle East News Agency reported that an Egyptian woman had been injured by a rocket fired from the Gaza Strip into the Egyptian town of Rafah. The woman had been taken to hospital with light injuries, said a security source in the area. (*Ynetnews*)

A renewed barrage of rockets hit Israel's south overnight, prompting IDF planes to carry out strikes on the Gaza Strip the following morning, killing 8 and wounding about 20, according to Palestinian reports. A 9-month-old baby was slightly wounded after a rocket hit a private car in the Hof Ashkelon Regional Council. Rocket fire continued late into the night, with two rockets also landing in Sderot. (*Haaretz*)

Egyptian security forces had been mapping the network of tunnels running between the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip in preparation of destroying the smuggling tunnels, Egyptian newspaper *Al-Shorouk* reported. In addition, it was reported that the security forces had been tightening security at the Philadelphi Corridor, the line that separates the Sinai and Gazan sides of the city of Rafah, in an attempt to bring the Sinai Peninsula under tighter control. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Palestinian medical sources in the Gaza Strip reported that Ismael al-Ismael, a leader in the Al-Quds Brigades, the armed wing of the Islamic Jihad, had been killed by an Israeli air strike on his car while driving west of the city of Rafah, in the southern part of the Gaza Strip. Two other Palestinians had been injured, the sources said. An Israeli military spokesman confirmed the strike, saying it had targeted "an activist linked to Islamic Jihad who was implicated in attempted terrorist actions in the Sinai". (*AFP, IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency, Wafa*)

As part of the Israeli campaign against the Palestinian statehood bid at the United Nations in September, Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danie Ayalon arrived in Spain for a three-day political tour. Mr. Ayalon was expected to hold several meetings with Spanish officials in an attempt to convince their country to oppose the Palestinian bid. Political sources in Madrid stated that the country had yet to make a final decision in that regard. (*IMEMC*)

PA Foreign Affairs Minister Riyad al-Maliki started a tour in Africa to mobilize support for the September bid and to urge African countries to vote in favour of a Palestinian State at the United Nations, the Foreign Ministry announced in a statement. (*Wafa*)

Chinese Middle East Envoy Wu Sike announced his country's full support for the Palestinian bid for recognition by the United Nations in September.

PA Secretary-General At-Tayeb Abdul Rahim met with the Chinese envoy in the presidential headquarters in Ramallah. The envoy said that the

Palestinian bid did not contradict the terms of the peace process or hinder negotiations, and the fair solution was to establish a Palestinian State on 1967 borders. (Ma'an News Agency)

Indian Foreign Minister S.M. Krishna, in a meeting with Fatah Central Committee member Nabil Sha'ath in New Delhi, confirmed India's full support for the Palestinian bid to the United Nations and its acceptance of Palestine as a full member of the international organization. India, which holds the presidency of the Security Council during August, recognized the Palestinian State in 1988 and has had full diplomatic relations and strong historical ties with the Palestinian people since the time of the late Palestinian President Yasser Arafat. (Wafa)

The Israeli Government planned to expel 384 Palestinian activists from occupied East Jerusalem after the holy month of Ramadan for their political activities in the city. Press TV reported that the move was part of Israeli efforts to pressure the PA to scrap its plan to head to the United Nations in September to seek recognition as a State. (IMEMC)

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom announced in a press release that it was speeding up assistance to the PA to help it to meet its commitments and continue the provision of essential services, such as immunization and primary school education. "The non-payment of PA salaries puts at risk the delivery of basic services; in addition, the effect on household finances and the wider economy could also be severe," said the Office in a press release. (Wafa)

Palestinian, Israeli and activists from various countries planned to march from four Israeli army-manned checkpoints separating Jerusalem from its West Bank environs to Jerusalem on 26 August under the slogan "Knocking on Jerusalem's doors". The activists would protest the Israeli closure of Jerusalem to Palestinians from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, particularly those wishing to reach it to pray at Al-Aqsa Mosque during the holy month of Ramadan. (Wafa)

25

Seven Palestinians were killed and at least 30 were injured as multiple Israeli air strikes targeted Gaza in the early morning. Another Palestinian, Salama al-Masri, was killed and 20 more were injured as Israeli planes fired at a sports club in the densely populated area in the northern Gaza Strip town of Beit Lahiya, emergency services Spokesman Adham Abu Salmiya told Ma'an News Agency. Among the injured were seven children and four women, he added. (Ma'an News Agency)

The Security Council heard Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs B. Lynn Pascoe's monthly briefing on security, political and humanitarian developments in Israel, the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon and Syria. Mr. Pascoe stated that recent terror attacks and escalating violence in the Middle East showed the urgent need to make progress towards the two-State solution, while the political deadlock persisted. "Differences remain profound between the parties regarding what terms should frame negotiations, and mistrust is deepening," he said.

The Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, Robert Serry, said in a statement, that, "in the interest of protecting the lives of civilians and for the calm to succeed, a complete halt to the firing of rockets from Gaza and a display of maximum restraint by Israel" were required. Mr. Serry called on all sides to immediately take steps to prevent any further escalation. (www.unsco.org)

El Salvador recognized Palestine as an independent State. "This decision was made in the context of the profound respect El Salvador has for sovereign decisions by members of the United Nations, the majority of who have recognized the Palestinian State," said President Carlos Mauricio Funes Cartagena said in a news conference. (Reuters)

PLO Executive Committee member Hanan Ashrawi said that the plan to join the United Nations as a State would not threaten the rights of the PLC in the Organization and that refugees had nothing to fear from the bid. (Ma'an News Agency)

The Palestinian team responsible for preparing the United Nations initiative in September were given an independent legal opinion that warning it of the risks involved in the plan to join the United Nations. Having Palestinians represented by a State instead of by the PLO would terminate the legal status held by the PLO in the UN since 1975 as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, according to the team. Crucially, there would no longer be an institution that could represent the inalienable rights of the entire Palestinian people in the United Nations and related international institutions. The team added that representation for the right to self-determination would be gravely affected, as it was a right of all Palestinians, both inside and outside the homeland and that a change in status would severely compromise the right of refugees to return to their homes and to the properties from which they had been displaced. The legal opinion was submitted to the Palestinian side by Guy Goodwin-Gill, a professor of public international law at Oxford University and a member of the team that won the 2004 non-binding judgment by the International Court of Justice that the route of Israel's wall was illegal. (Ma'an News Agency)

A solidarity group from South Africa of solidary activists arrived in Gaza for a four-day visit they have called "Freedom for detainees". The 36 activists were expected to meet people working on the issue of Palestinian detainees in Israeli jails. The group brought 10 trucks of medical and humanitarian supplies and entered through the Rafah crossing. (Ma'an News Agency)

26

Senior Islamic Jihad officials said that the faction had agreed to a ceasefire with Israel after mediation by Egypt. Two members of the Islamic Jihad's military wing had been killed the previous night in an Israeli air strike in the northern Gaza Strip. (Ma'an News Agency)

A Grad rocket struck an open field in Ashkelon. There were no reports of damage or injuries. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine claimed it had carried out the attack. (Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli troops fired tear gas on protesters gathered at the Qalandiya checkpoint near Ramallah to call for access to Jerusalem. Youths were seen throwing stones at Israeli forces, Al-Jazeera reported. (DPA, Ma'an News Agency, Wafa)

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh said: "We will not leave any centimetre of Palestine and we will not recognize Israel and the occupation." He called the revolutions sweeping the Arab world "the introduction for Palestinian liberation." (Ma'an News Agency)

PLO Executive Committee member Saeb Erakat said, after meeting the US Consul-General in Jerusalem, Daniel Rubinstein, and the EI representative to the PA, Christian Berger, that supporting a Palestinian State within the 1967 borders would benefit the peace process and the two-State solution. He called on the US to reconsider its opposition. The EU, he said, "should take the correct position, not the easy position". Mr. Erakat said Mr. Rubinstein had told him that his country believed the bid at the United Nations would be "useless and futile", and had warned that the US would veto a Security Council resolution and stop financial aid to the PA if the Authority proceeded with its plans. (Wafa)

Honduras became the second Central American country after El Salvador to recognize the State of Palestine in the previous 24 hours. In a letter to PA President Abbas, Honduras said that it recognized Palestine as a free, independent and sovereign State, and stressed that it would support Palestine's drive to gain membership in the United Nations in September. (Wafa)

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said that the potential recognition of a Palestinian State by the United Nations should be only a "step forward" towards the "full liberation" of Palestine. (AFP)

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak's office said that a building permit had been issued to house a kindergarten in "Beit Romano" in Hebron. (AP)

27

Israel exploited for its own use over 90 per cent of the water resources it shared with Palestine while also exerting tremendous influence over the

remaining 10 per cent, said Minister of the Palestinian Water Authority Shaddad Attili during the closing session of the World Water Week held in Stockholm from 21 to 27 August 2011. Palestinians were being denied their equitable and reasonable share of water under customary international water law and were also being prevented from developing essential water infrastructure and securing their human right to water as mandated in a 2010 United Nations General Assembly resolution on the topic, said Mr. Attili in a press release. (*Wafa*)

Several dozen residents of Al-Walaja village, near Bethlehem, marched and rallied to call on Israel to end the takeover of their land for the construction of the separation wall. The residents were joined by a number of Israeli peace activists, four of whom were arrested by Israeli troops along with one Palestinian. The rally in Al-Walaja was held just days after the Israeli Supreme Court denied the villagers' petition to re-route the wall to prevent the takeover of half of the village land. (*IMEMC*)

28

A rocket fired by Gazan militants hit southern Israel in what was the fourth projectile lobbed across the border since a truce had taken hold two days earlier, Israeli officials said. The rocket landed near Khatzerim, a village west of the southern desert city of Beersheba, a police spokeswoman said.

"The rocket hit an empty area without causing injuries or damage," she said. The Islamist group Tawhid wal-Jihad claimed responsibility for firing a Grad rocket towards Beersheba. (*AFP*)

IDF Chief Benny Gantz ordered the deployment of reinforcements around the southern Gaza Strip and the Egyptian border in response to intelligence reports suggesting an imminent attack by the Islamic Jihad, despite a ceasefire deal agreed on by the group on 26 August. The reinforcements were coordinated with the Egyptian army. (*Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces arrested five Palestinians crossing Beit Furik checkpoint, east of Nablus, assaulted one other civilian at the Qalandiya checkpoint, north of Jerusalem, and raided Alyamoon, a village west of Jenin, according to Palestinian police. (*Wafa*)

Israeli forces obstructed the passage of dozens of buses carrying Palestinians at al-Karama crossing in Jericho, according to witnesses who said that Israeli forces stopped the buses for several hours without giving any explanation. The majority of those riding the buses were women and children heading to the West Bank to spend Eid al-Fitr with their families. (*Wafa*)

Prime Minister Netanyahu criticized the PA plan to turn to the United Nations for recognition of a Palestinian State without negotiations with Israel. During a meeting with the Foreign Minister of Norway, Jonas Gahr Støre, Mr. Netanyahu remarked that the unilateral Palestinian bid at the United Nations constituted "a breach of the Palestinian commitments mentioned in agreements signed with Israel". (*Ynetnews*)

PA President Abbas said in an interview with the Qatari newspaper *Al Watan* that "when Palestine gains international recognition of a Palestinian State within the 1967 borders, it will be a country under occupation, thus our reference will be the United Nations, and we will discuss our issues there according to the Fourth Geneva Convention". (*Wafa*)

The Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee voted against the publication of a controversial report criticizing Israel's readiness for the United Nations vote on Palestinian statehood in September. Allegedly, in the report it was stated that Israel was ill prepared for possible scenarios in September and that the Palestinian bid could have been prevented in the diplomatic arena. (*Ynetnews*)

Israel and Hamas will attempt to resume negotiations for the release of kidnapped IDF soldier Gilad Shalit next week, the London-based Arabic-language newspaper *Al-Hayat* reported. According to the report, Egyptian Intelligence Minister Murad Muwafi met with Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal during a recent visit to Mecca, and the two discussed the possibility of striking a prisoner exchange deal between Israel and Hamas. Direct negotiations to that effect were set to resume after the Eid al-Fitr holiday. (*Ynetnews*)

A settler ran over a Palestinian child in Hebron, in the northern West Bank, according to security sources. The child sustained severe injuries to the head and was transferred to a hospital for treatment. (*Wafa*)

29

In an incident in Tel Aviv, a 20-year-old Palestinian from the northern West Bank city of Nablus stole a cab, ran over an Israeli policeman over and stabbed eight people late the previous night near a nightclub, according to Israeli police. The PA condemned attacks against all civilians, including that incident. (*AFP, The Jerusalem Post, Wafa*)

Clashes broke out early in the morning in the northern West Bank city of Jenin as Israeli forces detained three Palestinian civilians. Palestinian security officials said that Israeli forces had entered a number of homes, and Palestinian youths gathered to throw stones at the soldiers. The army responded with tear gas as a result of which Yousif Abu Saleim, 28, and Muhammad Abu Samara, 23, were brought to Jenin public hospital for gas inhalation. Israeli forces detained two men, identified as 34-year-old Alaa Fathi Sadiq and 22-year-old Muhin Abu Ubeid in Jenin's old city. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A Qassam rocket landed in an open area in the Eshkol Regional Council. No injuries or damages were reported. (*Ynews*)

A 14-year-old boy, who had been severely injured in an Israeli Air Force air strike on the Gaza Strip on 19 August, had died. The strike occurred after a cross-border terror attack that had killed eight Israelis, which had, in turn, led to rocket fire from the Gaza Strip. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Military sources reported that IDF paramedics were attacked with a Molotov cocktail in the West Bank during the night. The paramedics' ambulance was responding to reports of a serious car accident near a Palestinian town. The Molotov cocktail did not cause injuries or damage. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The IDF conducted detailed work to determine a "red line" for each settlement in the West Bank. Soldiers would be ordered to shoot at the feet of Palestinian protesters who crossed that line. The IDF was also planning to provide settlers with tear gas and stun grenades as part of the defence operation. The IDF was currently in the process of finalizing its preparations for Operation Summer Seeds to prepare the army for September and the possibility of confrontations with Palestinians following the vote on Palestinian statehood at the United Nations, the result of which was expected to be in favour of the Palestinian bid. (*Haaretz*)

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton travelled to Israel and the OPT to renew her call for a return to the negotiating table. "Following the recent tragic events in Israel and Gaza, it is more important than ever that the parties return to the negotiating table [...]. It is only through negotiations – and not violence – that the root causes of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be addressed," Ms. Ashton said.

She added: "The EU continues to make every effort to make a renewal of negotiations possible". PA President Abbas, on the other hand, called on the EU to support the Palestinian bid to the United Nations. He added that Palestinian leaders hoped the 27 member States of the EU would "speak with one voice regarding the Palestinian request for full membership". Ms. Ashton informed Mr. Abbas that the EU did not object to the legitimacy of going to the United Nations but that the EU position would depend on the wording of the Palestinian application. Palestinian lawmaker Hanan Ashrawi also called on the EU to support Palestinian efforts and stressed that Europe should maintain its position on Palestine and commit to "upholding international law". (www.consilium.europa.eu, *Ma'an News Agency, Wafa*)

The Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations, Ron Prosor, had sent a classified cable to the Foreign Ministry the previous week, stating that Israel had no chance of rallying a substantial number of States to oppose a resolution at the General Assembly recognizing a Palestinian State in September. "The maximum that we can hope to gain [at the UN] is for a group of States who will abstain or be absent during the vote," Mr. Prosor wrote, adding that his comments were based on more than 60 meetings he had held during the previous few weeks with his counterparts at the United Nations. Sources in the Prime Minister's office, meanwhile, said that Prime Minister Netanyahu was considering not participating in

this year's General Assembly. Instead, it was likely that President Shimon Peres would represent Israel. (*Haaretz*)

The Government of Japan and the European Union made a contribution of over €1.7 million (\$2.5 million) to the sixth payment under a PA programme for private sector reconstruction in Gaza, according to joint a Japanese-EU press release. The programme is the first large-scale initiative in support of the private sector in the Gaza Strip. (*Wafa*)

Prime Minister Netanyahu had suggested that the Palmer report on the IDF raid on a Gaza-bound flotilla in which nine Turkish activists had been killed, which was due to be issued on 2 September, be delayed by six months. The suggestion was made to the Turkish Government and United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon but, according to *Haaretz*, the Turkish Government had rejected Netanyahu's proposal, claiming it was not serious. Issuance of the Palmer report had already been delayed three times, each time with the agreement of both Israel and Turkey, who had made joint requests to the Secretary-General. Turkey saw Mr. Netanyahu's suggestion as an attempt to avoid reaching a decision on the reconciliation agreement and to stall progress. Turkey explained that despite the fact that the report was problematic, it would prefer that the report be published on 2 September rather than wait another two months, at the end of which it was not at all certain that Mr. Netanyahu would agree to apologize for what had happened on board the Mavi Marmara. (*Haaretz*)

30

Republican members of the US House of Representatives planned to introduce legislation that would seek to force major changes at the United Nations, using as leverage the fact that the United States funds 22 per cent of the world body's operating budget. The bill, introduced by Republican congresswoman and Chair of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, would require the United Nations to adopt a voluntary budget model that would States to fund United Nations agencies selectively rather than according to a set formula. It would end funding for Palestinian refugees, limit use of US funds only to purposes outlined by Congress and stop contributions to peacekeeping operations until management changes were made. (*Bloomberg.com*)

The Caribbean islands of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines became the 125th country to recognize Palestine as an independent and sovereign State.

It announced its decision in an official letter to the United Nations. (*Ynews*)

More than 50 Palestinian officials, researchers and advisers – members of the Palestine Strategy Group – drafted a strategy paper that would make it difficult for the United States to oppose a United Nations vote for Palestinian statehood. The wording of the draft, crafted in recent days by the leadership of Fatah, was designed to enable even “problematic” countries such as the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands to climb on board, or at least abstain from voting. Instead of ascribing to Palestine the 1967 borders, the Group stated in the draft that the permanent borders would be determined in negotiations with Israel on the basis of borders of 4 June 1967. The Group rejected the possibility of continuing the status quo, maintaining that the endless negotiations provided cover for expanding the settlements and consolidating the occupation. The Group also rejected the option of a Palestinian State with temporary borders and limited sovereignty under effective Israeli control. If the strategy of conducting a diplomatic struggle for Palestinian independence that includes sanctions, turning to the International Criminal Court and non-violent resistance, as in Egypt and Tunisia did not change the situation, the Group recommended switching to a “plan B”: dismantling the Palestinian Authority and restoring responsibility for the West Bank's inhabitants to Israel. The Group did not ignore the price their public would pay for such a plan, but wondered what honourable option remained. If it turned out that even that option was unattainable, the Group recommended working towards a model binational State, or a democratic State that did not distinguish between Israeli and Palestinian citizens. Another possibility would be confederation between Jordan and a Palestinian State. (*Haaretz*)

At a meeting today with the Permanent Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Claus Grube, PLO Executive Committee member Hanan Ashrawi stressed the importance of Denmark's support for membership in the United Nations, and urged Denmark to recognize the State of Palestine. (*Wafa*)

Israel's Ambassador to the United States, Michael Oren, said the following about the Palestinian bid at the United Nations: “We have no agreements with a government of Palestine. It puts us in a different realm.” He said that the move at the United Nations would render invalid economic treaties, including on export, import and water sharing, as well as security cooperation agreements, and stressed that Palestinian agreements with the US were also at risk. (*ynetnews*)

The Saudi Arabian newspaper *Al-Medina* reported that Jordan had asked PA President Abbas to reconsider heading to the United Nations for State recognition, fearing that it would cost Palestinian refugees any chance of returning to Israel. According to the report, Jordan had tried to advance the message through a number of different “Arab channels” but that the PA remained determined to seek State recognition on 20 September. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The Israeli Ministry of Defense approved the construction of 100 new homes in the Beit Aryeh settlement as well as the disbursement of NIS 6 million in compensation for monetary losses due to the construction of a bypass road between that settlement and the nearby community of Ofarim, according to the head of the Beit Aryeh Regional Council, Avi Naim. Beit Aryeh is located 3.8 kilometres from the pre-1967 line and is within the boundaries of the security barrier. The approval for the construction was the third largest handed out to any single settlement since the end of a 10-month moratorium on new construction. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Hamas authorities in the Gaza Strip imposed new travel restrictions on Palestinians involved in non-governmental organizations, a move that the Palestinian NGO Network regarded as another attempt by Hamas to control and hamper the work of such organizations. The interior ministry of Hamas announced on its website that anyone leaving Gaza in the framework of activities in non-governmental organizations must provide details of the trip to the ministry's department on non-governmental organizations. The requested details should include: information on the purpose, duration and destination of the trip; a description of the project; and the names of the host and group involved, along with the names and personal details of other participants. The Palestinian Center for Human Rights issued a statement expressing horror at the new development. (*Haaretz*)

The International Press Institute and the Israeli-Palestinian Journalists Forum, a group of 25 journalists from Israel and the OPT, wrote a letter to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, PA President Abbas and senior Political leader of Hamas Ismail Haniyeh calling for press freedom ahead of the possible recognition by the United Nations of the State of Palestine. “The Palestinian National Authority is currently working toward the recognition of a Palestinian State by the United Nations. That is why journalists working for Palestinian and Israeli media must be allowed to do their work without restriction. This is a matter of democratic principle. Journalists must also be free to responsibly publish news and commentary, without fear of attack or legal reprisal.” (*Ma'an News Agency*)

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An Israeli army spokesperson said that a projectile from the Gaza Strip had landed in southern Israel, causing no injuries. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

French President Nicolas Sarkozy said that he wanted to see a united EU voice on the issue of Palestinian statehood at the General Assembly. “The 27 countries of the European Union must express themselves with one voice. [...] The role of the US is uncontested and irreplaceable, but everybody sees that it is not enough. We have to widen the circle of negotiation, think of the role and pertinence of the Quartet,” Mr. Sarkozy said in an opening speech to the annual conference of French ambassadors. (*Reuters*)

Members of the European Parliament in the International Trade Committee unanimously [recommended](#) that the European Parliament consent to a pending agreement between the EU and the PA that would allow Palestinian agricultural products, including processed agricultural products, as well

as fish and other fisheries products duty-free access to the European market. (www.europarl.europa.eu)

The IDF arrested Sheikh Hassam Yousef, a founder and leaders of Hamas in the West Bank. Israeli forces also detained Suheib Bassam al-Saadi, the son of an Islamic Jihad leader. (*Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency, Ynetnews*)
