

Division for Palestinian Rights
**Chronological Review of Events Relating to the
 Question of Palestine**
 Monthly media monitoring review
 June 2008

Monthly highlights

- Israel announces plans to build more than 800 new homes in East Jerusalem settlements. ([1 June](#))
- UN International Meeting on the Question of Palestine held in Qawra, Malta. ([3 June](#))
- Knesset passes amendment to the Israeli Basic Law making Jerusalem capital of the entire Jewish people. ([4 June](#))
- PA President Abbas calls for national dialogue with Hamas. ([4 June](#))
- Senegal's President Wade mediates between Fatah and Hamas. ([7 June](#))
- Israel confirms plans to build 1,300 more apartments in East Jerusalem settlements. ([13 June](#))
- Ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas covering the Gaza Strip takes effect. ([19 June](#))
- Berlin Conference in Support of Palestinian Civil Security and the Rule of Law secures funding commitments for security projects. ([24 June](#))
- Quartet Principals meet in Berlin. ([24 June](#))
- Spanish court issues arrest warrant against Israeli officials suspected of war crimes against Palestinians. ([30 June](#))

I

Three Hamas militants and an Israeli soldier were wounded during an Israeli army incursion into the southern part of the Gaza Strip east of Khan Yunis, Palestinian medics and the IDF said. (*AFP*)

In a statement, the military wing of Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for firing two home-made projectiles at Sderot. Meanwhile, the military wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command claimed responsibility for firing a home-made projectile at Ashkelon. Separately, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades said that their fighters had launched a homemade projectile at Sderot. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Three Palestinians were wounded by an Israeli air strike on Al-Qarara town near Khan Yunis, local sources said. In the meantime, Israeli bulldozers razed a large area of agricultural land. (*Wafa*)

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert held consultations with Defense Minister Ehud Barak, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and senior defense officials on the outlines of the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. It was decided that at that stage, prisoner negotiator Amos Gilad would not be sent to Egypt, but that they would re-evaluate the situation after Mr. Olmert's return from the US. (*Haaretz*)

A delegation of retired US diplomats met Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in the Gaza Strip as part of a Middle East fact-finding mission. The delegation represented the Council for the National Interest. Richard Viets, the head of the delegation, said, "It was a very interesting and very frank discussion." Mr. Viets, who had served as the second in command at the US Embassy in Israel and Ambassador to Jordan in the early 1980s, said that the group had not sought permission for the visit from the US Government. (*AFP*)

Palestinian Authority (PA) Prime Minister Salam Fayyad said that he would keep trying to improve life in the West Bank in small steps regardless of the fate of the US-backed peace efforts. He hoped to break what he described as a culture of defeatism among Palestinians, nurtured by decades of Israeli occupation, and to instil instead a sense of the possible. He said, "The way we end it [occupation] is by this ... spirit of positive defiance, to build despite the occupation, do what we can." Mr. Fayyad said the biggest failure of the past year had been the continued split between the West Bank and Gaza. (*AP*)

Postal Director Mahmoud Mushtaha said that Israeli authorities had restricted mail delivery in and out of the Gaza Strip for an entire week, subsequently allowing delivery of paper documents and reducing the weight limit of packages from 8 to 4 kgs. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel said that it would allow seven students from the Gaza Strip, who had received US Government Fulbright fellowships, to travel to Jerusalem for a visa interview. (*Reuters*)

Israeli police and special services prevented the holding of a memorial service in Jerusalem for the late Faisal Husseini, former PA Minister for Jerusalem Affairs. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel announced plans to build more than 800 new homes in East Jerusalem settlements. Housing and Construction Minister Ze'ev Boim instructed his office to publish a tender to build an additional 763 housing units in "Pisgat Ze'ev" and 121 housing units at Jabal Abu Ghneim ("Har Homa"). (*Haaretz*)

The official spokesman of the PA Presidency, Nabil Abu Rudeineh, said that the settlement expansion plan constituted a blatant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. "Such plans are grave Israeli moves that directly impact the entire peace process and disclose the Israeli Government's apathy to international legitimacy and even to previous internationally witnessed signed peace agreements with the Palestinians", he added. "Hence, the Palestinian leadership now believes that the peace process can not advance unless Israel halts, once and for all, all its settlement activities", Mr. Abu Rudeineh said. PA Prime Minister Fayyad said the peace process was "being trampled upon" with Israel's accelerated settlement construction, calling on the international community to take a firm stand. Yasser Abed Rabbo, Secretary-General of the Executive Committee of the PLO, said Prime Minister Olmert's Government "talks about peace while at the same time working on undermining the basis of peace by increasing settlement activity in Jerusalem and around it."

Jordan rejected Israeli plans for the expansion of settlements in East Jerusalem. In a statement, Nasser Judeh, Minister of State for Media Affairs and Communications, said the Israeli attempts to create a new reality on the ground were a violation of international law and the Israeli commitments under the Road Map.

He urged Israel to immediately freeze all settlement activities, including the so-called "natural growth" of existing settlements. Egyptian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Hossam Zaki said in a statement the Israeli move was threatening any hope for a peaceful solution to the Palestinian issue, adding that the silence of the international community was "no longer acceptable." The French Foreign Ministry said: "This decision damages the viability of the future Palestinian State and the diplomatic process currently under way... We condemn the continuation of settlement activities and hereby restate our demand, which is contained in the Road Map ... for a complete freeze of settlement activities, including those linked to 'natural growth'". (*AFP, Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA), Xinhua*)

Israeli forces evacuated settlers and right-wing activists from the unauthorized settlement outpost of "Shvut Ami". Clashes had erupted near the outpost between Palestinian youths and Israeli forces the previous evening. Two young Palestinians from Nablus were moderately injured by Israeli forces. The "Shvut Ami" outpost covered 35 dunums of land belonging to the Palestinian village of Talfit near the settler bypass road leading to the "Kedumim" settlement and had been

occupied by Israeli settlers in 2006. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The IDF attacked a peaceful anti-wall rally and wounded 12 Palestinians and arrested 5 others in the village of Na'lin, west of Ramallah, Popular Campaign for Resisting the Wall coordinator Salah al-Khawaja said. (*Wafa*)

Palestinian lawmakers in the Gaza Strip condemned the Israeli decisions to speed up the trial of Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) speaker Abdel-Aziz Dweik and to present female detainee Nora Al-Hashlamoun with the choice of exile or lifetime detention. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The media department of the Nafha Association for the Defence of Prisoners and Human Rights said that Israeli authorities had issued 183 administrative detention orders and extensions of previous orders against Palestinians during May 2008, ranging from two to six months. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

2

Israel began to allow Arab Israelis into Jenin to visit relatives and shop for the first time since 2000, Palestinian officials said. About 200 Arab Israelis entered Jenin through the Israeli-controlled Jalameh terminal at the entrance to the city. Under the new rules, the Israeli army barred those younger than 18 from crossing and said all of the travellers must return to the terminal, where they would be subjected to security questioning, before nightfall. (*Reuters*)

Four Palestinians were hospitalized after a tunnel running under the Gaza-Egypt border in Rafah collapsed. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The military wing of the Popular Resistance Committees claimed responsibility for launching two home-made projectiles at the Nahal Oz Israeli military post. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Prime Minister Olmert said that the "hour of decision" was approaching regarding continued Palestinian rocket fire from the Gaza Strip, pledging that the attacks would be stopped "one way or another... I said in the past that I prefer the path of dialogue, but as long as all the steps we take do not lead to the hoped-for calm, we will be forced to turn to the sword," he said. "We will brandish it in a heavy, sharp and painful manner." (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert met with PA President Abbas in Jerusalem. At the meeting, the Prime Minister discussed letters sent by PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad to the European Union (EU) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in which he requested they not upgrade ties with Israel in light of the ongoing settlement building and lack of progress in peace talks. For their part, the Palestinians at the meeting condemned the Israeli approval for plans to build additional homes in East Jerusalem settlements. "Differences were deep and strong in this area," Saeb Erakat, Head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), said. "This process will continue," Israeli Government Spokesman Mark Regev said of the peace talks with the Palestinians, adding that Mr. Olmert had recommitted himself during the meeting to trying to reach an agreement on Palestinian statehood by the end of the year.

(*Haaretz*)

Germany's Foreign Minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, met with PA President Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah. At a joint press conference, Mr. Abbas appealed to the international community and the Arab countries to intervene to end the catastrophic situation in the Gaza Strip. (*Wafa*)

At a Jerusalem press conference, EU Parliamentary Working Group on the Middle East Vice-Chair Véronique de Keyser said: "We strongly feel that until [Israeli] signs of good faith translate into tangible improvements on the ground, the time is not yet right to upgrade EU-Israel relations... On behalf of the EU Parliament, we call for an end to the geographical and political isolation of the Gaza Strip and to reconnect it to the rest of the world," she said. "We call on the Quartet and its representative Tony Blair and on the Palestinian Authority institutions to re-engage on the ground and to collaborate with Gaza." During a four-day visit members of the group had met with both Hamas and Fatah members of the PLC. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The US reinstated the Fulbright scholarships of seven Gaza Strip students blocked by Israel from leaving the territory, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said. The reversal came on orders of Secretary of State Rice, who "wasn't pleased," Mr. McCormack added. (*AP*)

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

The Secretary-General is deeply concerned at the recent announcement by the Israeli Government to invite new tenders for construction in Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem. The Government of Israel's continued construction in settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory is contrary to international law and to its commitments under the Road Map and the Annapolis process, as stressed by the Quartet when it met in London on 2 May.

(*UN News Centre*)

3

An Israeli soldier was moderately wounded when troops clashed with Palestinian militants in the southern Gaza Strip, an IDF spokesman said. Palestinian witnesses said several tanks and bulldozers had rolled into southern Gaza east of Khan Yunis. The armed wing of Hamas said its fighters had fired on the troops.

Three Islamic Jihad militants were injured when an Israeli drone fired a missile at their car in Khan Yunis. (*AFP, Ma'an News Agency*)

Five people were wounded when a barrage of Qassam rockets hit the Eshkol region in Israel. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

A Palestinian died when a smuggling tunnel between Egypt and the Gaza Strip collapsed, Palestinian medics said. Three others were injured in the incident. (*AFP*)

Israeli forces arrested 14 Palestinians in Hebron and Tulkarm, PA security sources said. (*Xinhua*)

The IDF announced that three more PA police stations would be allowed to open in Jenin. Palestinian police would be in charge of keeping peace, while the security responsibility for the city would still remain with the IDF, the spokesperson said. (*Haaretz, Xinhua*)

PA police and security services began a campaign aimed at imposing order in the northern West Bank Governorate of Salfit. "The campaign will include destroying all unregistered cars as well as capturing fugitives and outlaws," said Director of Salfit police Yousif Shahada. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh told a press conference: "The Israelis gave completely ambiguous answers to the Palestinian demands which were clear — ceasefire in exchange for lifting the crippling siege, opening the crossing points and halting hostilities against the Palestinian people." He affirmed that Egyptian-brokered ceasefire negotiations between Hamas and Israel were still ongoing. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

PA President Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Olmert had made "a breakthrough" regarding Israeli checkpoints in the West Bank, Saeb Erakat, Head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO, said, adding that Israel "works on removing some of these checkpoints to ease the daily suffering of the Palestinian people." "The Israeli settlement really bites the peace process and the Palestinian leadership studies all the options if the negotiations failed," Mr. Erakat added.

Ahmed Abdel Rahman, an aide to PA President Abbas, said that Palestinians were growing impatient with the lack of progress in the peace talks. "There's a limit to how much we can negotiate," he said. "We are giving peace a chance, but not forever. We know how to defend our rights and lands." Yasser Abed Rabbo, Secretary-General of the Executive Committee of the PLO, accused Israel of seeking to divide the West Bank into cantons and to isolate East Jerusalem from the West Bank. "Israel's practical goal is to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian State," he added. (*The Jerusalem Post, Xinhua*)

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh told a press conference in Gaza City, "I welcome President Abbas' approval of any Arab or international effort aimed at bridging the gap between the Palestinian rivals" and stated his readiness to begin an "unconditional national Palestinian dialogue." He urged the Arab League to take part in the reconciliation efforts. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Prime Minister Olmert told an annual American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) conference: "The [Israeli-Palestinian] negotiations cover all outstanding issues between us and the agreement, if and when it is reached, will reflect the vision introduced to the world by President Bush in June 2002 and its implementation will be subject to the Road Map... The time for both parties to make difficult decisions is soon approaching." US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told the conference: "We still believe that we have a chance to reach an agreement on the basic contours of a peaceful Palestinian State. I know that this is ambitious... But if we can pursue this goal by the end of the year, it will be an historic breakthrough. The goal itself, though, will endure beyond the current US leadership," Ms. Rice said. (www.aipac.org, www.state.gov)

Palestinian sources reported that a 28-year-old female Palestinian patient had died after being unable to leave the Gaza Strip for treatment owing to the continued Israeli closure. (*Wafa*)

The Head of the Palestinian Power Authority in the Gaza Strip, Kan'an Ubaid, said that a Norwegian technical team had been in the Gaza Strip the previous week to repair parts of the power station. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A senior State Department official told *The Jerusalem Post*, on condition of anonymity: "What we're telling the Israelis is that the policy that was adopted after the summer [of 2007] wasn't working, of really closing the [Gaza Strip] borders," and was helping rather than hurting Hamas. He said this view was likely to be conveyed to Prime Minister Olmert during his visit to Washington. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

White House Spokesperson Dana Perino said: "We don't believe that any more settlements should be built. And we know that it exacerbates the tensions when it comes to the negotiations with the Palestinians." "The Prime Minister was informed and he gave his authorization for the construction of the houses [in East Jerusalem settlements]," Israeli Housing and Construction Minister Ze'ev Boim told Israeli *Public Radio*. (*AFP*)

"Kiryat Arba" settlers rebuilt a synagogue marking "Hazon David", an unauthorized outpost near Hebron, soon after the IDF had destroyed the structure. The outpost had been destroyed and rebuilt at least 32 times. (*Haaretz*)

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People convened a two-day United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine in Qawra, Malta. The objective of the event was to foster greater support by the international community for the creation of a climate conducive to the advancement of the permanent status negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. At the opening session, Tonio Borg, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malta, [addressed](#) the meeting. "The primary objective of the international community must be to achieve peace in Palestine and simultaneously guarantee the right to exist for the State of Israel. While peace in the Middle East does not guarantee peace in the rest of the Mediterranean, there can be no peace in the Mediterranean without peace in the Middle East," he said. A [message](#) from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was delivered by Maxwell Gaylard, Deputy UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. Statements were also made by Paul Badji (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee; and Tayseer Quba'a, Deputy Speaker of the Palestine National Council. (*The Malta Independent, The Times of Malta, UN press releases GA/PAL/1089, SG/SM/11613-GA/PAL/1090*)

4

Palestinian doctors said that a Palestinian worker at a Gaza fuel terminal had been wounded by an errant rocket fired by Palestinian militants. The Israeli army said that the attack on the Gaza side of the Nahal Oz crossing prompted it to cease transferring industrial fuel, cooking gas and diesel to Gaza. (*AP*)

IDF arrested eight Palestinians in Jenin, Al-Yamun and Silat Harithiya, PA security sources said. (*Wafa*)

Two Palestinians were hit by rubber bullets when clashes erupted between protestors and Israeli soldiers during a rally protesting the construction of the separation wall in the village of N'lin west of Ramallah. Palestinians and Israeli and foreign peace activists who participated in the rally said that Israeli soldiers had attacked them with tear gas and rubber bullets, claiming the demonstrators had thrown stones at them. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Hamas would hear Israel's response to an Egyptian offer for a Gaza ceasefire after Prime Minister Olmert's return from Washington, Hamas leader Mahmoud Al-Zahhar said. Hamas' position would be determined when it received the Israeli answers on some questions involving the lifting of the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip and stopping violence. (*Xinhua*)

Osama al-Muzini, a leader of Hamas, threatened that the Palestinians would storm the Gaza Strip border in "all directions", including the Rafah terminal, if the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip remained in place. (*Xinhua*)

PA President Abbas told a Cabinet meeting: "If they [Israelis] want serious negotiations with good intentions, then they have to stop the settlements, release prisoners and remove roadblocks." "We need Arab efforts and Arab presence if possible so that we can solve our problems," he said in reference to the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip. (*AP, DPA*)

The Head of the Palestinian negotiating team, Ahmed Qureia, told a Fatah meeting in Ramallah that "to reach a final agreement this year will require a miracle." He said the Palestinian and Israeli teams had discussed all possible files for a final status agreement and committees had been formed to discuss every issue; however, "no tangible progress has been achieved so far." (*DPA*)

PA President Abbas called in a speech for a national dialogue with Hamas to implement the Yemen initiative "to end the internal division that harms our people, [our] cause". He added that if the talks were successful, he would call for new legislative and presidential elections. Hamas spokesman Taher Nunu welcomed the call for talks. (*AP, Wafa*)

US National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley told reporters following the meeting between President Bush and Prime Minister Olmert: "At this point we follow the lead of the parties and the parties have indicated that they want to continue this [peace] process... These are negotiations entered into by Prime Minister Olmert certainly, but on behalf of the Government. It involves participation by other ministers in this process." Mr. Olmert told reporters: "I hope that we will be able to make decisions during 2008," and noted that "not even half of the year has gone by." (*AP, www.whitehouse.gov*)

PA President Abbas rejected presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama's call for Jerusalem to be the undivided capital of Israel, made in an address to AIPAC. "The whole world knows that holy Jerusalem was occupied in 1967 and we will not accept a Palestinian State without having Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian State", he said. Senior Hamas leader Mahmoud Al-Zahhar told reporters in Gaza: "The statements of Obama that undivided Jerusalem is the capital of the occupation State is rejected and condemned. It reflects the biased US position towards Israel". (*DPA, Reuters*)

The Israeli occupation and conflict with the Palestinians had undermined Israel's economic growth and cost at least an extra New Israeli Sheqalim (NIS) 36.6 billion (\$10.9 billion) in defence spending over the past two decades, according to a report by the Adva Centre, an Israeli think tank. (www.adva.org)

Hamas gunmen seized control of the Palestinian Water Authority office that was spearheading Quartet Representative Tony Blair's water project in the Gaza Strip, Palestinian and Western officials said. The seizure came ahead of a planned tender by the Authority for building a water treatment plant and amid negotiations with Israel on bringing critical building supplies into Gaza. A World Bank official, who was coordinating the project, said that construction was expected to move forward as planned. (*Haaretz*)

The Knesset approved in a preliminary reading an amendment to the Israeli Basic Law whereby Jerusalem would be considered not just the capital of Israel, but the capital of the entire Jewish people. Member of the Knesset Avshalom Vilan, who had voted against the bill, said that he was worried it would cause the collapse of the peace process, making it impossible to reach a political compromise on Jerusalem. (*Haaretz*)

5

IDF troops killed a young Palestinian and injured two others in the Jabal Johar area of Hebron. According to the Israeli army, the armed Palestinians were exchanging gunfire in a clan fight near an Israeli settlement in the city. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

An Israeli was killed and four others were wounded when Palestinians in the Gaza Strip fired a mortar shell into Kibbutz Nir Oz in the western Negev. Hamas claimed responsibility for the attack. Not long after the mortar strike, Palestinian doctors said that a 4-year-old girl was killed and her mother wounded when an Israeli aircraft targeted a group of militants in the southern Gaza Strip but missed them. (*Haaretz*)

Three Palestinians were seriously injured when Israeli forces opened fire on them in Beit Unmar, north of Hebron. Hospital officials said that 16-year-old Tareq Jamal Abu Maria was undergoing surgery to remove three bullets after having been shot in the chest and stomach. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

IDF troops arrested seven Palestinians in Nablus and the Balata refugee camp and two in Tulkarm. Meanwhile, in the town of Khadr, near Bethlehem, the IDF arrested Salwa Saleh, 16, and three other Palestinians from Shawawra village, security sources said. (*Wafa*)

Khalil Sokkar, 27, was killed and 29 other Palestinians injured in a series of Israeli air strikes and ground attacks in the Beit Hanoun area in the northern Gaza Strip.

Eyewitnesses said that Mr. Sokkar was on his way to rescue two injured civilians. Israeli forces raided eastern Rafah; no injuries were reported. Israeli forces withdrew from the town of Khuza'a, east of Khan Yunis, leaving a number of Palestinians injured. (*AP, Ma'an News Agency*)

Prime Minister Olmert told journalists, "The way it looks now, we are closer to a military operation in Gaza than we are to any other type of arrangement." Defense Minister Ehud Barak said: "The military operation is closer than ever, and it will precede the ceasefire". (*AFP, AP, Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency*)

In a television interview before his meeting with the House of Commons International Development Select Committee, Quartet Representative Tony Blair said, "What we need to do is to get a period of calm, to get a ceasefire in Gaza, progressively to start reopening the crossings, start to get proper humanitarian help through and then build our way back out of this to a situation where the people of Gaza can be helped and secondly, and very importantly, the situation in Gaza does not disrupt other possibilities of progress". His said his view of the situation had been transformed as he recognized the vital importance of the situation on the ground to enable constructive political dialogue. (*Haaretz*)

6

Four Qassam rockets and five mortar shells struck the western Negev. No injuries were reported, but some buildings and cars were damaged. An Israeli soldier was wounded and a Palestinian militant killed in clashes east of Gaza City, an IDF spokesperson said. (*Haaretz*)

Presumptive US Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama did not rule out Palestinian sovereignty over parts of Jerusalem when he told AIPAC that Jerusalem should remain undivided, his campaign told *The Jerusalem Post*, clarifying that Mr. Obama felt Jerusalem should not be "divided by barbed wire and checkpoints as it was in 1948-1967". Mr. Obama told *CNN*: "Obviously it is going to be the parties to negotiate a range of these issues, and Jerusalem is part of those negotiations ... I think it is smart for us to work through a system in which everybody has access to the extraordinary religious sites in old Jerusalem ... Israel has a legitimate claim

on that city.” Mr. Obama added: “We have to have a contiguous and cohesive Palestinian State that functions effectively.” (AFP, *The Jerusalem Post*, *Reuters*)

The Christian Peacemaker Teams reported that the IDF had blocked the main road between Tuwani and Yatta, in the southern West Bank. (Ma'an News Agency)

7
A Hamas member was killed and two others wounded by Israeli tanks in eastern Gaza City. (AP, DPA, *Reuters*, *Xinhua*)

In response to the recent string of Hamas rocket attacks, Israel was likely to conduct a medium-sized military operation against Hamas before agreeing to a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, senior defense officials told *The Jerusalem Post*. A final decision on Israel's course of action would be made on 10 June during a meeting between Prime Minister Olmert, Defense Minister Ehud Barak and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, they said. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade, Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, met envoys from Fatah and Hamas for reconciliation talks between the two parties. The meetings with Hamas representative Emad Khalid Alamy and Hikmat Zeid, the Palestinian Ambassador to Senegal, was the first round of what the Government of Senegal said was a planned seven rounds of talks. President Wade later said in a statement, “I ask Israel and Hamas for an immediate ceasefire from Monday, 9 June 2008 at 1200 GMT: no more Israeli attacks and incursions into the Gaza Strip and no more shooting at Israel by Hamas.” He also said he would soon visit the West Bank, Gaza and Israel to pursue his mediation. Speaking about the mediation efforts, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh said, “Things are still at the beginning and it may take a long time.” (AFP, AP, BBC, *Haaretz*, *Reuters*)

8
A foreign agricultural worker was slightly wounded by a rocket which Palestinian militants fired into southern Israel from the Gaza Strip, Israeli medics and the military said. (AFP)

PA President Abbas met with Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah and, the following day, with Egyptian President Mubarak. The talks focused on efforts to revive inter-Palestinian dialogue, the Egyptian attempts to broker a Gaza Strip ceasefire and Israeli settlement expansion. President Abbas said, after the Cairo talks, “We consider the settlements the main obstacle to progress on any of the issues being negotiated, because we feel that settlements are eating Palestinian land bit by bit.” He added: “Only dialogue between Fatah and Hamas will lead to improvement in Gaza.” (AFP, *The Jerusalem Post*, *Xinhua*)

9
A Palestinian was killed when a smuggling tunnel collapsed in Rafah underneath the border between Egypt and the Gaza Strip. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli soldiers shot a young Palestinian in the feet near the village of Beit Ummar, near Hebron, Israeli sources reported. The Israeli military said that he had thrown a Molotov cocktail at an Israeli position. (Ma'an News Agency)

Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa, on a two-day visit to Slovenia, told a joint news conference with Slovenian Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel in connection with the EU-US Summit to be held in Slovenia, “I trust there will be a serious discussion about the prospects of peace in the Middle East and on whether it will be possible as promised to have a Palestinian State by the end of the year ... Israel does not seem ready to give anything or enter into a deal ... I think one of the important steps to face is for Fatah and Hamas to close ranks, and this is our task to achieve.” (AFP)

Britain's Foreign Secretary, David Miliband, visited the Occupied Palestinian Territory as part of a Middle East trip that also included Israel. The Minister met local officials in Jenin and later met with PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad and Head of the Palestinian negotiating team Ahmed Qureia. (AFP)

A poll conducted by the Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research suggested that PA President Abbas would win 52 per cent of the vote if elections were held now, up from 46 per cent in March. Another poll conducted by the Near East Consulting Company said that 73 per cent of Palestinians trusted President Abbas. (DPA, *Haaretz*, *Reuters*)

“Contacts between Gaza and the Egyptian side are persistent in order to reach a deal allowing the opening the Rafah crossing for three days a week,” said Ihab al-Ghussein, a spokesman for Hamas. (*Xinhua*)

The family of captured IDF Cpl. Gilad Shalit received a new letter from him as a result of former US President Carter's efforts, Israel's *Channel 10 TV* reported. (*Haaretz*)

PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad said that Israel had delayed transferring PA tax revenues used to pay 160,000 civil servants and members of the security services. He added, “Much has been said on this topic. Anonymous Israeli officials have linked it to the letter I sent to the European Union about the Israeli request for closer ties.” (AFP, AP, *The Jerusalem Post*, *Ma'an News Agency*)

10
Palestinian officials said three Palestinian militants had been killed in an Israeli attack in Jabaliya in the northern Gaza Strip. Health officials said four people were also wounded. Hamas said that the three dead militants belonged to the group. (AP)

Four Qassam rockets fired by Gaza militants struck the western Negev and 10 mortar shells struck near the Nahal Oz border crossing. There were no reports of casualties in the attacks. (*Haaretz*)

Israel's Industry, Trade and Labour Minister, Eli Yishai, said, during a Cabinet meeting: “It is impossible to accept a virtual calm, but if this will be a serious ceasefire, then there's room to talk.” Construction and Housing Minister Ze'ev Boim said that “Israel must launch an operation against Hamas.” Support for a military operation also came from Interior Minister Meir Sheetrit. In another meeting to be held shortly, the entire Security cabinet would convene to discuss the situation in Gaza. (*Haaretz*, *The Jerusalem Post*)

“We have approached the US Administration with an official request to prevent an Israeli military attack on the Gaza Strip,” a senior PA official in Ramallah told *The Jerusalem Post*. “We fear that [Prime Minister] Olmert will order an attack on the Gaza Strip to divert attention from the latest corruption scandal.” (*The Jerusalem Post*)

In an interview with pan-Arab news channel *Al-Arabiya*, British Foreign Secretary David Miliband said: “I think that the bloodshed is itself a barrier to the solution, but I believe that overcoming the problem lies in rallying support from various societies. There is an ongoing process that enables us to reach this goal. The greatest challenge we face is developing an effective peace process. ... There is evidence of the possibility of reaching a solution to the situation between the Israelis and the Palestinians based on the two-State idea. I believe that the solution lies in achieving justice for the Palestinians and guaranteeing security for the Israelis.” (www.fco.gov.uk)

In an interview with Palestinian journalists in the West Bank city of Al Bireh, Jon Wilks, the official Arabic-language spokesperson of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, said the United Kingdom (UK) and the EU wanted the Gaza border crossings opened, but only under three conditions: a ceasefire with Israel, Palestinian national unity and an agreement to work out a political resolution with Israel. Mr. Wilks expressed the UK's readiness for hosting another international conference to promote investment in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. (Ma'an News Agency)

In their [2008 EU-US Summit Declaration](#), leaders welcomed the recent steps forward towards peace in the Middle East and said they would pursue complementary efforts to support the parties' efforts to reach a political agreement by the end of 2008, as foreseen at the Annapolis conference. They called on Israel and the Palestinians to implement their Road Map obligations in full. (www.eu2008.si)

Mr. Yusuf Zumor of the PA Finance Ministry said that after a delay, Israel had made a monthly tax transfer of \$54 million, \$20 million short of the expected amount. (AP)

PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad signed an agreement with the World Bank for the transfer of \$40 million in budget support for the PA. “This grant aims to support the PA's efforts to accelerate the implementation of reforms described in the [Palestinian Reform and Development Plan] PRDP, especially those aimed at strengthening its fiscal position and improving public financial management,” said David Craig, World Bank Country Director for the West Bank and Gaza. (www.worldbank.org)

The EU [announced](#) that it would contribute €23 million to the PA to pay salaries and pensions of over 73,000 Palestinian civil servants and pensioners through PEGASE. (www.delwbg.ec.europa.eu)

Israeli forces killed four Palestinians, including a 9-year-old girl, in the Gaza Strip, Palestinian medical workers said. They said that the girl's remains had been recovered from a house in the village of Qarara, north-east of Khan Yunis, which had been struck by Israeli tank fire. During the Israeli operation, soldiers also shot and killed a Hamas gunman and a civilian. Another Palestinian civilian was killed in an Israeli air strike in northern Gaza. An Israeli military spokesman said the ground attack near Khan Yunis had targeted militants attempting to launch rockets into Israel from a built-up area. The air strike in the northern Gaza Strip had been launched against Palestinians who were planning to fire mortars at Israel, according to the military. (Reuters)

Israeli troops arrested 28 Palestinians in the West Bank, *Israel Radio* reported. (Haaretz)

An Israeli Apache helicopter fired on Al-Za'tar area near Jabalya and killed Mohammed Asaliya, 55 and wounded his granddaughter, as well as a passer-by, witnesses said. (Wafa)

At a meeting of the Ministerial Committee on National Security Affairs led by Prime Minister Olmert, top Israeli political and security officials decided not to launch broad military action in the Gaza Strip for the time being, but instructed the army to continue preparations in case the truce talks failed, Government spokesman Mark Regev said. Security officials said Israel's representative for the truce talks, Amos Gilad, would head to Cairo in the next few days to try to advance the ceasefire efforts. (AP)

12

The IDF troops killed two Palestinians, who were members of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, in the Gaza Strip city of Beit Lahiya, local sources said. They were identified as 20-year-old Mohammed Dawlah and 22-year-old Khalid Zahd. According to *Haaretz*, the two men were trying to rig explosive devices near the fence between Israel and the Gaza Strip. An IDF tank opened fire on one man and forces from the Givati Brigade shot the other. (Haaretz, Wafa)

An explosion destroyed a Hamas member's house and damaged several other homes in Beit Lahiya in what Hamas described as an Israeli air strike. Israel denied involvement. Seven people, including a 4-month-old baby, were killed in the blast; another Palestinian died from injuries caused by the explosion. About 50 people were wounded, among them 15 children. Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip fired some 40 Qassam rockets and mortar shells at the western Negev, leaving one woman moderately wounded when a rocket directly struck the infirmary in a Moshav in the Ashkelon coastal region. (Haaretz)

Israeli forces stormed the Al-Mustaqbal Society for Development and Democracy in Nablus. (Ma'an News Agency)

Amos Gilad, Head of the Israeli Defense Ministry's Diplomatic-Security Bureau returned from a meeting with Egyptian Intelligence Chief Omar Suleiman in Cairo on a proposed truce in and around the Gaza Strip. He said the Ministry was still working to "exhaust" the dialogue with Egypt on a ceasefire with Hamas. Defense Ministry officials said Mr. Gilad asked the Egyptians for clarifications on the release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in conjunction with a truce deal, as well as on Cairo's promise to step up efforts to curb the smuggling of weapons into Gaza under the Philadelphia corridor (Salah al-Din area). "The Egyptians are supposed to get back to us with answers in the coming days," a Ministry official said. (AP, The Jerusalem Post, Ynetnews)

PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat warned that any large-scale Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip would destroy the peace process and push the region into further violence, chaos and bloodshed. He made the remarks in Jericho during the visit of the Vice-President of the German Parliament, Dr. Susanne Kastner, and her delegation. (Ma'an News Agency)

13

Israeli forces arrested a 28-year-old Palestinian from Hebron. (Ma'an News Agency)

Three members of the Izz ad-Din Al-Qassam Brigades (Hamas' military wing) were killed and two others injured in an Israeli air strike against a group of militants near a mosque in the Jabalya refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip. (Ma'an News Agency)

Hamas confirmed that the members of its military wing who had died in the massive explosion in Beit Lahiya in the northern Gaza Strip a day earlier were making last-minute preparations for a "special mission." Earlier, Hamas had blamed Israel and reacted with heavy rocket fire on the western Negev. (BBC, Haaretz, Ynetnews)

Israeli Transportation Minister Shaul Mofaz characterized the Cabinet's decision to continue indirect ceasefire talks with Hamas as problematic, adding that Hamas should be asking Israel for calm, rather than the other way around. He said, "We needed to change our policies regarding the Gaza Strip a year ago when the Hamas rose to power. Today, we are a year late and we still have not reached the right decision." After a day of heavy shelling from the Gaza Strip the previous day, defense officials said that Israel would persevere with talks but that the IDF might step up operations in response to the attacks. (Haaretz, Ynetnews)

The European Commission has allocated €24 million (\$37.7 million) to address the urgent humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable Palestinians. More than 1.5 million Palestinians in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria would benefit from the humanitarian aid. (<http://europa.eu>)

Israel confirmed plans to build 1,300 more apartments in East Jerusalem settlements. Interior Ministry spokesperson Sabine Hadad said the new apartments were approved for construction in the ultra-Orthodox "Ramat Shlomo" settlement to help alleviate a "housing shortage" in Jerusalem. PA Negotiator Saeb Erakat said, "We condemn this project, which reveals the Israeli Government's intention to destroy peace." (AP)

An Israeli human rights group, B'Tselem, released a video showing what it said were Israeli settlers attacking a Palestinian family as they tended their sheep in the West Bank. The attack on 8 June near the "Susia" settlement by four masked men in the southern West Bank left an elderly Palestinian couple and their nephew wounded from blows to the head, face and hands. (AP, BBC)

14

At least seven Palestinians were wounded when hundreds of people clashed with Israeli troops near Bethlehem, Palestinian security officials said. The fighting broke out when around a dozen Israeli military jeeps surrounded an apartment building in Al-Doha village and closed off nearby roads, according to Palestinian witnesses. Hundreds of Palestinians, mostly young men, massed in the area and hurled rocks at the soldiers, who responded with gunfire and called in another dozen vehicles, including armoured bulldozers, they said. The seven people wounded were hit by live rounds and rubber bullets, a security official said. Later, the soldiers began throwing rocks at the protestors, hitting several people, including an AFP photographer, whose camera was broken, and a photographer from Reuters. (AFP)

15

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said in her remarks with PA President Abbas in Ramallah: "I did speak with the President, as I spoke earlier this morning with Foreign Minister Livni, with Defense Minister Barak, and will with Prime Minister Olmert later, about the issue of settlement. As I said before, it's important to have an atmosphere of confidence and trust. And unfortunately, I do believe, and the United States believes, that the actions and the announcements that are taking place are indeed having a negative effect on the atmosphere for negotiation. And that is not what we want. We should be in a position of encouraging confidence, not undermining it. No party should be taking steps at this point that could prejudice the outcome of a negotiation. And I want to make very clear that the United States will not consider these activities to affect any final status negotiations, including final borders. These are to be negotiated between the parties in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). And this is a point that I have made to my Israeli colleagues earlier, and Mr. President, I wanted to reiterate that with you." Ms. Rice also met with Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni in Jerusalem. Israeli Prime Minister Olmert told Secretary Rice in Jerusalem: "We are not confiscating additional Palestinian lands but building in Jewish neighbourhoods in Jerusalem, which are expected to remain in Israeli hands." Regarding building endeavours in the settlements, Mr. Olmert stressed that Israel's policy had not changed, saying, "It remains as it was - and it was clarified to our counterparts, both American and Palestinian, long before the Annapolis conference and then again after it." (AP, www.state.gov, Ynetnews)

16

Israeli strikes in the southern Gaza Strip killed three Palestinian gunmen and injured three others. Three Islamic Jihad men were killed by Israeli fire when they were planting explosives along the Gaza-Israel border, according to Abu Ahmad, a spokesman for the group. The military confirmed that troops had crossed into Gaza and shot the militants. In a separate incident, an Israeli air strike injured three Hamas militants, one of them critically, Hamas said. The military confirmed the attack. (AP)

A rocket fired from the Gaza Strip struck a cemetery in the southern Israeli city of Ashkelon, leaving one person wounded. Another rocket exploded inside the city. (Haaretz)

Israeli tanks killed a Palestinian gunman and, later, an air strike killed Mu'taz Tafesh, 23, both in Jabalya. In another incident, a member of Islamic Jihad was killed and three Palestinians were wounded east of Gaza City, doctors and witnesses said. (DPA, Ma'an News Agency, Wafa)

Israeli forces seized two Palestinians from the Dheisheh refugee camp in Bethlehem and a Palestinian lawyer from Jenin. (Ma'an News Agency)

"The talks under way in Egypt on calm are nearing an end, an end that would bring about what the Palestinian people aspire to - a lifting of the siege, the opening of

the crossings and an end to the aggression,” Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh told a gathering in Gaza. He added, “We are committed to these demands. ... a reciprocal and simultaneous calm that begins in Gaza and then extends to the West Bank.” Israeli Prime Minister Olmert’s spokesman, Mark Regev, said, “We’re giving a very serious chance to the initiative of the Egyptians. It’s the preferred outcome from the point of view of the Government.” But Mr. Regev reiterated that the Israeli army was preparing in case the Egyptian track failed, saying the Government would not be deterred by domestic political uncertainty from launching a Gaza offensive if necessary. (Reuters)

The EU and Israel agreed to strengthen ties, but the EU urged more progress on Middle East peace and criticized Israel for building more settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. EU ministers stressed that closer ties needed to be set in a context “which notably includes the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the implementation of the two-State solution,” according to a text obtained by Reuters. Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni told a news briefing after the talks that the meeting marked a “new phase” in relations between Israel and the EU. EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner said it remained to be seen what linkage there would be between progress in the peace process and closer ties. The EU text said the bloc wanted gradually to strengthen cooperation in areas such as social policy, give the high-tech Israeli economy better access to the EU market and cooperate more closely on regulatory issues. Twelve Europe-based groups signed a statement criticizing the decision. “As Israel’s pre-eminent trade partner, the EU must use the upcoming upgrade negotiations process to ensure Israel ends the ever-worsening Gaza blockade, lifts movement restrictions and halts settlement expansion in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem,” said Adam Leach, regional manager for Oxfam. (AFP, DPA, Reuters)

A US Defence Department team arrived at Egypt’s border with the Gaza Strip, bringing hi-tech equipment to help Egyptian forces search for smuggling tunnels, a security official said. The US team, including two defence attachés from the US Embassy in Cairo and 14 US-based staff, arrived at the Rafah border crossing and began instructing Egyptian border forces on the use of the equipment, the official said, adding that the Americans would be staying in the nearby town of El-Arish for “up to 15 days.” (AFP)

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice pressed Israel to ease living conditions in the West Bank after warning that the growth of settlements there was harming revived peace talks. Ms. Rice raised the issue of the more than 600 checkpoints and roadblocks in the West Bank during a meeting with Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak in Jerusalem. Mr. Barak said he would look into the possibility of removing barriers on a case-by-case basis, but stressed that on the whole they were needed for security reasons, according to Defense Ministry officials. The two were then joined by PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad. (AFP)

Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura said he planned to hold a four-way meeting with Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Jordan ahead of next month’s G-8 summit. Mr. Komura said he had invited his counterparts from the three sides to take part in talks in Japan before the summit, to be held in Toyako in northern Japan from 7 to 9 July. Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni told him by telephone that she could not come because of domestic political developments but would send a representative, Mr. Komura said. The Palestinians and Jordan had also agreed to come, although the exact date of talks and level of representation was yet to be decided, he added. (AFP)

The Jerusalem municipality said that the Israeli authorities had approved a plan to build 40,000 new homes in Jerusalem, including in East Jerusalem, over the next decade. The plan was approved by the National Planning and Building Committee on 15 June, municipal officials said. (AFP)

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, and the newly appointed Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Richard Falk, addressed the Human Rights Council, which then held an interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur, followed by a general debate on the human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories. Ms. Arbour, presenting two reports, said that the first report focused on the closure of Gaza and its impact on the enjoyment of human rights and described the effects of violence against the civilian population, as well as other human rights violations. Actions taken by Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Hamas during the reporting period continued to violate international human rights and humanitarian law, the report stated. The second report focused on the question of access of Palestinians to religious sites in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. It described how obstacles to freedom of movement, such as the closure, permit regimes and the wall, hampered such access. While security was undoubtedly important, measures that limited access to religious sites and hampered cultural exchange should be proportionate to that aim and non-discriminatory, the report stated. Mr. Falk said he was concerned that the mandate as now formulated applied only to Israeli violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. This had allowed critics of the Human Rights Council and of the reports of this particular mandate to complain about the bias and one-sidedness of the approach taken. He asked the Council to consider expanding the mandate to also encompass inquiry into Palestinian violations of international humanitarian law, but not of alleged violations of human rights within the Palestinian territories. (www.unog.ch)

17

Six Palestinian militants were killed and two wounded in Israeli air strikes on cars in the southern and central Gaza Strip. Among the dead was Muataz Dumush, believed to be linked to Al-Qaida. Islamic Jihad said five of its members were killed. (AFP, Haaretz, Reuters, Ynetnews, Xinhua)

The Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades, the military wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, claimed responsibility for launching two home-made projectiles at Ashkelon and the western Negev desert. (Ma’an News Agency)

Two Israeli settlers were arrested in connection with the beating of Palestinian shepherds in the West Bank. The two suspects, one of them a minor, were residents of “Susia” settlement near Hebron. The incident was captured on video by a relative of one of the victims using one of the 100 small video cameras which B’Tselem had handed out to Palestinians to record proof of attacks. The organization said it had investigated 47 cases of physical assault, gunfire, beating or stone-throwing by settlers against Palestinians in 2007. (AP, AFP, Haaretz)

PA President Abbas was scheduled to travel to Yemen, Jordan and Kuwait, leaving on 18 June, for talks on reconciliation with Hamas, official sources in Sana’a said. (DPA)

Amos Gilad, Head of the Israeli Defense Ministry’s Diplomatic-Security Bureau, met with Egyptian intelligence chief Omar Suleiman. Mr. Gilad returned to Israel overnight with a final agreement and reported to Defense Minister Ehud Barak. “The Palestinian and Israeli sides have accepted the first stage of a reciprocal and simultaneous period of calm, starting in the Gaza Strip,” the official news agency (MENA) quoted a senior Egyptian official as saying. “Both sides have pledged to halt all hostilities and all military activities against each other,” said Foreign Ministry Spokesman Hossam Zaki. Israel said, however, that it would continue preparations for broad military action should the truce fall apart. Defense Minister Ehud Barak said, “This evening, the possibility of reaching calm is being examined. It is still early to declare it, and it is difficult to determine how long it will last.” The test will be in its implementation, but nevertheless it is important to use the chances of a calm in order to return quiet to the Gaza-border communities, Ashkelon and Sderot, and use the chances to renew negotiations for the release of Gilad Shalit,” the Defense Minister said. (AFP, AP, Haaretz, Reuters, Yediot Ahronot)

Senior Hamas officials, among them former PA Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh and the deputy head of the Hamas Political Bureau in Damascus, Mohammed Nazal, announced the truce timetable, confirmed by news agencies with officials in Cairo. The ceasefire reportedly included a pledge by the IDF not to engage in offensive action in the Gaza Strip and a pledge by Hamas to prevent any attack from the Gaza Strip on Israel by its operatives or other Palestinian groups. The agreement put no limitations on IDF actions in the West Bank. (Haaretz)

Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal said the truce committed Israel to ending its blockade of the Gaza Strip, but any Israeli violation of the deal would not go unanswered. “If you go back, we go back. The resistance factions are not in a weak position; they are in a strong position... We are a people with a cause and we will not be broken by aggression or invasion”, Mr. Mashaal said during a visit to the United Arab Emirates. He added, “The Gilad Shalit issue is linked to an exchange deal... whereas the truce involves a bilateral ceasefire, lifting the blockade and opening the crossings.” (Reuters)

The official spokesman of the PA Presidency, Nabil Abu Rudeineh, said in a statement that PA President Abbas and Egypt’s President, Hosni Mubarak, had exerted major efforts during the past months with all concerned parties to reach a state of calm. He said that Mr. Abbas had called on all factions in the Gaza Strip to abide by what was agreed upon so as to maintain the higher interests of the Palestinian people, lift the siege on the Gaza Strip and end the division and unite the homeland under the banner of legitimacy. (Wafa)

A delegation of Fatah members travelled to the Gaza Strip for the first time in a year. Hakmat Zeid, heading the delegation, said it intended “to clarify the initiative of President Abbas to restore Palestinian unity.” “There has been no preparation until now for talks between the Fatah delegation and Hamas,” said Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri. (AFP, Reuters)

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said at the ninth European-Israeli Dialogue Forum in Berlin: “The conditions at the moment for a peaceful solution are in my view better than they have been in the last 10 years. For the first time in a long time, the great majority of the Arab States have expressed their desire to constructively work toward an agreement between Israel and Palestine.” (AFP)

Arab League Secretary-General Amre Moussa condemned Israeli construction of settlements in East Jerusalem. “We are following this issue with extreme concern

because settlements are going to destroy the present peace process if they have not already destroyed it ... We will not remain silent versus this dangerous situation which reflects realities on the ground," the Secretary-General said in remarks to reporters after talks with Jordanian Prime Minister Nader Dahabi in Amman. (DPA, Haaretz)

Jordan's Director of Palestinian Affairs Department, Wajih Azayzeh, affirmed in an interview with *Petra* news agency his country's desire to provide a decent life for Palestine refugees, but said "it would not mean resettlement of refugees... This can never mean giving up the refugees' legitimate rights, at the top of which is their right of return and compensation." (Xinhua)

18

Seven Qassam rockets were fired from Gaza, most of which struck open fields in the western Negev. One rocket caused light damage to a nearby greenhouse. Palestinian militants also opened fire on IDF troops operating near the Gaza-Israel border fence, but none were wounded. (Haaretz)

Four Palestinians were arrested when IDF soldiers entered the Jalazone refugee camp near Ramallah. Two other Palestinians were arrested in Hebron. (Wafa) IDF troops closed the Nahal Oz fuel transfer terminal between Israel and the Gaza Strip because of Palestinians shooting at Israeli workers. No casualties were reported. (Wafa)

Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip fired 50 rockets towards Israel and Israel responded with air strikes in Gaza just hours before the truce was to take effect. The military said at least 40 rockets and 10 mortar shells had exploded in Israel by nightfall. Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for much of the rocket fire, saying it was to avenge Israeli air strikes that had killed 10 militants in the previous two days. Israel hit back with two more air strikes, wounding two Palestinians, according to Hamas security officials. (AP)

The Israeli army ordered the confiscation of land in the northern West Bank to build a new military base, according to Palestinian residents who received notification. In an order distributed to 12 residents of the northern district of Tubas, Israel's army commander for the West Bank said the military would take control of 92 acres of land until the year 2012. (AP)

Israel officially confirmed that an Egyptian-proposed ceasefire (tahadiyeh) with Palestinian militant groups in the Gaza Strip would go into effect on 19 June at 6 a.m. Israeli Government spokesman Mark Regev said, "If the fighting indeed ceases Thursday as planned, Israel will ease its blockade of Gaza next week". He said talks to release abducted IDF soldier Gilad Shalit would also intensify. "Thursday will be the beginning, we hope, of a new reality where Israeli citizens in the south will no longer be on the receiving end of continuous rocket attacks," Mr. Regev said, adding, "Israel is giving a serious chance to this Egyptian initiative and we want it to succeed." *Israel Army Radio* reported that Defense Minister Ehud Barak, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni all approved the deal. Vice Premier Haim Ramon said, "The tahadiyeh is recognition of Hamas and a very serious blow to the Palestinian Authority and its leaders, who will negotiate to establish a joint government with Hamas." (Haaretz)

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said that the release of IDF soldier Gilad Shalit was an inseparable part of the ceasefire deal reached with Palestinian militant groups in the Gaza Strip. He also stressed that he had not and would not negotiate directly with "terrorist" elements. "We have no illusions. The calm is temporary and may be very short," Mr. Olmert said. "Hamas has not changed its skin. These are bloodthirsty and despicable terrorists who even today are doing all they can to harm Israeli civilians," he added. (Haaretz)

Former PA Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh said he would welcome PA President Abbas in the Gaza Strip. Speaking during a meeting with members of the PLC, Mr. Haniyeh confirmed that a ceasefire with Israel would go into effect on 19 June. Mr. Haniyeh also said, "If the Israelis violate the agreement, Palestinians will have the right to defend themselves but we need a national conformity for dealing with such issues under the brokering of Egypt and the factions had already agreed." He said that Egypt was working to extend the ceasefire to the West Bank. (Ma'an News Agency)

Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said the implementation of the truce agreement would take place under Egyptian supervision, in conjunction with the beginning of a national reconciliation dialogue between Hamas and Fatah. (Ma'an News Agency)

The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, one of the Palestinian groups that had approved in principle the ceasefire with Israel, expressed reservations about the conditions of the truce ratified by Hamas and Israel. Saleh Nasser, a member of the Democratic Front's central committee, said that "partial solutions" would not help the ceasefire to succeed. He also said that having the ceasefire take effect before Gaza's borders were opened, while excluding the West Bank entirely, would hinder the agreement's implementation. (Ma'an News Agency)

The Saraya Al-Quds Brigades, the armed wing of Islamic Jihad, said it would commit to the ceasefire, but would respond if Israel violates the deal. The Brigades' spokesman, Abu Ahmad, said that the ceasefire would face a difficult beginning, as Israeli reconnaissance planes were still flying over the Gaza Strip. Meanwhile, Abu Mujahid, the spokesperson of the armed wing of the Popular Resistance Committees, said that his group would not get in the way of an agreement that would end the Israeli siege, but would respond to any Israeli violation. (Ma'an News Agency)

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

The Secretary-General welcomes the announced Israel/Gaza cessation of violence.

The Secretary-General hopes that these efforts will both provide security and an easing of the humanitarian situation in Gaza, and end rocket and mortar attacks against Israeli targets. He also hopes that this cessation of violence will lead to a controlled and sustained opening of the Gaza crossings for humanitarian and commercial purposes. The Secretary-General looks forward to all sides acting with care and responsibility in ensuring that this cessation of violence endures.

The Secretary-General congratulates Egypt on its persistent efforts to achieve calm through this agreement.

(UN News Centre)

The League of Arab States welcomed the Egyptian-mediated truce between Israel and the Palestinians as a key step towards reconciliation between Palestinian factions. Hisham Youssef, Chief of Staff of the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Amr Moussa, said, "The calming is an important step which can pave the way for a development of the political situation on the Palestinian front," adding, "Palestinian unity was the only real guarantee ... for the creation of an independent Palestinian State". (AFP)

The EU Presidency, currently held by Slovenia, issued the following statement:

The Presidency of the EU welcomes the announcement of the agreed cessation of violence in the Gaza Strip and its surroundings. It commends the Government of Egypt for successful mediation efforts, and urges all the parties concerned to abide by the agreed cessation of violence.

The Presidency also welcomes the Israeli intention to progressively ease its restrictions on Gaza and reopen the crossings in and out of Gaza for both humanitarian reasons and commercial flows. The EU has repeatedly asserted its readiness to resume the border assistance mission at the Rafah crossing point as soon as conditions allow. The Presidency reiterates its call for the release of abducted Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit and supports the efforts to this end.

(AFP, www.eu2008.si)

In Brussels, European Union External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner welcomed Israel's confirmation of a ceasefire with Hamas. She said the EU was ready to resume its halted mission to control the Rafah border and the regular flow of aid and commercial goods into Gaza and bolster Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. (International Herald Tribune)

French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner released the following statement:

I learned with satisfaction of Egypt's announcement that an agreement had been reached for a truce between Israel and Hamas. We welcome the efforts of the Egyptian authorities to obtain this result. Only a political solution can resolve the current crisis in Gaza.

This agreement will have to be reflected on the ground. It will have to lead to the complete cessation of violence and result in improvement in the humanitarian situation in Gaza through the reopening of crossing points as soon as possible. We hope that it will speed up the process of releasing our compatriot, Gilad Shalit.

The reintegration of the Gaza Strip into the peace process is indispensable to the establishment of lasting peace in the Middle East. I welcome in this regard President Abbas' initiatives to promote the unity of the Palestinians behind his peace endeavour.

A new spirit is pervading this region which has been plunged into mourning so many times: the Doha agreement on Lebanon, indirect talks between Syria and

Israel, a humanitarian exchange between Israel and Hezbollah, and now the announcement of this truce in Gaza. These positive developments are of course still fragile and must be confirmed.

We hope that this more favourable climate will permeate the peace process between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, and help accelerate the negotiations launched at Annapolis. These recent acts may in the end profoundly change the situation in the Middle East. France will offer every assistance to these peace efforts, to this wish for dialogue. It is in this framework that President Sarkozy will be visiting Israel and the Palestinian Territories from 22 to 24 June.

(www.diplomatie.gouv.fr)

British Foreign Secretary David Miliband said, "Reports of a ceasefire in Gaza are very welcome for a region that has seen so much conflict in recent months. The Egyptians have done well to make this happen. ... We hope that the militant groups now fulfil their commitment to stop firing rockets into Israel and that Israel will ease restrictions on Gaza as it has pledged, ensuring that important humanitarian aid and supplies can get through. The UK remains committed to helping Israel and the Palestinian Authority move towards agreement on a just and lasting peace." (www.fco.gov.uk)

The Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement: "The Egyptian-brokered accord provides for ending rocket attacks on Israel from Gaza and Israeli raids in the territory. In a few days Israel must also ease the economic blockade and authorize supplies of fuel and food to Gaza. ... The chief thing now is to ensure observance of the accord and to go further by seeking resolution of the problems still outstanding, including the release of Corporal Gilad Shalit and reopening of the crossing at Rafah. It is very important that normalizing the situation around Gaza should be supplemented with progress on inter-Palestinian dialogue." (www.mid.ru)

19

During a military operation in Qalqilya in the northern West Bank, Israeli forces detained six Palestinian brothers and demolished two abandoned houses. In the Dheisheh and Beit Jibrin refugee camps near Bethlehem, Israeli forces detained a 17-year-old and a 23-year-old Palestinian. (*Ma'an News Agency*) Four Israeli Border Police officers were wounded in clashes with settlers over two unauthorized outposts near the "Yitzhar" settlement, south of Nablus. The Border Police had evacuation orders for the outposts and a demolition order for one caravan. The police stated that four policemen were hurt by stones thrown by settlers while a fifth one suffered from tear gas. Settler sources indicated that 11 residents of "Yitzhar" were wounded during the incident, one of whom lost consciousness. Several settlers were arrested when they locked up the police officers in "Yitzhar" after the demolition of a caravan in the unauthorized outpost of "Havat Shaked". (*Haaretz, The Jerusalem Post*)

The agreement for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip went into effect at 6 a.m. Moments before the truce took hold, the Israeli Air Force killed a member of a Qassam rocket squad preparing to launch near the Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza. Palestinian sources said the man killed had been a Hamas operative. The resumption of the transfer of goods from Israel to the Gaza Strip through the Sufa crossing went into effect following the start of the ceasefire. Security sources said that the number of trucks permitted to bring goods to Gaza would increase on the morning of 22 June, from 60 to 80 or 90. (*Haaretz*) Israeli military sources indicated that if the Gaza ceasefire were to hold, the army would redeploy some of its troops which were currently stationed near the Gaza Strip to other sectors for training. The same day, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert warned Hamas that the ceasefire was its last chance to avoid an IDF incursion into the Gaza Strip. Hamas sources indicated, for their part, that they did not intend to deploy along the border in order to prevent any IDF operations. (*Haaretz*) Israeli Prime Minister Olmert stated in an interview with the *BBC Arabic Service* that progress had been made on numerous issues, including borders, in talks with the Palestinian Authority and that Israel was willing "to dramatically compromise" on territorial issues in negotiations with Palestinian leaders, adding that it was not a one-way process. Despite progress on many fronts with the PA, Mr. Olmert remained sceptical that a full agreement could be signed and delivered during the remaining months of the term of US President Bush. As concerns Hamas, Mr. Olmert said that the movement would be welcome to join the peace negotiations after it accepted and complied with the demands of the international community, namely, calling off terror attacks and recognizing Israel. (*AFP, Ynetnews*)

EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana made the following statement: "The truce that came into effect this morning is a very welcome development. I hope it will provide momentum for the peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians. I should also like to congratulate Egypt on its successful role in mediating the agreement on the truce which I urge the parties to respect in full. The main objective now is that the truce holds. I reiterate our readiness to resume our monitoring mission at the Rafah border crossing point." (www.consilium.europa.eu)

United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Robert Serry said the Egyptian-brokered truce and reconciliation talks between rival Palestinian factions could create conditions for the deployment of UN peacekeepers in the Gaza Strip. He said the idea of sending peacekeepers was "premature" at this stage but that it could become "very practical" later if security and political conditions improved. A peacekeeping mission would be possible only under certain conditions, he said, chief among them agreement between Israel, Egypt and "all the parties" on the need for such a force. "That, I think, would be a very important consideration for any future troop contributing country," Mr. Serry said. In a conversation with *Ynetnews*, he stated that the three issues that must be emphasized in the near future are a complete ceasefire, the opening of crossings and prisoner-POW exchanges, including Gilad Shalit. Mr. Serry said, "I believe that a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas is an encouraging sign that will lead to quiet and security from both sides. We are aware of the fact that both sides claim the ceasefire is frail. We need to be realistic and not expect that achievements will be immediate." (*Reuters, Ynetnews*)

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) [reported](#) in the Joint Rapid Food Security Survey in the Occupied Palestinian Territory that nearly 40 per cent of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank did not have access to sufficient food, a rise of 4 per cent from 2006. They stated that the main causes of food insecurity in the OPT were "rooted in the military and administrative measures imposed by the Israeli occupation - closure regime, permits, destruction of assets - as well as settlement expansion and derived infrastructure multiplication - access to land and water and the construction of bypass roads." "The agricultural sector in the Gaza Strip is close to collapse, as no exports are allowed, and there is a total unavailability of fertilizer, pesticides and other crucial inputs," the report said. (*UN News Centre, www.unrwa.org*)

Hamas sources reported that 260 Palestinians, who had been stranded in Egypt after seeking medical treatment there, had crossed back into the Gaza Strip overnight through the Rafah border crossing. They indicated that 5,517 Gazans, including students and Palestinians with residency abroad, had applied to leave the Gaza Strip if the Rafah crossing were open. (*Haaretz*)

The Israeli High Court of Justice issued an interim injunction ordering settlers not to occupy nine new houses in the "Ofra" settlement in the West Bank, to halt construction of houses and not to connect them to the infrastructure. The State backed the request of the petitioners, five Palestinians and the Israeli human rights organizations B'Tselem and Yesh Din, for a temporary order to be issued. The lawyer representing the petitioners, Michael Sfard, stated that the land on which the houses were being built belonged to the five Palestinian petitioners and was registered in the land registry as private Palestinian property. The State representative said that, "The construction of the houses and their occupation are illegal. The construction was carried out in violation of stop-work and demolition orders." (*The Jerusalem Post*)

In Al-Mazra'a Al-Qabaliyya, north-west of Ramallah, Israeli military bulldozers supported by settler guards razed about 500 dunums of land, which reportedly would have been used for settler agricultural projects and to build a new settlement. In the villages of Bureen and Hawara, near Nablus, Israeli settlers burned dozens of dunums of agricultural land. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

An Israeli military court ordered the release of a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council affiliated with Hamas who was detained two years ago as part of a crackdown on Hamas after the capture of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. A military spokeswoman indicated that plans to prosecute Bassam al-Zahari were dropped owing to "reasonable doubt". Mr. al-Zahari left Ofer prison in Israel for his home town of Hebron. (*Reuters*)

20

Three Israeli hikers were wounded, two of them seriously, in a drive-by shooting in the "Neve Tzuf" settlement, near Ramallah. According to the hikers, unknown masked assailants in a passing vehicle opened fire at them from close range and then sped away. (*Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency, The Jerusalem Post, Ynetnews*)

The Israeli army detained two Palestinians who had crossed illegally into Israel through the electric fence surrounding the Gaza Strip. The IDF confirmed that it was searching for a third person and that the men who were detained were not armed. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A number of demonstrators were injured and two members of the International Solidarity Movement were detained by Israeli forces during demonstrations against the separation wall in the West Bank village of Al-Ma'sara. The demonstrators came from the Al-Ma'sara, Um-Salamouna and Marah M'alla villages in the Bethlehem Governorate. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A student from the Od Yosef Hai yeshiva, located in the "Yitzhar" settlement near Nablus, built a home-made rocket containing explosives and fired it at a Palestinian village. No injuries were reported. Israeli newspaper *Ma'ariv* reported that Rabbi Itzik Shapira, the head of the yeshiva, was among those suspected of involvement in the incident. (*Ma'an News Agency, Ma'ariv, The Jerusalem Post*)

Israeli forces fired tear gas and rubber-coated metal bullets at protesters during the weekly demonstration against the separation wall in Bil'in village, located north-west of Ramallah. Two people were injured and some 10 olive trees belonging to village residents were burned. Dozens of demonstrators suffered from gas inhalation. In addition, Israeli soldiers used a weapon known as "the scream" which makes a sound that affects the middle ear, causing people to lose balance and fall to the ground. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces raided the headquarters of an ambulance service in the town of Beit Ummar in the West Bank, breaking the main gate and several windows. The head of the Palestine Red Crescent Society in Hebron stated that the equipment damaged during the attack could no longer be used. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

21

Israeli forces raided civilian houses and arrested 19-year-old Adnan Sha'abneh and 16-year-old Bader Nabil Jamal in Zububa village, north-west of Jenin. Nine people were arrested the same day in the Jalazone refugee camp near Ramallah. (*Ma'an News Agency, Wafa*)

The Civic Coalition to Defend Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem, a network of 18 Palestinian human rights NGOs, launched a campaign to mobilize the international community to end Israel's "de facto expulsion" of Palestinians from Jerusalem. The Coalition called on activists and Governments around the world to take concrete action to pressure Israel into ending violations against Palestinians' housing and residency rights in the city. The Coalition would also be targeting multinational corporations which provide services that assist in the occupation of Jerusalem. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

22

Five Palestinians were injured by Israeli forces during a sit-in protest against the separation wall and land confiscation called by the Popular Committee for Resisting the Wall in the village of Ni'lin, west of Ramallah in the West Bank. Three protesters were hit by rubber-coated metal bullets, while two suffered from tear gas inhalation. An Israeli soldier was hit in the head by a stone. The demonstrations took place at the site of land slated to be confiscated on 24 June. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces at night raided a number of houses in the village of Ourta, south of Nablus, and arrested four Palestinians. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Israeli human rights group Public Committee Against Torture in Israel (PCATI) issued a report entitled "No Defence: Soldier Violence against Palestinian Detainees", showing that the IDF routinely used violence against bound Palestinian detainees and that the IDF, the Ministry of Defense and the Knesset were showing "almost absolute indifference" regarding such practices. The report contains testimonies by 90 Palestinians who were alleged to have been abused by IDF soldiers after being arrested during and after sweeps between June 2006 and October 2007. (*Haaretz, www.stoptorture.org.il*)

23

A 67-year-old Palestinian was shot in the shoulder and neck by Israeli forces while he was in his garden, which is located 350 metres from the eastern border of the Gaza Strip. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli troops stormed at dawn the village of Deir Abu Masha'l, north of Ramallah, arresting five Palestinians. (*Wafa*)

Israeli army bulldozers uprooted more than 200 olive trees in Beit Hanina, north of Jerusalem. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A mortar shell fired from the Gaza Strip landed in an open area in Israel's western Negev region. It was the first breach of the ceasefire. No injuries or damage were reported. (*Ynetnews*)

During a speech before the Knesset, President Sarkozy of France offered to help the parties reach an agreement. He stated that France was "ready to provide its guarantee, ready to mobilize its diplomatic service, its resources, and its soldiers." "There can be no peace without a halt to settlement activity," he said. Knesset member Avshalom Vilan (Meretz) expressed hope that France would help advance the initiative to compensate Israeli settlers in the West Bank who wished to leave voluntarily, for which President Sarkozy had expressed support. (*Reuters, Ynetnews*)

Israel's High Court of Justice rejected a petition by the parents of captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit to keep the Gaza crossings with Israel closed. (*Haaretz*)

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak expressed hope that Hamas and Israel would abide by the truce during talks with visiting Israeli Prime Minister Olmert. Mr. Mubarak and Mr. Olmert discussed a package of measures aimed at ending the violence in Gaza, Egyptian presidential spokesman Suleiman Awad told reporters.

"We received assurances that Rafah crossing will not open until [captured Israeli soldier Gilad] Shalit's case is solved," said a senior Israeli official who took part in the talks in Sharm el-Sheikh. During their meeting, Mr. Olmert asked Mr. Mubarak to lead "intensive negotiations" with Hamas to free Shalit, according to the official. (*Reuters, Wafa*)

Maj. Peter Lerner, of the office of the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, indicated that the increase in shipments of goods to the Gaza Strip, which is part of the ceasefire deal with Hamas, from 60 to 90 trucks a day, "does not go beyond humanitarian goods at the moment". Israeli officials were not able to say when restricted items such as raw materials, agricultural products, cement, spare parts and numerous other items would be allowed into Gaza. (*IRIN*)

The EU announced a €5 million contribution to provide vital equipment to the Palestinian Civil Police. (*www.delwbg.ec.europa.eu*)

Israeli bulldozers started to raze agricultural land in the village of Beit Hanina At-Tahta located near the "Ramot" settlement north of Jerusalem for the construction of the separation wall. Israeli forces prevented villagers from approaching their land after having declared the area a closed military zone. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

24

Israeli troops killed two Palestinians in Nablus at dawn. Palestinian medics and security sources identified the dead as Tareq Abu Ghali, 24, and Iyad Khanfar, a 21-year-old university student. An Israeli military spokesman said troops had killed the two in an "exchange of fire," saying both were armed and that Mr. Abu Ghali was an Islamic Jihad militant wanted for carrying out attacks against Israel. Islamic Jihad confirmed Mr. Abu Ghali had been one of its senior members and vowed revenge. (*AFP*)

Four Qassam rockets fired from the Gaza Strip landed in the southern Israeli town of Sderot and a nearby area. One of the rockets struck a vacant house in Sderot.

Two people were slightly wounded and two others were treated for shock. Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility. (*Haaretz*)

Hamas leader Khalil al-Haya said Hamas remained committed to a ceasefire with Israel, but would not act as Israel's "police force" in confronting militants who breached the truce. Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh called for an end to "Israeli atrocities" while urging armed Palestinian groups to exercise restraint. (*AP, Ma'an News Agency*)

The rocket fire constituted a "blatant violation of the ceasefire on the part of the Palestinian groups in the Strip," said Prime Minister Olmert upon his return from Egypt. (*Haaretz*)

Israeli forces detained a 38-year-old Palestinian in the Dheisheh refugee camp in Bethlehem, a 22-year-old university student in Yatta, south of Hebron, and two men from Silat Al-Harthiyah. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Berlin Conference in Support of Palestinian Civil Security and the Rule of Law [secured](#) commitments of \$242 million for specific projects, German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said. The one-day conference brought together representatives from more than 40 countries. Participants included PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Quartet Representative Tony Blair. Officials said that the bulk of the funding being committed was expected to come out of the \$7.4 billion pledged at the Paris donor's conference. Secretary Rice said, "Security and the rule of law represent the foundations of any successful, responsible State." EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana said in his remarks: "We are interested in creating security forces accountable to the law, neither to a faction nor a party." Israeli Foreign Minister Livni said in her address: "Israel has already made it clear that it is willing to accept territorial compromise in return for peace. I believe that the majority of the Israeli public is willing to accept this, provided actual territorial concessions will occur only when we are certain of what will happen

on the other side of the border. We cannot simply determine the border of the Palestinian State, without being able to hand over the keys to an effective and responsible Government able to restore law and order ... on the other side." PA Prime Minister Fayyad pointed to Israel's raid in Nablus earlier in the day as an example of persisting difficulties, saying, "[The raid is] an example of the kind of activity that has to stop, and stop immediately and promptly, if, in fact, we are going to succeed in the provision of security to our people. ... The morale of our troops is at stake here, the credibility of the effort is at stake, and our own political credibility will continue to be at stake so long as those kinds of incursions continue." (AP, www.consilium.europa.eu, www.mfa.gov.il, www.state.gov)

After talks with PA President Abbas in Bethlehem, French President Nicolas Sarkozy said at a joint news conference: "The security of Israel is non-negotiable for France, but the creation of a viable, democratic, modern State for the Palestinians is a priority for France.... We will work towards the creation of your State. We will use the same strength, the same commitment we used in ensuring Israel's security." He reiterated his call for Israel to freeze settlement activity in the West Bank. "I told our Israeli friends the injustice done to the Jewish people can't be resolved by creating conditions of injustice for the Palestinian people," Mr. Sarkozy said, adding, "It was a pleasure to come here to Bethlehem to see what the checkpoints were like, the wall, the misunderstandings on either side. This must stop." On Jerusalem, he said, "It's a holy city for three faiths, Jews, Christians and Muslims. ... Can Jerusalem be for one side and not the other? I don't think so." (AFP, AP)

The following is the Quartet statement issued after its meeting held on the sidelines of the Berlin Conference:

Representatives of the Quartet – UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, High Representative for European Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, European Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner, and Slovenian Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel – met today in Berlin to discuss the situation in the Middle East. They were joined by Quartet Representative Tony Blair.

The Quartet reaffirmed its support for ongoing Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and stressed the urgent need for tangible progress towards the shared goal of an agreement by the end of 2008 on the establishment of an independent and viable Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza, and an end to the conflict. The Quartet expressed its commitment to support the parties in taking and implementing the difficult decisions required in order to achieve these outcomes.

The Quartet underscored the urgent need for more visible progress on the ground in order to build confidence and support progress in the negotiations launched at Annapolis. Israel's removal of some significant West Bank checkpoints and the opening of a number of Palestinian police stations in Area B represent good steps. Greater efforts are required now to project a new reality, including through further urgent steps to improve access and movement. Likewise, Palestinian security performance has improved, including recent efforts in Jenin. Continued Palestinian efforts to fight terrorism and to implement a more comprehensive security strategy are necessary for sustainable long-term improvement. The Quartet urged the parties to build upon these efforts, fulfilling all of their obligations under the road map and refraining from any steps that undermine confidence or could prejudice the outcome of negotiations. In particular, the Quartet reiterated its deep concern at continuing settlement activity and called on Israel to freeze all settlement activity including natural growth, and to dismantle outposts erected since March 2001.

The Quartet voiced its support for the outcomes of the "Berlin Conference in Support of Palestinian Civil Security and the Rule of Law". With its focus on the Palestinian police and justice sector the conference provided a timely forum to refocus and direct international support efforts towards two key sectors of Palestinian state-building. The Quartet called for speedy implementation of projects agreed and robust donor support in order to build the capacity of the Palestinian police and justice sector. The Quartet urged Israeli-Palestinian cooperation in that respect and emphasized the importance of unobstructed delivery of security assistance to the Palestinian Authority.

Noting the dire budget situation facing the Palestinian Authority, the Quartet urged all donors who have not fulfilled their pledges, especially the key regional partners, to fulfil their pledges from the December 2007 Paris donors' conference and to urgently provide budgetary support to meet the requirements of the Palestinian Authority Government. It looked to the next Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting on 22 September to take stock of progress.

Recalling the centrality of economic development and institutional reform to the success of a future Palestinian State, the Quartet reaffirmed its support for Quartet Representative Tony Blair's efforts, and congratulated the Palestinian Authority on the success of the 21-23 May Palestine Investment Conference in Bethlehem. Commending the close cooperation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority on this initiative, the Quartet encouraged similar cooperation to break ground on short- and medium-term projects and to make progress in private sector activities that will create jobs for Palestinians and help change the conditions of life. The Quartet underscored the importance of uninterrupted transfers of Palestinian tax and customs revenues to the Palestinian Authority.

The Quartet noted that a lasting solution to the situation in Gaza can only be achieved through peaceful means. The Quartet expressed its continuing support for Egyptian efforts to restore calm to Gaza and southern Israel and welcomed the period of calm that began on 19 June. The Quartet urged that the calm be respected in full and expressed the hope that it would endure, and lead to improved security for Palestinians and Israelis alike, and a return to normal civilian life in Gaza. In this respect, the Quartet looked forward to increased humanitarian and commercial flows through the Gaza crossings under the management of the Palestinian Authority, consistent with the November 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access, and welcomed the European Union's offer to resume its monitoring mission at the Rafah crossing point. The Quartet expressed its strong support for the steady and sufficient supplies of fuel to Gaza and for the immediate resumption of stalled United Nations and other donor projects there. It further tasked the Quartet Representative to develop and promote implementation of measures, in coordination with Israel and the Palestinian Authority, to improve conditions in Gaza, as a matter of urgency.

The Quartet welcomed the 21 May announcement by Syria, Israel and Turkey that indirect talks have been launched, with Turkey's facilitation, aimed at achieving peace in accordance with the Madrid terms of reference, and hopes that progress is made in this direction.

The Quartet principals looked forward to meeting again in September at the United Nations General Assembly. On that occasion the Quartet will consider, after further consultations with the parties, the timing and agenda of an international meeting in Moscow to lend support to the process launched in Annapolis.

Quartet Principals will also continue their dialogue with members of the Arab League Follow-Up Committee.

The Quartet reaffirmed its commitment to a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace in the Middle East based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003).

(UN News Centre)

French President Sarkozy and PA President Abbas signed an agreement to establish an industrial zone in the Bethlehem area during Mr. Sarkozy's visit to the city, where he also met other PA leaders. Mr. Abbas thanked Mr. Sarkozy for agreeing to fund the \$21 million project, which is expected to provide thousands of jobs.

(The Jerusalem Post)

25

An elderly Palestinian farmer was seriously injured near Khan Yunis when Israeli troops stationed on the border of south-east Gaza opened fire at Palestinians who were working on their land. Islamic Jihad threatened to renew rocket fire after the shooting. "We will respond to every Zionist violation at a suitable time," said Islamic Jihad spokesman Abu Hamza. (Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency, Xinhua)

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak ordered the closure of all the crossings into the Gaza Strip. Hamas spokesman Taher Nunu said the closure was a "clear violation of the calm" and called on Egypt to intervene. (AP, DPA, Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency, Reuters)

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice had invited Palestinian negotiators to the US to discuss and evaluate the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, Saeb Erakat, Head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO, said. According to Mr. Erakat, the invitation, which had been sent to Mr. Ahmed Qureia, Head of the Palestinian negotiating team, scheduled the visit for July. (Xinhua)

Popular Resistance Committees' spokesman Abu Mujahid told Ynetnews: "We demand the release of the prisoners who were sentenced to long jail terms. Without their release, [IDF soldier] Shalit will remain in our hands for many years to come." Hamas spokesman Abu Obeida said: "The ball is in the hands of the occupier. If they are interested in a deal, they will have to agree with the terms." (Ynetnews)

26

Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip fired a Qassam rocket at the western Negev without causing any injury or damage. The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade claimed responsibility for the attack. Abu Qusai, a spokesman for the Brigades said, "The rocket attack was in response to Israeli violations. Any calm deal must end Israeli attacks on our people in the West Bank too." (Haaretz)

Israeli military liaison official Peter Lerner said that the border crossings with the Gaza Strip would remain closed for a second day. Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri accused Israel of breaching the ceasefire that began a week ago, adding, "If this closure continues it will render the deal for calm meaningless". (*Haaretz*)

IDF arrested seven Palestinians in separate incidents in Tulkarm, Nablus and Ramallah. (*Wafa*)

Fourteen Palestinians were wounded during a protest against the separation wall in the West Bank village of Ni'lin, Palestinian medics said. As 300 protestors approached the wall, Israeli troops used tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse them, a protester said. (*AFP, Haaretz*)

The PA Presidency spokesperson said that President Abbas had reiterated PA support for the ceasefire agreement reached under Egypt's auspices. The President affirmed that the preservation of calm served the interests of the Palestinian people and provided suitable conditions for lifting the blockade of the Gaza Strip, stopping the Israeli aggression, and national cohesion and détente among the Palestinian factions. (*Wafa*)

Israel's Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni called for an immediate military response to any infringement of the ceasefire agreement. However, Israel would refrain from retaliating militarily against the rocket fire, IDF sources said. (*Ynetnews*)

Israel Army Radio reported that the Israeli Government had asked Hamas to include additional Gazan prisoners in the exchange list, rather than the West Bank prisoners who were originally on the list. Israel also wanted the PA to determine which of the prisoners would be released to the Gaza Strip and which to the West Bank, the report stated. (*Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel's Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) group accused Israeli doctors of ignoring what it described as the torture of Palestinian detainees during interrogations. The findings were based on testimony from two Palestinians who developed trauma-related symptoms. PHR urged the Israeli Health Ministry in a letter to forbid doctors from participating in interrogations carried out by Shin Bet. Israel said those findings were "fraught with mistakes, groundless claims and inaccuracies". (*Reuters*)

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics said the poverty rate in the Gaza Strip had climbed from 47.9 per cent in 2006 to 51.8 per cent in 2007. In the West Bank, however, the poverty rate had been declining owing to increased international aid, from 22 per cent in 2006 to 19.1 per cent in 2007. (www.pcbs.gov.ps)

27

Two mortar shells fired from northern Gaza Strip landed in the western Negev. There were no reports of injuries or damage. (*Haaretz, Xinhua*)

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh called on all the Palestinian factions to honour the ceasefire with Israel. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

PA security sources said the IDF had arrested nine Palestinians in Bethlehem, Qalqilya, Jenin and a village near Ramallah. (*Wafa*)

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades denied the previous claim of responsibility for the rocket fire against Sderot on 26 June and declared their full support for the ceasefire and the relevant declarations by PA President Abbas. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Czech Republic can use its good relations with the Palestinians and Israel during the period of its EU Presidency in 2009 to contribute to the peace process, PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad said after a meeting with Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek in Prague. (*CTK*)

"We call on all parties to refrain from any action that would undermine the negotiations and to implement their Road Map obligations," the G-8 Foreign Ministers said in a [statement](#) after their meeting in Kyoto. They said the obligations included "freezing all settlement activities and ending all acts of violence, terrorism and incitement." They expressed support for convening an international meeting in Moscow to lend support to the process launched in Annapolis. (www.mofa.go.jp)

"After the General Assembly, we are going to have a meeting to push the [peace] process forward in the Middle East. It will take place in Moscow," Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy told a news conference after the Russian Federation-EU summit in Khanty-Mansiysk, Russian Federation. (*Reuters*)

The London-based Arabic-language newspaper *Asharq Al-Awsat* reported that Israel had offered to release Palestinian prisoners demanded by Hamas as part of the deal for the release of IDF soldier Gilad Shalit and to transfer them to the Gaza Strip instead of sending them back to their homes in the West Bank. The report went on to say that Hamas had rejected the offer, with its spokesman Fawzi Barhoum saying that the group would never accept the conversion of a prison sentence into a deportation. (*Ynetnews*)

Israel allowed the transfer of 600,000 litres of industrial fuel into the Gaza Strip to run the power station, according to IDF sources. But Israeli army spokesman Peter Lerner said that most crossings remained closed. Israel had last allowed food into Gaza on 24 June, he added. (*AP*)

Lisa Bittenheim, Director of the Asia and the Pacific Division of the Department of Political Affairs, [briefed](#) the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. (*UN press release SC/9379*)

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon decided to appoint, in his personal capacity, Mr. Ronald J. Bettauer (United States) as one of the three members of the Board of the United Nations Register of Damage caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. (*UN press release SG/A/1141-PAL/2100*)

28

IDF troops killed 7-year-old Mohamed Al Allami during a military operation in the village of Beit Omer, south of Hebron, local sources said. Witnesses said that the boy had been helping his father in preparation for a family event. (*Wafa*)

Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip fired a rocket or mortar shell into southern Israel in violation of the truce agreement, an Israeli military spokesman said. (*AFP*)

The Islamic Jihad threatened to resume rocket attacks if Israel continued military operations in the West Bank. (*AFP*)

29

Israeli troops shot dead 18-year-old Muhammad Nasser Sa'id Daraghmah and arrested another Palestinian in the northern West Bank town of Tubas. Opening fire on stone-throwing teenagers, Israeli troops shot Mr. Daraghmah eight times, witnesses said. Mr. Daraghmah, a Fatah member, had been arrested two years ago and had served more than a year in Israeli jails. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Thirteen Palestinian, Israeli and international demonstrators were injured when Israeli soldiers confronted a peaceful anti-separation wall demonstration in the West Bank village of Ni'lin, west of Ramallah. Dozens of others suffered from tear gas inhalation. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Hamas official in charge of agriculture in the Gaza Strip Mohammad Ramadan Al-Agha said that the IDF was shooting at Gaza's farmers whenever they went to their land near the borders. Mr. Al-Agha asked Egypt to affirm the seriousness of the incidents as breaches of the truce. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Hamas security officials in the Gaza Strip arrested Mohammed Abu Imana, the spokesman for the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, which had claimed responsibility for a rocket attack on Israel in violation of a truce, his brother Adham said. Hamas leader Mahmoud al-Zahhar said his organization would arrest violators of the truce and confiscate their weapons. (*AFP, Haaretz*)

Hamas PLC member Ahmed Bachar said that his organization would not recognize Mahmoud Abbas as PA President after 9 January 2009. The statement was made in response to a resolution passed by a special judicial panel under which Mr. Abbas' term would end in January 2010, which also coincides with the end of the PLC term. Palestinian Authority officials said that an amendment had been added to the constitution upon Mr. Abbas' election, stating that the President's term ran through the duration of the Parliament's. (*Haaretz*)

Israel reopened three of its border crossings with the Gaza Strip. An Israeli military spokesman said that the Sufa commercial crossing, the Nahal Oz fuel-transfer depot and the Beit Hanoun (Erez) border terminal for travellers had resumed operations with some restrictions in force. Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri said that movement across the commercial crossings was still very slow and that there had been no change at all, at least as at that moment. (*Reuters*)

Ahmad Shweidih, Hamas official in charge of prisoners' affairs, said that Israel was disrespecting international norms and treaties by continuing the detention of Palestinian lawmakers, which had lasted for two years. Mr. Shweidih said, "Palestinian lawmakers are being detained as political hostages in order to blackmail the Palestinian people. There is no legal motive for detaining them, and so Israel detains them under so-called administrative detention without charge or trial."

(*Ma'an News Agency*)

30

A Qassam rocket was fired at a field near kibbutz Miflasim in the western Negev. No injuries or damage were reported. (*Haaretz, The Jerusalem Post, Ynetnews*)

Israeli forces injured three Palestinians in the south of the Hebron Governorate. The Israeli army also detained a Palestinian family in the village of Deir Abu Mash'al near Ramallah and used their home as a military outpost. (*IMEMC, Wafa*)

Israeli forces arrested eight Palestinians in the cities of Nablus and Jericho. Two people were arrested during dawn raids in Jenin and the nearby Ta'nak village.

Israeli troops, backed by at least seven jeeps and three armoured personnel carriers, entered Bethlehem and arrested two Palestinians. (*Ma'an News Agency, Wafa*)

The Knesset approved a bill which mandated a national referendum or a two-thirds Knesset majority vote prior to a withdrawal from any territory under Israeli control.

The bill refers to areas over which Israel claims full sovereignty, such as the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem, while the West Bank does not fall into this category. The bill, approved in its first reading by a majority of 65 votes to 18, stipulates that if the Government approves the ceding of land, the decision has to be brought before the Knesset and, if it is approved by the Knesset, that a referendum will be held within 180 days. However, if a withdrawal is supported by at least 80 Knesset members, the matter will not be brought to a referendum. (*Haaretz, IMEMC, The Jerusalem Post, Ynetnews*)

In Ramallah, PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad signed an agreement with the World Bank for an electric utility management project as well as water and wastewater projects worth \$29 million. Half of the money was earmarked for the Gaza Strip. At a signing ceremony with David Craig, the World Bank's Director for the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Mr. Fayyad said that implementing the projects would require Israel to lift the siege imposed on the Gaza Strip and reopen the border crossings. (*Reuters*)

The Palestinian Ambassador to Egypt, Nabil Amr, said the Egyptian Government was to reopen the Rafah border crossing with the Gaza Strip for two days to allow hundreds of people stranded on both sides to cross. The reopening would begin on 1 July and all Palestinians who needed medical treatment would be allowed into Egypt, as well as those with residency permits in Egypt or elsewhere, Mr. Amr said in Cairo. (*AP*)

Speaking to *Al-Quds Radio*, senior Hamas leader Mahmoud al-Zahhar said that his organization had been encouraged by Israel's decision to trade a Lebanese prisoner for the bodies of two Israeli servicemen. He said Hamas would work "to release people Israel accused of having blood on their hands like Samir Kuntar. We have to take advantage of this to release our prisoners." (*AP*)

At the African Union Summit in Sharm el-Sheikh, PA President Abbas said that the peace negotiation between the Palestinians and Israel had achieved little progress while Israel continued its hostile practices against the Palestinians, including the building of settlements and the continuing siege. Secretary-General of the League of Arab States Amre Moussa called on African leaders to stand firmly in opposition to Israeli settlement expansion. Mr. Moussa said that the "Palestinian-Israeli dispute is getting more complicated and the peace process relaunched at the Annapolis conference is heading toward failure due to Israel's policies which aim at sabotaging all chances for peace." (*Wafa, Xinhua*)

The Deputy head of the Federation of Gas Distributors in the Gaza Strip, Mahmoud al-Khizindar, said that Israel was still not allowing minimum levels of fuel into the Gaza Strip, despite the pledges made within the framework of the ceasefire. No automotive gasoline had been delivered for the previous two days. So far, 200,000 litres of automotive diesel fuel, 250,000 litres of industrial diesel for the Gaza power plant and 100 tons of cooking gas had been delivered. According to Mr. al-Khizindar, those shipments fell short of the minimum needed to maintain normal civilian life. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The head of the European Union Border Assistance Mission, Lt.-Gen. Pietro Pistolese, said that although the Rafah crossing was opened from time to time for humanitarian reasons, this did not constitute an official opening of the crossing. He added that several issues needed to be addressed before the crossing could be opened and that he did not see it permanently reopening "in a short time." (*IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency, The Jerusalem Post*)

The Swedish Prime Minister said in a statement that, according to the new strategy adopted by the Government, Palestinian priorities and the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan would serve as guidelines for Swedish development assistance. (*Wafa, www.sweden.gov.se*)

The Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem said that the West Bank was facing a severe water crisis for which Israel was partly to blame owing to its unfair distribution of water resources and also because of the 2008 drought. The NGO said that Israeli settlers received more than three times as much water as Palestinians and that Palestinians living in the northern West Bank received one third of the minimum per capita water needs as recommended by the World Health Organization. (*AP, BBC, btselem.org, The Jerusalem Post, Wafa*)

Israeli daily *Yediot Ahronot* reported that the Israeli Foreign Ministry had instructed a number of officials not to visit Spain, as an international arrest warrant had been issued against them on suspicion of committing war crimes against Palestinians. The instructions came after a Spanish human rights organization filed a case against Israeli officials involved in the assassination of senior Hamas member Salah Shehade six years ago, which killed 16 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. The list included former Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer and former Chief of Staff Moshe Ya'alon, as well as former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. The newspaper said that Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni would ask the Spanish authorities to revoke the case. (*Ynetnews, Xinhua*)
