

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

Monthly highlights

- IDF raids, closes charities, schools, offices and a shopping mall in Nablus it says are Hamas-linked. ([7](#), [8](#), [9](#) and [10 July](#))
- PA President meets with leaders of Palestinian factions in Syria, calls for an Arab League-sponsored national dialogue. ([8 July](#))
- Israeli authorities approve plans to build 1,800 apartments in two East Jerusalem settlements. ([9 July](#))
- G8 summit in Japan reiterates full support for the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. ([9 July](#))
- Four years after the ICJ Advisory Opinion, construction of the separation wall continues, with 57 per cent completed, joint OCHA/UNRWA report says. ([10 July](#))
- Hamas arrests Gaza militants firing rockets at Israel. ([10 July](#))
- PA Prime Minister Fayyad calls for the establishment of unity Government with Hamas. ([12 July](#))
- French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner calls for a "European Road Map". ([15 July](#))
- UK Prime Minister Brown announces plans to host an international investment conference for the Palestinians in autumn. ([20 July](#))
- PA warns of a fiscal crisis due to a shortfall of pledged aid. ([23 July](#))
- Knesset approves construction of a new settlement in the West Bank. ([24 July](#))
- Israeli defence establishment agrees to move a 2.4-km stretch of the separation wall north of Qalqilya closer to Green Line. ([28 July](#))
- US Secretary of State Rice meets with Palestinian and Israeli negotiators in Washington. ([30 July](#))

1

A Palestinian woman was shot and wounded in the leg by the Israeli Army near the Sufa border crossing in the southern Gaza Strip while she was tending her sheep, according to witnesses. (*IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency*)

The IDF raided the villages of Beit Iba and Asirah al-Shimalyia near Nablus, and arrested three Palestinians, including a 25-year-old teacher. During a pre-dawn raid on Surif village near Hebron, the IDF detained three Palestinians. In Tulkarm, Israeli special forces detained an Islamic Jihad activist and his brother. (*IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert warned Palestinian militants that Israel would respond with force if attacks from the Gaza Strip persisted in defiance of the truce. "We are in favour of a genuine calm. If it prevails, fine. If it doesn't, we know how to respond with full force, and in a manner that will guarantee complete security to the residents of the south," Mr. Olmert said while on a tour of southern Israel. (*AP*)

Egyptian officials informed Hamas that Israel would fire "warning shots" at Palestinians who entered an area west of the Gaza Strip border fence which extends for several hundred metres which Israel had designated as a "special security zone". (*Haaretz*)

The Secretary-General of the Al-Nasser Salah ad-Din Brigades, the military wing of the Popular Resistance Committees, said that if the closure of the Gaza crossings continued, the Brigades would reconsider the terms of the ceasefire. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli settlers from the "Bracha" settlement, south of Nablus, launched two home-made rockets at neighbouring Palestinian villages, Palestinian security sources said. No injuries were reported. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak ordered the closing of most border crossings between Israel and the Gaza Strip. Only the Erez crossing remained open for the passage of Palestinian humanitarian cases. (*Haaretz*)

Egypt opened the Rafah crossing for Palestinians needing to leave the Gaza Strip, a security official told *AFP*. "It will be open for sick and injured Palestinians, humanitarian cases and for those with visas for Egypt or other countries and those working or studying in Egypt and abroad," he said, adding that no limit had been set for the number of Palestinians crossing. (*AFP*)

On the second day of the twenty-third congress of the Socialist International, in Lagonissi, Greece, Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas characterized the political process launched at Annapolis as an opportunity, underlining that Israel must prove that it wanted peace by taking certain steps, "such as putting an end to settlements, opening the 670 checkpoints that destroyed the lives of tens of thousand of Palestinians and launch the process for the release of 11,000 Palestinians held in Israeli jails." Speaking to journalists, Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak blamed Hamas for "indiscriminate attacks" on Israeli citizens saying, "If there is no peace, again it will be the responsibility of Hamas." (*AFP, AP, Xinhua*)

The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories received [accounts](#) of grave economic, health and human rights conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in Gaza, from witnesses it had interviewed in Jordan, the second stop on a three-nation visit that also included Egypt and Syria. In a statement issued at the end of its visit to Amman, the Committee expressed serious concern about reports it received about the "strangulation" of the Palestinian economy, the impact of the separation wall on the human rights of Palestinians, expanding settlements and the condition of the Palestinians detained in Israeli prisons and detention centres. Israeli authorities barred the Special Committee from visiting the Occupied Palestinian Territory for the fact-finding mission. (*UN News Centre, Wafa, www.unhcr.ch*)

A Russian cargo jet, carrying 80 tons of food and medicine donated by the Russian Government for the Palestinian people, landed at Amman airport. The aid was the third batch of humanitarian assistance in a week. (*Petra, Xinhua*)

2

The IDF arrested 15 Palestinians in Nablus, Ramallah and Bethlehem. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Defence for Children International - Palestine Section reported that a 10-year-old Palestinian boy had been subjected to physical abuse amounting to torture for two and one half hours by Israeli soldiers who stormed his family's shop in the village of Sanniriya, south-east of Qalqilya, on 11 June, seeking information on the location of a handgun. The boy was repeatedly beaten, slapped and punched in the head and stomach, forced to hold a stress position for half an hour, threatened and lost two teeth as a result of the assault, the group said. (www.dci-pal.org)

A Palestinian construction worker from East Jerusalem rammed a bulldozer into a passenger bus on Jaffa Street shortly after noon, killing at least three people and wounding dozens more. One of the dead was a woman who had been driving a car at the scene of the attack. Police shot and killed the driver of the bulldozer, Hosam Dwayyat, 30, who held an Israeli identification card. Minister of Public Security Avraham Dichter said that the attacker was not linked to any Palestinian group. Police were trying to establish whether he acted alone. (AP, AFP, DA, Haaretz, Reuters, Ma'an News Agency, Ynetnews, Xinhua)

Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs Masahiko Komura, Israeli Minister of Environment Minister Gideon Ezra, PA Minister of Planning Samir Abdullah and Jordanian Minister for Foreign Affairs Salaheddin Al-Bashir reaffirmed in a joint statement following their meeting in Tokyo their political commitment to a Japan-proposed agro-industrial project in the West Bank called "Corridor for peace and prosperity" initiated in July 2006. A feasibility study by the Japan International Cooperation Agency was expected to be completed in November, and projects to develop basic infrastructure would be implemented as early as possible in 2009, the statement said. When realized, the agro-industrial park would be expected to create employment for as many as 6,000 Palestinians. In talks with Israeli Minister of Environment Ezra, Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs Komura emphasized the importance of implementing the Road Map, including the halt of settlements and violence, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs said. (AP)

Egypt closed its border with the Gaza Strip after hundreds of Palestinians stormed the Rafah crossing. Angry crowds, many of them waiting for hours to be allowed entry, forced their way past guards into Egypt, security officials said. "Out of 1,500 Palestinian registered as medical cases, Egypt allowed only 25 to cross, along with 120 of the 6,000 Palestinians stranded at the border," said Ihab al-Ghussein, a spokesman for Hamas. (AP, AFP, Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA), Ma'an News Agency, Reuters, Ynetnews, Xinhua)

Israel opened two commercial border crossings to Gaza. Israeli sources stated that fuel, wheat, animal feed and 200 tons of dry cement were among the products that entered Gaza. However, the chief of the Palestinian Federation of Industries, Amr Hamad, said that the deliveries were insufficient to meet the demands for construction. (Ma'an News Agency, Ynetnews, Xinhua)

World Health Organization (WHO) official Mahmoud Daher stated that the Israeli blockade of Gaza could result in serious pollution of the drinking water. The lack of fuel, electricity and spare parts meant that treatment plants pumped 77 metric tons of partially treated or raw sewage into the Mediterranean Sea. Mr. Daher said that some of the waste could be creeping back into Gaza's water supply, which was indicated by WHO tests showing that 30.8 per cent of the drinking water in the Rafah area was contaminated with human and animal feces. (IPS)

3

A 17-year-old boy was shot in the foot by IDF soldiers as they entered his family's house in Hebron. (Wafa)

The IDF arrested 24 Palestinians affiliated with Fatah in the village of Duma, south of Nablus. (Ma'an News Agency)

An IDF spokesman said that a rocket fired from the Gaza Strip had landed in an open field north of the southern Israeli town of Sderot, causing no injuries or damage. (AFP, Reuters)

Egypt's official MENA news agency quoted the Palestinian Ambassador to Egypt Nabil Amr as saying, "Egypt will shortly invite around 14 Palestinian factions for dialogue to draw up mechanisms to apply Yemeni President Ali Abdallah Saleh's initiative on a Palestinian national reconciliation." (AFP)

Egypt reopened the Rafah border crossing to allow passage for around 300 Palestinians waiting to return to Gaza, according to an Egyptian official. The same source said that the opening was temporary and only applied to Palestinians returning to Gaza but not to persons trying to cross in the other direction. (AFP, DPA, Xinhua)

An IDF official said Israel would close its border crossings to Gaza on 4 July in response to the rocket attack earlier in the morning. (Reuters)

In response to the bulldozer attack in Jerusalem on the previous day, Israeli Vice Premier Haim Ramon proposed to change the route of the wall in Jerusalem in order to cut off outlying Arab villages, as well as to revoke the residency rights of the people living there. "One of the main reasons that the attack was carried out yesterday with such ease was because there are Palestinian villages that for some reason are called Jerusalem. They need to be treated as we treat Ramallah, Bethlehem, Jenin and Nablus," Mr. Ramon said. (AP, BBC, Haaretz)

The Gaza office of the Union of Agricultural Work Committees, a non-governmental organization, announced the resumption of a project funded by Norwegian People's Aid to plant fruit and olive trees in areas where IDF incursions had destroyed the crops. (Ma'an News Agency)

4

Israel's Defense Minister Ehud Barak ordered the demolition of the homes of two East Jerusalem Palestinians who had perpetrated attacks against Israeli civilians in Jerusalem, *Israel Army Radio* reported. The first home to be demolished housed the construction worker who ploughed a bulldozer into a string of vehicles on 2 July. Mr. Barak's order was based on the announcement a day earlier by Attorney General Menachem Mazuz stating that razing the homes of "terrorists" was permissible by law. (Haaretz)

The *Al-Aqsa* satellite channel affiliated with Hamas denounced the draft resolution presented to the US Congress to classify it and four other television channels as terrorist organizations. The draft resolution also calls for classifying the satellites that provide service to the channels, including the Arab League's Arabsat and the Egyptian Nilesat, as terrorist organizations. (Xinhua)

Palestinian sources announced that 558 Palestinians, stranded on the Egyptian side of the Rafah crossing, were now back in the Gaza Strip. (Ma'an News Agency)

Hamas Political Bureau Deputy Head Moussa Abu Marzook said that his movement "has suspended the negotiations regarding (IDF soldier) Gilad Shalit, due to the Israeli decision to close the crossings in response to the firing of rockets into its territory," the London-based *Al-Hayat* newspaper reported. (Ynetnews)

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) decided to review its relationship with Israeli billionaire and donor Lev Leviev after a campaign by Adalah-NY human rights organization and found "at least a reasonable grounds for suspecting" that Mr. Leviev's companies were building settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Chris de Bono, a senior adviser to the Executive Director of UNICEF, told *Reuters*, adding that it was UNICEF's policy to have partners who were "as non-controversial as possible." (Reuters)

5

Egyptian authorities found weapons and explosives in the Sinai desert they believe were destined for the Gaza Strip, a security official said. (AFP)

Israeli forces arrested seven Palestinians in Nablus and Bethlehem, Israeli and Palestinian security sources said. (DPA)

Israeli forces blockaded the Palestinian village of Ni'lin near Ramallah in what the IDF called an open-ended effort to curb protests against the construction nearby of the separation wall. Troops were encircling the village under orders to turn back would-be demonstrators. (Reuters)

Israeli warships fired machine guns on Palestinian fishermen in the northern Gaza Strip. No casualties were reported. (Ma'an News Agency)

A group of Israeli settlers beat a 31-year-old Palestinian in the southern Hebron Hills, after having tied him to a telephone pole. The incident was videotaped by peace activists. (Haaretz)

The Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH) expressed concern about the consequences of the announced authorized expansion of the "Beit Romano" settlement in the centre of Hebron's old city. (www.tiph.org)

6

"Israel would be playing with fire in case it carries out any military action against Gaza," said Sami Abu Zuhri, Hamas spokesman in Gaza, adding, "The occupation should think carefully before carrying out such an action." (Xinhua)

Medical sources said that 13 Palestinians were wounded by Israeli gunfire in the village of Ni'lin. The sources added that confrontations had erupted between the IDF and demonstrators protesting against the construction of the separation wall on their lands. Local sources said the troops also arrested three Palestinians in the village. (Wafa)

Israel completed a series of tests in the short-range missile defence system it is currently developing as part of the project code-named "Iron Dome." Defence sources estimate that by the end of 2008 "Iron Dome" would be ready to undergo a major test that will evaluate the system's ability to intercept a Qassam rocket. (Haaretz)

An Israeli court sentenced to two life sentences and an additional eight-year sentence Gaza Strip resident Sharif Ziyada, who was convicted of attempting to bring

Qassam rocket manufacturing to the West Bank. (*Ynetnews*)

PA President Abbas discussed Arab efforts to help end the rift between Hamas and Fatah, as well as the peace process and Syria-Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) relations with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad who stressed "the need to exert every effort to achieve unity among Palestinian ranks as the sole means to recover their rights, notably the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as capital." The Secretary-General of the Executive Committee of the PLO, Yasser Abed Rabbo, told *Reuters*, "President Abbas will not meet Hamas Political Bureau Chief [Khaled] Mashaal in Damascus or anywhere else before Hamas commits to end its coup in Gaza." (*AFP, Ma'an News Agency, Reuters, SANA, WAFA*)

Israel reopened the crossings into the Gaza Strip, except the Kami crossing, which Israel said was undergoing renovations. (*AP*)

7

Israeli forces arrested eight Palestinians in Nablus and Jenin, Israeli and Palestinian security sources said. (*Xinhua*)

Two mortars struck an open space between the Kami and Nahal Oz crossings between Israel and the Gaza Strip, causing neither casualties nor property damage. (*Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency*)

Several Palestinians were wounded by IDF rubber coated bullets during an anti-wall protest in the West Bank village of Niflin, west of Ramallah, local sources said. The IDF troops also barred ambulances from evacuating the wounded to hospitals in Ramallah, witnesses said. (*WAFA*)

PA President Abbas met Islamic Jihad, Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine leaders in Damascus. "We told Abbas that Hamas was a main component of the Palestinian people and stressed the importance of reuniting Palestinian ranks irrespective of the differences between Hamas and Fatah," Popular Front leader Maher al-Taher told *DPA*. "Disagreements (between Hamas and Fatah leaders) are still big and things seem difficult now," he said. (*DPA*)

A public opinion poll released by a University of Maryland research institute showed that 71 per cent of Americans believed that the United States Government should not take sides in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; 21 per cent said the United States should take Israel's side and 3 per cent, the Palestinian side. The survey, which measured attitudes of nearly 19,000 respondents in 18 countries around the world, found that in 14 of the 18 nations studied, a large majority favoured an even-handed approach to the conflict. In three countries, Egypt, Iran and Turkey, the majority of respondents favour taking the side of the Palestinians, with 86 per cent of Egyptians, 63 per cent of Iranians and 42 per cent of Turks taking that position. In none of the countries surveyed did a majority support taking Israel's side. (*Haaretz, www.worldpublicopinion.org*)

Hamas sources said that more than 100 truckloads had crossed into Gaza through the Sufa crossing for the first time since Israel had imposed sanctions on Gaza. The shipments included various food products, frozen meat and fish, cleaning materials and cement, according to the sources who also expected that more construction materials would come soon. However, Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri accused Israel of not being seriously committed to the ceasefire agreement, adding that the Israeli "violations are continuing." (*Xinhua*)

The chair of the Paris donors' conference, French Minister for Foreign Affairs Bernard Kouchner, and the co-chairs – Quartet Representative Tony Blair, European Union Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner and a representative of Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs Jonas Gahr Støre – met in Paris to assess the follow-up to the [Conference](#). In a [statement](#) issued after the meeting, they "strongly welcomed" the fact that, of the total amount of aid pledged in Paris of US\$ 7.7 billion over 3 years, the international community had already disbursed more than \$920 million in six months in direct budgetary support and signed for \$1 billion of bilateral agreements with the Palestinian Authority for development projects. However, they said, "Restrictions by the Government of Israel on Palestinian movement and access continue to weigh heavily on the economic outlook. Without a significant lifting of such barriers in the West Bank, and a relaxation of the restrictions on humanitarian and commercial flows to the Gaza Strip, there is a much-reduced prospect for private sector recovery, public and private investment programmes will continue to be delayed, and consequently any economic recovery will continue to be inhibited." (*Reuters, www.diplomatie.gouv.fr*)

Israeli troops shut down a girls' school and two other facilities of a Hamas-affiliated charity, as well as a medical centre in Nablus. Computers, documents, cash and furniture were seized, witnesses said. "We consider the Israeli decision to shut down charities that take care of families of martyrs, orphans and poor people as a moral crime," Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoom said in Gaza. (*AP*)

Relatives of Israelis killed in a shooting attack in the West Bank in 2001 submitted damage claims against the Palestinian Authority and the six Palestinians imprisoned in Israel for the amount of NIS 559 million (about \$172 million). (*Ynetnews*)

8

Israeli sources said that Israeli troops arrested nine Palestinians in the West Bank in Nahhalin, Beit Fajjar, Bethlehem, Abu Dis, and Halhoul. (*Ma'an News Agency*) The IDF said Gaza militants fired a mortar shell into the western Negev in another violation of the truce. The shell struck near Kibbutz Ein Hashlosha, according to *Israel Radio*. The Army said there were no casualties or damage. (*Haaretz*)

IDF troops opened fire at a Palestinian car travelling between Dhahriya and Sammu towns and wounded two passengers, witnesses said. (*WAFA*)

The IDF imposed a curfew on the village of Kifl Haris, north of the West Bank city of Salfit, after Palestinians threw an inflammable bottle at a car owned by an Israeli settler on the main road near the town, the IDF said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak agreed to open the Gaza Strip crossings despite the firing of mortar shells, following a request by Egypt's Intelligence Chief Omar Suleiman, Israeli defense officials said. (*AP*)

The IDF shut down a shopping centre in Nablus as part of a campaign against Hamas' civil and social infrastructure in the West Bank. The IDF also shut down five other alleged Hamas institutions in Nablus, including a support group for militants jailed in Israel, an Islamic trade union organization, a medical society and two aid organizations in the refugee camps of Askar and Balata. (*Haaretz*)

PA Attorney General Ahmad Al-Mghanni escaped unhurt an apparent assassination attempt when a bomb detonated in his car in Ramallah. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces withdrew from Niflin after blockading it for four consecutive days. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Two Palestinians were killed and another two injured in an explosion at an Izz Ad-din Al-Qassam Brigades (armed wing of Hamas) training camp in southern Gaza, security sources said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Hamas leaders were travelling to Cairo for talks with Egyptian officials to assess the truce with Israel. Hamas leader Mahmoud Al-Zahhar said, "We will evaluate the Israeli commitment. They are opening the crossings partially and that was against the agreement". Mr. Al-Zahhar said he and other Hamas officials would urge Egypt to press Israel to stop the repeated closures. He added that the discussions would also include the prisoner swap with Israel. (*Haaretz*)

Speaking before leaving Syria, PA President Abbas called for a national dialogue among all Palestinian factions to be sponsored by the Arab League. Faction leaders had urged Mr. Abbas to suspend peace talks with Israel, saying that they were pointless, with Israel continuing its settlement policy and offensives against the Palestinians. (*DPA*)

PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad said that a Palestinian coalition Government, backed by Arab support, could end intra-Palestinian political rivalry. He explained that Palestinian factions could maintain their multiple political positions, but the security services must be under the auspices of one Palestinian Authority. Mr. Fayyad said that these issues had been discussed with Arab and foreign officials as part of PA President Abbas' initiative for dialogue with Hamas. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Deputy Chairman of the Bulgarian National Assembly and the President's adviser, Petar Beron, said that the establishment of an independent Palestinian State was inevitable despite all the obstacles. During a meeting with Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) members in Ramallah, Mr. Beron condemned the Israeli policy that did not serve peace and stability in the region, affirming that Bulgaria would continue its support for the Palestinian people until they achieved their legitimate rights for freedom and sovereignty. (*WAFA*)

Colombia agreed to open a representative office in Ramallah, the PA Foreign Ministry announced. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Director of UNRWA Affairs in Syria, Panos Mountzis, and Frans Wolfkamp, Managing Director of Music in Me, a Dutch non-governmental organization, inaugurated the Ramallah Children's Music Centre in Ein el-Tal refugee camp in Aleppo. (*UNRWA press release No. 17/2008*)

9

Israeli troops forced their way into the Mayor's office in Nablus to carry out a search, security sources and witnesses said. Soldiers used explosives to blow open the main door to the finance department before breaking into individual offices. They confiscated a number of computers and numerous documents, the sources said. (*AFP, AP*)

Two Palestinian teenagers were wounded and two others were rounded up during an IDF operation in the Far'a refugee camp in the Tubas district, Palestinian security sources reported. (Wafa)

Israeli settlers from the "Bracha" settlement launched three home-made projectiles at the Palestinian villages of Burin and Madama, south of Nablus. They landed near houses, but no injuries were reported, according to a Palestinian security source. (Ma'an News Agency, Wafa)

A Palestinian bulldozer driver attempted to ram the Palestinian side of the separation wall near Qalandiya, north of Jerusalem. Border guard officers stationed nearby were able to foil the attempt using crowd control measures. (Ynetnews)

Israeli security forces shot and killed Talal Sa'ad Talal Abed, who tried to escape arrest near Jenin, the Israeli army said in a statement. "Abed, 32, a resident of Kafri Dan, was a member of Hamas' terror infrastructure in the village, an infrastructure that attempted to dispatch a suicide bomber into Israel," the statement said. (AFP)

PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad told a news conference with Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs Franco Frattini in Ramallah: "[The Israeli operations in the West Bank] undermine grossly our efforts aimed at rebuilding our capacity and re-establishing law and order." (AP)

At the end of the Group of Eight summit in Japan, Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda said in the [chair's summary](#): "We reiterated our full support for the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations with a view to reaching an agreement by the end of 2008. We call on all parties to refrain from any action that would undermine the negotiations and to implement their Road Map obligations, such as freezing all settlement activities and ending all acts of violence, terrorism and incitement. We welcome the truce in Gaza that came into effect recently and call for its observance. We remain committed to continuing to provide assistance to the Palestinians and helping to strengthen the Palestinian institutions. We look forward to a comprehensive peace between Israel and its neighbours." (Reuters, www.mofa.go.jp)

Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs Franco Frattini announced that Italy would provide the Palestinian Authority with €20 million in aid. Speaking at a news conference with PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, Mr. Frattini condemned Israel's continued expansion of settlements. "If you build new settlements, you will undermine the credibility of the Palestinian Government, which is not in our interest, and not in Israel's interest and not in the international community's interest," he said. (AFP)

Palestinian officials said that Israel had opened the Sufa cargo crossing to Gaza despite the previous day's mortar fire. (AP)

Israel Radio reported that Israel planned to build some 1,800 new homes in two settlements in East Jerusalem. Some 900 homes would be built in the "Har Homa" settlement, and a similar number of new apartments would be built in "Pisgat Ze'ev," the radio said, adding that the Jerusalem municipality's Planning and Construction Committee had given preliminary approval to both projects. (DPA)

Arab States had asked the Security Council to re-declare Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory illegal and condemn new construction in East Jerusalem. Libya, a Council Member and the head of the Arab Group, submitted a draft resolution calling on Israel to immediately stop its settlement expansion in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Zalmay Khalizad, said, "For us, the criteria for an acceptable resolution which can make it to the Council are that it is balanced," and that achievements or setbacks by both sides in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must be reflected in the draft. (Haaretz)

United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Robert H.erry concluded a series of discussions in Cairo and Amman following earlier talks with PA President Abbas and senior Israeli officials. Mr.erry discussed all facets of the Middle East peace process, expressing UN support for Egyptian efforts to consolidate calm in Gaza and enhance conditions for civilians, UN spokesperson Michele Montas told journalists. He also underscored the Secretary-General's backing of the continuing Israeli-Palestinian political negotiations, steps taken by President Abbas to promote Palestinian unity and the indirect talks between Israel and Syria, she added. (UN News Centre)

The Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem said that the Israeli Government had not implemented three Supreme Court orders, one issued three years previously, to change the route of the separation barrier. Defense Ministry spokesman Shlomo Dror said budgetary problems had delayed the changes. (AP, www.btselem.org)

Palestinians faced acute water shortages as dry weather continued straining supplies already restricted by Israel, residents and the water authority said. Parts of major West Bank cities, such as Jenin, Hebron and Bethlehem, had had no running water for about a month, and even faucets in parts of Ramallah had been dry for days at a time in recent weeks, residents said. (Reuters)

Israeli legislators approved a draft bill that would allow the State to confiscate the property of Palestinians living in East Jerusalem who carried out attacks in Israel. The Knesset approved the draft bill, initiated by Knesset member Gideon Sa'ar of Likud, by 50 in favour to 13 against, in a preliminary reading, Israel Radio reported. Three more readings need to be passed before the bill becomes a law. (DPA)

10

Israeli troops killed an unarmed Palestinian near the border in the southern Gaza Strip, an IDF spokesman said. The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades claimed the victim had been one of its members. The head of Gaza emergency services identified the victim as Salim Jumaa al-Hamadi, 18. The death brings to 526 the number of people, nearly all Palestinians, killed since Israeli-Palestinian peace talks resumed in November 2007, according to an AFP count. (AFP)

In the fourth day of operations in Nablus, Israel closed a clinic and a TV station, and raided a mosque, a newspaper and other offices, which it said were linked to Hamas. (AP)

Israeli forces arrested five Palestinians in Dura, west of Hebron, and in Nablus. (Ma'an News Agency)

Palestinians fired two Qassam rockets into Israel's western Negev region, hours after Israeli troops shot to death a Palestinian along the Israel-Gaza border. The rockets struck open areas, causing no injuries or damage. (Haaretz)

Hamas arrested three militants from the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades immediately after they launched rockets at targets in Israel. Following the arrest, senior Hamas spokesman Moussa Abu Marzouk stated that his organization would uphold the ceasefire and attempt to stop the firing of rockets into Israel. (AFP, AP, Ma'an News Agency, Reuters, Ynetnews)

Israeli troops demolished two houses, razed land and arrested seven men in Hebron. (Ma'an News Agency, Reuters)

Israeli troops arrested eight Palestinians in the village of Issawiya, north of East Jerusalem. Subsequently Israeli police charged the men with belonging to a cell that used Molotov cocktails to attack cars. (Ynetnews)

The Dutch Government had asked Israel for clarification about the treatment of Palestinian journalist Mohammed Omer when he entered the West Bank from Jordan en route to Gaza after receiving an award in London. Dutch diplomats had escorted Mr. Omer from the West Bank to Gaza after he claimed to have been abused and humiliated by Israeli officials during an interrogation. The Dutch claim came after an internal Israeli investigation dismissed Mr. Omer's claim as being "without foundation". (AP)

Following the closing of a shopping mall in Nablus which the Israeli authorities claimed "supported terrorism", PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad encouraged shopkeepers to re-open their businesses. Mr. Fayyad went on to say that the Israeli army orders and decisions were not valid and that the Palestinian Authority would deal with them as if they did not exist. (Ma'an News Agency, Reuters)

Islamic Jihad and five factions affiliated with the PLO called for an end to Palestinian internal strife, after a workshop the factions organized in the Gaza Strip. "We have [an] opportunity to have a Palestinian national dialogue that brings all Palestinians together, and there is no alternative [to] the Yemeni initiative," Fatah leader Ibrahim Abu Al-Naja said. (Ma'an News Agency)

Yasser Abed Rabbo, Secretary-General of the Executive Committee of the PLO, said that the Palestinians were considering freezing their peace talks with Israel over Israeli settlement construction plans for East Jerusalem. Since renewing negotiations with the Palestinians in November 2007, Israel had disclosed plans to build more than 3,000 apartments in East Jerusalem and adjoining areas in the West Bank. (Haaretz)

A lawsuit was filed in Quebec's Supreme Court on behalf of the citizens in the West Bank village of Bil'in. The plaintiff alleged that two Montreal-based construction companies had violated Canadian law by building settlements on Palestinian-owned land. The plaintiff's attorney, Michael Sfar, said that the people of Bil'in would seek \$2 million in punitive damages, as well as an immediate order to halt construction. (AP, BBC, The Jerusalem Post, Ynetnews)

France condemned the Israeli decision to expand the "Har Homa" settlement, east of Jerusalem. A statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the

expansion contributed to the weakening of the peace process and demanded that Israel commit itself to a “complete freeze on settlement activity, including that linked to ‘natural growth’, in the whole of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem” as promised at Annapolis. (www.ambafrance-us.org)

In a report entitled, “[Four years after the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the barrier](#),” the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and UNRWA said, “Four years on, barrier construction continues, with approximately 57 per cent of the barrier constructed and 9 per cent under construction. The majority of the route, approximately 87 per cent, runs inside the West Bank and East Jerusalem, rather than along the 1949 armistice line (Green Line). This has a major impact on Palestinian villages, towns and cities, isolating communities and separating tens of thousands of people from services, lands and livelihoods.” (www.ochaopt.org)

11

Israeli troops shot and killed Mahmud Assi, a 49-year-old Palestinian, outside of the “Alfei Menashe” settlement, south of Qalqilya. The incident took place after the Palestinian had shot and wounded one settler and one Israeli soldier. (AFP, AP, DPA, Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency, Reuters, Ynetnews)

Israeli troops arrested 14 Palestinians in the village of Al-Eizariya, east of Jerusalem, and in Al-Jalazoun, north of Ramallah. (Ma'an News Agency)

Hamas arrested another four members of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades in the village of Beit Hanoun in the northern Gaza Strip. (AFP)

The Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs Micheál Martin voiced concern over the wall's social and economic impact on the Palestinian people, during a meeting in Tel Aviv with his Israeli counterpart, Tzipi Livni. Mr. Martin, drawing on the experiences from the Irish conflict with the British, said that “measures that ultimately have as their consequence the undermining of economic sustainability and quality of life in a particular area ultimately undermine the prospect of good security”. (The Irish Times)

PA President Abbas met with President of Italy Giorgio Napolitano in Rome. The two leaders discussed the latest developments on the Middle East peace as well as bilateral relations. At a joint news conference with Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, Mr. Abbas said that he hoped the upcoming Paris Summit for the Mediterranean would boost prospects for peace with Israel. (AP, Wafa)

PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad said that he had sent a letter to Lt. Gen. William Fraser III, a senior Middle East Envoy and Road Map monitor for the US Administration, to complain that recent Israeli military raids in the West Bank had undermined his administration. “Israel increased its military actions by 50 per cent in the first half of this month compared to the same period last month. What does that mean if not that Israel is trying to undermine the Palestinian Authority?”

Mr. Fayyad said. (AP)

The Israeli High Court of Justice dismissed a claim filed by villagers from El-Nu'man, located south of East Jerusalem, to change the route of the wall or – if this was not possible – to grant them residence permits of East Jerusalem. The people living in El-Nu'man would be cut off from the rest of the West Bank by the wall and a checkpoint but not be allowed to enter East Jerusalem and Israel. However villagers could apply for a permit to continue to reside in their homes and enter the West Bank, but would only be allowed to import products from Israel. Villagers that failed to apply for such a permit or were refused one would be expelled to the West Bank. The Palestinian Human Rights non-governmental organization, Al-Haq, criticized the ruling and accused the Israeli authorities of violating the Fourth Geneva Convention by “pursuing a political agenda of indirectly forcibly removing the residents of al-Nu'man from their land and homes for the expansion of the nearby illegal Israeli settlement of Har Homa”. (Al-Haq, The Jerusalem Post)

Robert H. Serry, the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, visited housing and sanitation works in Khan Younis, Gaza, to witness the impact of the problems with sewage treatment there. (UN News Centre)

12

Israeli police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said that a rocket fired from the Gaza Strip had landed in southern Israel, near Sderot, causing no injuries or damage. No one had claimed responsibility for the attack. (DPA, Reuters)

Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of France, Bernard Kouchner, said that gathering 43 leaders of countries in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa for the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean was a beginning and urged the group to increase pressure for progress in Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. (AP)

PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad called for the establishment of a unity Government with Hamas. “Mr. Fayyad's call is far away from any national proposal,” said Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoom. (DPA, The Jerusalem Post)

13

The IDF arrested three Palestinians in the refugee camp of Aida, near Bethlehem, PA security sources said. (Wafa)

Israeli police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said the police had arrested Gilad Herman, a student at a Jewish seminary in the settlement of “Yitzhar” near Nablus, suspected of involvement in an attempted rocket attack on a Palestinian village. (AP, Haaretz)

Gaza militants fired a rocket into Israel, *Israel Radio* reported. It struck an open area in the western Negev. No casualties were reported. There also was no claim of responsibility. (Haaretz)

The Palestinian delegation raised objections to the Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean after it had already been distributed by the French hosts, a Palestinian official said, because it made no direct reference to the two-State solution. (Reuters)

Israeli Prime Minister Olmert told the Paris Summit that Israel and the Palestinians had never been closer to a possible [peace] agreement. (AP)

Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh called His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, to suggest that Qatar host an intra-Palestinian dialogue similar to the earlier Lebanese dialogue hosted in Doha. (AFP, www.presidentsaleh.gov.ye)

Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal told reporters: “We support talks to resume the Palestinian dialogue on the basis of the Yemeni initiative with the aim of restoring the Palestinian situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank to what it was before and remedying all the causes that led to the Palestinian dispute.” (Reuters)

UNRWA Director of Operations in the Gaza Strip John Ging said in a statement that the missing element for the truce in Gaza was the fact that the “crossings had not opened to the extent that Gazans needed.” Conditions, according to Mr. Ging, were getting worse and Gazans were suffering. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli Prime Minister Olmert promised during talks with PA President Abbas to release a new group of Palestinian prisoners, his spokesman Mark Regev said. “In response to a request from Mr. Abbas to release prisoners, the Prime Minister said he was prepared to make a gesture,” said Mr. Regev. “Mr. Olmert stressed that he wanted to make a gesture in the direction of the Palestinian Authority, not towards the Hamas movement, without it being linked to an exchange of prisoners,” Mr. Regev added. (AFP, AP)

14

The IDF searched houses and arrested five Palestinians in Nablus, witnesses said. (Wafa)

The Israeli authorities said that soldiers had opened fire on a Palestinian who was 10 metres away from the Gaza-Israel border near the Kissufim crossing in the area of Deir Al-Balah, in the central Gaza Strip. (Ma'an News Agency)

Palestinian and Western officials said that Quartet Representative Tony Blair was preparing to travel to the Gaza Strip later this week. There will be no meeting with Hamas officials, the sources said. (Reuters, DPA)

The PA Ministry of Agriculture said that 75 per cent of agricultural lands in the Gaza Strip had been razed by the IDF. Under-Secretary of the Ministry Dr. Azzam Tubela said that the Ministry's figures indicated that agricultural lands were shrinking due to the closure and the lack of agricultural supplies and equipment. Dr. Tubela added that the losses of the agricultural sector in the Gaza Strip were estimated at \$33 million per year. (Wafa)

Israel opened three commercial crossings into Gaza and allowed passage of food, construction material and fuel in accordance with the ceasefire agreement with Hamas. (Xinhua)

The Government of Saudi Arabia pledged \$6 million to support the work of UNRWA. (Reliefweb)

A two-day Ministerial Conference on Capacity-Building for Palestine, organized under the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership framework, opened in Jakarta. In a speech, Indonesia's President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono stated that his country would continue to support “the creation of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State in accordance with the Annapolis agreement”. The Conference was jointly organized by Indonesia and South Africa. (Antara News, www.deplu.go.id, Xinhua)

The European Union issued a [statement](#) expressing deep concern over the Israeli decision to issue a tender for the construction of 920 housing units in the “Har Homa” settlement and 884 housing units in the settlement of “Pisgat Ze’ev,” north of Jerusalem. ([www.consilium.europa.eu](#))

The Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations told the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People at a meeting in New York that the settlement activity around East Jerusalem was threatening to derail the peace process. (*Reliefweb*)

The Israeli Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labour approved an expansion of the industrial park in the “Ariel” settlement. The expansion would allow the construction of 27 new factories, tripling the size of the settlement’s industrial park. The director of the Israeli non-governmental organization “Peace Now, Yariv Oppenheimer, criticized the move and said that the Annapolis peace process was becoming “more virtual than it ever was before”. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

15

The IDF arrested seven Palestinians affiliated with Hamas in Nablus. Among the detained were three members of the Nablus municipal council. (*AP, Haaretz, IDF, The Jerusalem Post, Xinhua*)

In Beit Fajjar, a town south of Bethlehem, the IDF conducted a military operation, occupying several buildings before detaining four Palestinians. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The IDF made incursions into Jenin and patrolled the area without making any arrests. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The IDF detained three Palestinians in a military operation in Qalqilya. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Quartet Representative Tony Blair cancelled his visit to Gaza where he was scheduled to visit a sewage treatment plant. Matthew Doyle, a spokesperson for Mr. Blair, said that a “specific security threat” was the reason behind the cancellation, but said that the envoy “hoped to visit Gaza again in the future”. *Haaretz* quoted anonymous sources as saying that the Shin Bet had warned Mr. Blair that “Palestinian terror organizations were planning to attack him”, but did not specify who posed the alleged threat. A Hamas spokesperson denied there were any security threats against Mr. Blair and accused Israel of pressuring the Quartet envoy to cancel his visit which “would have meant the failure of the siege on Hamas in the Gaza Strip”. UNRWA Director in Gaza John Ging said that he was “very disappointed” by the cancellation. (*AP, DPA, Haaretz, The Jerusalem Post, Reuters, Ynetnews*)

French Minister for Foreign and European Affairs Bernard Kouchner called for a “European Road Map” to help bring peace to the Middle East. “We do not have sufficient weight when it comes to the peace process,” Mr. Kouchner, whose country holds the EU Presidency, told members of the European Parliament in Brussels. “We propose to our friends the Foreign Ministers and to you [lawmakers] to define a Road Map that we could draw up in the first months of the French [EU] Presidency,” he said. He added, “It’s not about making proposals contrary to the Americans, nor contrary to anyone... [The change of US leadership] will be the moment to propose a form of partnership that will take more account of the symbolic, and real, weight of the European Union... We will have to propose this particular Road Map to our American friends... This is about giving European foreign policy its rightful place.” (*AFP*)

PA President Abbas met Malta’s President Edward Fenech-Adami during his two-day visit to the country. Mr. Abbas told the President that apart from supporting the Palestinian cause, Malta had always spoken to other parties, particularly the EU, in favour of the rights of the Palestinians. He also thanked the President for the plan to open a Maltese Embassy in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. President Fenech-Adami expressed his Government’s support of the Palestinian cause, mentioning, in particular, that Malta had held the position of the Rapporteur of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People since 1975. “We have always retained this position because we have always believed that, despite our small size, Malta can help the Palestinian people who have suffered, and are still suffering, so much,” the President said. Mr. Abbas was to meet with Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi later in the day. (*AFP, www.timesofmalta.com*)

The Italian Government announced that it had contributed €300,000 to aid the International Committee of the Red Cross in “urgent humanitarian assistance for the population of the Palestinian Occupied Territory facing health, food, water and shelter emergencies”. (*Reliefweb*)

More than 100 Israelis set up camp in an abandoned military base in the West Bank town of Beit Sahur in what Palestinian media described as an attempt to establish a settlement outpost. The area surrounding the military base was designated to become a hospital funded by CARE International. Hani Al-Hayek, the mayor of Beit Sahur, said that he had discussed the situation with the IDF and expected that the would-be settlers would be evicted. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The International Committee of the Red Cross warned that herders in the West Bank were facing an “acute water shortage” and were on the “brink of an emergency”. The Red Cross said that the problem was caused by natural factors such as three successive years of drought and frost during last winter as well as Israeli imposed restriction of movement that limited the access to water. An Israeli Defence official said that restriction of movement was necessary due to “security threats” and that the problem was caused by drought and Palestinian population growth. (*IRIN*)

In a statement, the international non-governmental organization Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) called on Israel to stop the demolition of homes as a means of collective punishment as it violated international law. In particular, COHRE criticized statements made by high-ranking Israeli officials claiming that the demolition of homes belonging to families of suspected terrorists in East Jerusalem was permissible by law, when the opposite was true. ([www.cohre.org](#))

The chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Paul Badji, announced that the Government of Chile had agreed to host a Latin American and Caribbean meeting in support of Israeli-Palestinian peace. The meeting is scheduled to take place in Santiago in mid-December 2008. (*Reliefweb*)

16

Israeli forces raided the town of Beit Fajjar, south of Bethlehem, and detained four Palestinians. Also, Israeli forces detained a Palestinian in the village of Jalqamus, east of Jenin. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

17

Two young Palestinians were shot and wounded by the IDF in the Balata refugee camp, in east Nablus, while heading to their workplaces and 12 others were detained in the Askar refugee camp after a raid in the area. (*AFP, Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli special forces stormed the house of Ahmad Mohammad Al-Aramin in Al-E'zariya, east of Jerusalem. His wife and a son were injured during the raid and his two other sons were beaten and detained. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In a televised statement, Ahmed Youssef, a political adviser to former PA Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, warned that if Israel did not continue to meet all the conditions of the truce, Hamas would return to violent means. He pointed out that the siege of the Gaza Strip, being maintained by Israel forces, constituted a breach of the truce. “If the siege is not lifted and the crossings are not opened, then to hell with the truce,” he said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

PA President Abbas said, “We believe that resolving the issue of prisoners between Israel and Hizbullah will help us resolve our own issues. We are also looking forward to have [IDF soldier Gilad Shalit] held in captivity released in order to enable thousands of our prisoners to return home.” Mr. Abbas was addressing a joint press conference with Malta Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi following a meeting between the two at Castille during which Dr. Gonzi was invited to visit the Occupied Palestinian Territory. ([www.timesofmalta.com](#))

Viet Nam’s Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dao Viet Trung, representative to the Ministerial Conference on Capacity-Building for Palestine, held in Jakarta, reaffirmed his country’s continued annual provision of \$120,000 in aid to the Palestinians. ([www.mofa.gov.vn](#))

The Israeli military cancelled an earlier decision to shut down the West Bank’s largest shopping center in Nablus. One of the owners said that the company had over 1,400 shareholders, the majority of whom were small investors, and nine major investors. (*DPA*)

PA Chief of Civil Affairs Husein al-Sheikh said in a statement that Israel had decided to increase the amount of fuel allowed into the Gaza Strip. “We were informed by the Israeli side that the amounts of diesel, cooking gas, gasoline and industrial diesel for operating the Gaza power plant would increase on 18 July,” said Mr. al-Sheikh. (*Xinhua*)

The house of the Al-Kurds family in East Jerusalem was scheduled to be demolished. The decision was a reversal of an earlier order by the Israeli High Court that had originally decided to allow the family to remain in their home and ruled that a Jewish group, which took over part of the property in 1999, should leave the house

but no action was taken against the settlers. The International Solidarity Movement had stated that the ruling "sets a dangerous precedent that could jeopardize the future of another 27 Palestinian houses in East Jerusalem" (*Ma'an News Agency*)

18

Israeli troops arrested 15 Palestinians from villages in the Nablus region. Local sources said Israeli troops raided the village of Madama at dawn and detained 10 residents. Five others were arrested in the neighbouring village of Asira. Meanwhile, the IDF also opened fire on a Palestinian allegedly trying to cross the Gaza Strip border. The Palestinian fled. (*Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency*)

Abtisam Anati, a lawyer from the Al-Hurriyat center for human rights, said that the harshness of the conditions at Ramon prison, in the south of Israel, was threatening to result in major unrest. Prisoners declared that they would go on strike if the situation did not change. The discontent came as a reaction to reported repeated assaults on inmates by prison guards. Some prisoners had been prevented from taking university entrance exams while others had been denied books necessary to study. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

19

Israeli forces arrested a 19-year-old Palestinian in the Balata refugee camp in Nablus and another man in Hebron. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

20

At a news conference with PA President Abbas in Bethlehem, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said, "Settlement expansion has made peace harder to achieve. It erodes trust, it heightens Palestinian suffering, and it makes the compromises Israel needs to make for peace more difficult... I think the whole European Union is very clear on this matter: we want to see a freeze on settlements." He also said Britain would donate an extra \$60 million in addition to the \$500 million the Government had pledged to the Palestinians over the next three years. He spoke of the need to create jobs by building industrial parks, promoting small businesses and building desperately needed housing. He announced plans to host an international investment conference for the Palestinians in autumn, and promised to help the Palestinians train their security forces. (*AP, www.number10.gov.uk*)

21

The Israeli Army said an Israeli soldier caught on film shooting a bound and blindfolded Palestinian detainee in the leg with a rubber-coated bullet had been detained.

The footage of the incident had been released by Israeli human rights group B'Tselem on 20 July. (*AFP, www.btselem.org*)

Israeli settlers launched a home-made projectile at the Palestinian villages of Orta and Odala, south of Nablus. The projectile landed in agricultural land. No injuries were reported. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel arrested some 20 Hamas activists in Nablus, including PLC member Muna Mansour, a Palestinian security source said. (*AFP*)

In its "Human Rights annual report 2007" Britain's House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee said, "Some of Israel's actions against the Palestinians have been disproportionate, and we conclude that Israeli policies towards the population of the Gaza Strip as a whole have been a form of collective punishment. We recommend that the Government should urge Israel in the strongest possible terms to desist from activities that violate international law. We further conclude that the Government is absolutely correct to condemn all forms of violence committed by Palestinians against the Israeli population. We recommend that, in its response to this report, the Government should provide an assessment as to what policy options are available to prevent the indiscriminate firing of rockets into Israel. We repeat our condemnation of violence between Palestinians, and we welcome the Government's provision of significant financial support to the Palestinian Authority." (*www.parliament.uk*)

During a speech to the Knesset, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said, "I believe that a historic, hard won but lasting peace is within your grasp by seizing the opportunity opened up by Annapolis - now taken forward by Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas and built on fundamentals: a two-State solution based on 1967 borders; a democratic State of Israel, secure from attack, recognized by - and at peace with - all its neighbours; alongside a peaceful, democratic and territorially viable State of Palestine that accepts you as its friend and partner; with Jerusalem the capital for both, and a just and agreed settlement for refugees. ... And to deliver this historic hard won and lasting peace, it is vital also that both sides now create the conditions for a final agreement: the Palestinians acting with persistence and perseverance against the terrorists who attack your country; Israel freezing, and withdrawing from, settlements." (*AFP, www.number10.gov.uk*)

The *Al-Bayan* newspaper of the United Arab Emirates reported that Israel was willing to include imprisoned Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti in a list of 300 Palestinian prisoners to be freed in exchange for Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. (*Haaretz*)

The Consumer Protection Department of the PA Ministry of National Economy in Bethlehem said that their staff had confiscated products made in Israeli settlements from local merchants. It urged Palestinian businessmen to refrain from buying such products. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

22

A Palestinian driver rammed his bulldozer into cars in Jerusalem wounding at least 16 people, before being shot dead. The driver was identified as a 22-year-old resident of East Jerusalem who held an Israeli ID card, Israeli police said. (*Haaretz*)

The military wing of Hamas announced that one of their members had been killed in an explosion during "a special operation" in the east of Gaza City. Two Palestinians were injured. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Israeli Army said they had detained a 27-year-old Palestinian for allegedly plotting to stab an Israeli soldier at a roadblock near Jerusalem. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

PA President Abbas warned that he would withdraw his forces from West Bank cities unless the IDF halted their frequent raids into the areas. PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad said, "The Palestinian National Authority may draw back the security plan that it implements in the Palestinian towns if Israel steps up its aggressive acts." (*AP, Haaretz, Wafa*)

Israeli President Shimon Peres and PA President Abbas met in Jerusalem for talks on strengthening the peace process and the situation in the region. Mr. Peres and Mr. Abbas, in a joint press conference, called for the release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. (*DPA*)

General James Jones, US Special Envoy for Middle East Security, was preparing an extremely critical report of Israel's security policies in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and its attitude toward the PA security services, sources familiar with the report said. (*Haaretz*)

Hamas had been taking advantage of the truce in order to plant mines in wide areas in the Gaza Strip, Shin Bet Director Yuval Diskin warned the Knesset's Foreign Affairs Committee. (*Ynetnews*)

Direct contacts with Hamas would not take place until the group recognized Israel's right to exist, Quartet Representative Tony Blair said in Brussels on the sidelines of an EU Foreign Ministers' meeting. He added that he was still hopeful there could be a peace agreement by the end of the year. Mr. Blair, who held talks with the ministers, said the EU had an important job to carry out in providing support politically, economically and in terms of security to Israelis and Palestinians. (*AP, DPA*)

Hamas official Said Siyyam told journalists: "President Abbas' term ends on 9 January 2009, and this should help build national reconciliation. There must be a Palestinian President who reunites the Palestinian people and speaks on behalf of both Fatah and Hamas." He refused to say whether Hamas was planning to participate in the presidential elections. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The International Women's Peace Service published a report on an attack on Palestinian farmers in Qalqilya by settlers from "Havat Gilad" outpost using chemical sprays. (*Ma'an News Agency, www.iwps.info*)

Israel allowed 89 trucks to pass through the Sufa commercial crossing into the Gaza Strip. The trucks carried food, building materials, and consumer goods. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A convoy of 15 trucks containing 200 tons of food and medical supplies from Jordan arrived in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The aid was sent by the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization under the direction of King Abdullah II. Eight trucks were sent to the Gaza Strip and seven to the West Bank. (*Petra*)

The Security Council held an [open debate](#) on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. The Council heard a briefing by Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs B. Lynn Pascoe. Speakers included Palestine, Israel, Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, among others. (UN press release SC/9402)

23

The IDF shot and wounded a Palestinian in the Gaza Strip and arrested two others during several incursions into the West Bank cities and villages, local witnesses and security sources said. (Wafa)

PA police and medical sources said that an Israeli military vehicle had run over 6-year-old Hamza Nabil Fawzi al-Julani west of Hebron. (Ma'an News Agency)

A demonstrator rallying in the town of Ni'lin, near Ramallah, said that IDF forces had arrested the father of the Palestinian girl who had videotaped a soldier firing at a bound Palestinian detainee. (Ynetnews)

Israeli Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said a policeman shot on 11 July in Jerusalem in a suspected Palestinian militant attack had died of his injuries. (AFP, AP, Ynetnews)

"Sanctions should be applied against the families of [Jerusalem] terrorists in cases where it is proved that they collaborated in attacks, or did nothing to stop them," Israel's Minister of the Interior Meir Sheetrit told *Israeli Public Radio*. (AFP)

PA Minister of Planning, Dr. Samir Abdullah, said that the PA faced a looming fiscal crisis. The problem is caused by a shortfall of pledged aid made at last year's Paris Donors' Conference as well as Israel withholding money from taxes on products imported into the Occupied Palestinian Territory. (AP, Ma'an News Agency)

A van carrying 1.5 tons of medical supplies from Scotland, destined for hospitals in Gaza, was refused entry at the Egyptian border crossing. Egyptian officials said the couple who drove the van did not possess the proper paperwork. (www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com)

Israel informed the Palestinian Authority that it was willing to pardon 24 Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades prisoners as part of the prisoner release agreed upon in 2007. (Ynetnews)

A British delegation headed by Teresa Jones, Director of Policy and Defence Relations in the British Ministry of Defence, and Mark Rock, the British Military Attaché to the region, visited the Headquarters of the Palestinian national security forces in Ramallah to meet with their commander Thiab al-Ali. The visit was part of a fact-finding mission to evaluate the forces' assistance needs. (Ma'an News Agency)

Eleven trucks will deliver flower seeds within next few days to the growers in the Gaza Strip under the Dutch flower project initiated by the Dutch Government. The project, which is worth one million euros, provides jobs for more than 1,500 Palestinians. (www.minbuza.nl)

24

Seven demonstrators were wounded by rubber-coated metal bullets, and two IDF soldiers were hurt by stones during a demonstration against the construction of the separation wall in Ni'lin, near Ramallah. (AFP)

IDF troops arrested five Palestinians and wounded three other in an operation in the southern part of the West Bank. (AFP)

IDF troops arrested a Palestinian in a Ta'naq, a village near Jenin. (Ma'an News Agency)

More than 20 Israeli settlers entered the village of Burin near Nablus, where they smashed cars, broke windows and cut electric wires. (AP, Haaretz, Ynetnews)

IDF troops confiscated machinery, materials and arrested an unknown number of Palestinians in the industrial zone of Beit Fajar, near Bethlehem. (Wafa)

Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak told PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad that the IDF had decided to cease its military operations in and around Nablus in the West Bank. (Xinhua)

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said at a joint press conference with the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Stephen Smith: "We do have an Annapolis process that we'll try to get to an agreement by the end of the year so that Israelis and Palestinians can finally have a two-State solution that will secure them both. The work is not easy to achieve, but it's very active... We're having bilaterals and trilaterals with the Israelis and Palestinians next week." (www.state.gov)

A cross-party committee in the British Parliament called on Quartet Representative Tony Blair to use the ceasefire to include Hamas in the peace process and facilitate reconciliation between the Palestinian factions. (BBC, Ynetnews)

PA Planning Minister Samir Abdullah said that some 150,000 PA employees would not receive their July salaries in full because of a growing budget deficit. (AP)

The unemployment rate in Gaza reached 45 per cent in 2007, according to a [study](#) conducted by UNRWA. According to the study, the overall unemployment rate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which had increased to 29.5 per cent, was "among the highest in the world". Another finding in the study was that 35 per cent of Gazans lived below the "deep poverty" line, set at \$457 per month for a family of six. In the West Bank, however, the situation had improved slightly in 2007, with 20 per cent of the population under the poverty line, defined at \$572 for a family of six. (IRIN)

The Israeli group Physicians for Human Rights said that the Israeli secret service had recently prevented 14 critically ill patients from leaving the Gaza Strip for medical treatment due to "security reasons". (Wafa)

The Swedish Government earmarked SKr 50 million (around \$8.3 million) for direct support to the Palestinian Authority. (Reliefweb)

The flow of food and goods into Gaza had increased since the ceasefire between Hamas and Israel begun. Building materials, being imported for the first time since the summer of 2007, and also shoes, clothes and juice, which had been blocked from entry for most of last year, were now entering Gaza. However an aid worker in Gaza described the increased flow of food and goods as "a humble improvement" and Richard Miron, a spokesman for UNSCO, said, "There is a need for something more sustainable for Gaza, a more sustainable economic base". (IRIN)

The Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee approved the construction of a new settlement in the West Bank. The plan would see the construction of 20 housing units and the establishment of the "Maskiot" settlement in the Jordan Valley. The final approval of the plan is to be taken by Defense Minister Ehud Barak, who, according to a source in his Ministry, would approve it within weeks. In 2006 the US pressured Israel to drop the establishment of the "Maskiot" settlement and during the Annapolis Peace Conference last year; Israel had vowed not to establish any new settlements in the West Bank. PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat said that the construction was "destroying the process of a two-State solution" and called upon the Americans once again to put pressure on the Israelis to block the final approval of the project. (AFP, AP, DPA, Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency, Wafa, Xinhua)

Palestinian prisoners incarcerated in the Majedo prison in the Negev desert circulated a letter to the media and humanitarian organizations, calling for an improvement of their living conditions. The letter said that the prison administration deliberately cut off water and deprived them of family visits without proper explanation. (Wafa)

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

The Secretary-General is deeply concerned about the announcement today of the initial approval by the Ministry of Defense of 20 residential units in the Israeli military post of Maskiot in the West Bank. The Secretary-General has stressed many times before that settlement construction or expansion is contrary to international law and Israel's commitments under the Road Map and the Annapolis process. The Secretary-General urges Israel to heed the call of the Quartet to freeze all settlement activity, including natural growth, and to dismantle outposts erected since March 2001.

(UN press release SG/SM/11717)

25

A powerful explosion destroyed a car on a busy Gaza City beach, killing four Hamas members, including Hamas field commander Amar Masubah, and a young girl, security officials said. It was the third blast of the day. A total of seven were killed and at least 23 injured. The first explosion took place just after midnight outside the Al Jazeera café, wounding three people and killing the man who set off the bomb. Another bomb exploded outside the house of Hamas lawmaker Marwan Abu Ras, causing light damage but no casualties. Hamas blamed the bombings on Fatah. (AP, The Jerusalem Post)

A Qassam rocket was fired from the northern Gaza, landing inside the territory near the border fence. There were no reports of injuries or damage. (Ynetnews)

Israeli forces arrested three Palestinians in Bethlehem, three in Jenin and four in Nablus, Israeli sources said. (Ma'an News Agency)

UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs David Miliband said he had been dismayed to learn of plans for new settlement construction in the Jordan Valley and that those were clearly outside Israel's Road Map and Annapolis commitments. (www.fco.gov.uk)
The United States filed an official protest with Israel regarding the eviction of the Al-Kurd family from their home in East Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood, which was being transferred to a settlers' organization. The US also demanded explanations for the harassment of Palestinian residents in the West Bank by Israeli settlers. (*Haaretz*)

26

Hamas forces in the Gaza Strip detained nearly 200 Fatah supporters. PA security forces detained at least 20 Hamas activists in the city of Jenin and another 15 in Tulkarm. (*BBC, Haaretz*)

27

PA President Abbas condemned the fresh outbreak of violence in the Gaza Strip over the weekend, calling for an independent inquiry into the bomb blasts. He said, "What happened in Gaza is extremely regretful and painful to us and to our people. We don't accept it. Neither do we accept accusations and claims made directly by Hamas blaming Fatah and its members for the Gaza blasts. We call for a committee made up of independent Palestinians to investigate the matter and come to conclusions on the perpetrators of the attack. We will accept the outcome of the inquiry." (*DPA*)

At a meeting with Egyptian President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak, PA President Abbas appealed to a number of Arab countries to consider dispatching troops to the Gaza Strip. He said that an Arab peacekeeping force could help "restore law and order" to the Gaza Strip and pave the way for ending the Fatah-Hamas rift. Mr. Abbas said he had agreed with President Mubarak to launch "reconciliation talks" with Hamas immediately and without preconditions. A senior Hamas official rejected Mr. Abbas' initiative and warned that his movement would not allow soldiers from any country to enter Gaza.

Hamas arrested Mr. Omar al-Farra, Director of *Wafa* news agency in the Gaza Strip. Hamas also issued warnings to several Palestinian journalists and media outlets against "favouring" Fatah in their coverage of the latest tensions. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The head of the Palestinian Water Authority, Shadad Ateli, said that many Palestinian homes had been without water for hours, and sometimes days at a time. Israel controlled the water sources and under an interim agreement signed in 1995, Palestinians received an allocated supply. Mr. Ateli said five years of drought had diminished supply, while the Palestinian population had grown rapidly since then. He hoped that Palestinians would negotiate a better water deal in a final peace agreement with Israel. (*AP*)

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PA security forces arrested 50 Hamas activists overnight in Nablus, including lecturers and students at the Al-Najah University and local council members, according to a Hamas spokesperson. (*Haaretz*)

A group of settlers from the "Yatsahar" settlement, to the south of Nablus, set fire to a Palestinian house in the village of Burin, which burned to the ground. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A number of Palestinian protestors were injured as Israeli forces stormed the home of Majid Abu 'Eisha in the Beit Hanina neighbourhood in North Jerusalem, which the Israelis were threatening to demolish. Among the injured was Hatim Abdul-Qadir, President Abbas' adviser on Jerusalem Affairs. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The IDF arrested seven Palestinians in Jenin, Hebron and Tulkarm, security sources said. (*Wafa*)

The PA Cabinet condemned the explosions which had occurred on 25 July in Gaza City and expressed concern about the "painful and unfortunate" events that had ensued in the Gaza Strip, including the ongoing detention campaign. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said it was unlikely Israel and the Palestinians would reach their goal of a peace accord by the end of 2008, considering the volatile status of Jerusalem. In lieu of a deal on Jerusalem, Mr. Olmert proposed a joint Israeli-Palestinian "mechanism" to continue negotiations on the future of the city. Mr. Olmert said, "Whoever thinks it's possible to live with 275,000 Arabs in Jerusalem must take into account that there will be more bulldozers ... carrying out attacks."

(*BBC, Haaretz*)

Israeli Minister for Transportation and Road Safety Shaul Mofaz warned that Jerusalem was becoming a "terror hub" and called for the Government to adopt policies of demolishing homes, closing areas, and exiling Palestinian activists and their families. Deputy Prime Minister Haim Ramon responded by saying that he did not think the proposal would solve the problem and that the main question was whether the Government wanted Jabal Mukaber and Sur Baher neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem as part of the State of Israel or not. "Those who want the fence to be east of Sur Baher actually determined that Jerusalem will live with the terrorist threat posed by 175,000 Palestinians with no affinity to Israel," he said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was pressuring Israel and the Palestinians to try to agree on a document of understanding to be presented to the General Assembly in September. The document would include agreed-on points, particularly on borders. An Israeli official said the gaps remained on most issues but confirmed that the parties were closer on borders, which stood at a remaining 2 or 3 per cent land to be annexed by Israel and the kind of compensation the PA would get in exchange. The gap regarding a right of return for Palestine refugees had also narrowed, according to Palestinian sources. (*Haaretz*)

The Bank of Palestine signed a partnership agreement with the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a branch of the World Bank, securing \$15 million of investment. The IFC said it would support the Palestinian bank's operations in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in order to enhance the local finance sector and to support efforts to develop private sector institutions. (www.ifc.org)

Israel Radio quoted the management of Gaza crossing points as saying that 86 truckloads of fruit and vegetables as well as shoes and clothes had entered the Gaza Strip through the Sufa crossing. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

After a five-year battle, the Israeli defense establishment had agreed to dismantle a 2.4-km stretch of the separation wall north of Qalqilya. The move would return 2,600 dunums of agricultural land to its Palestinian owners. The dismantled stretch would be replaced by 4.9 km of fencing closer to the Green Line. The wall in this area was built in 2003, and residents of several nearby Palestinian villages had petitioned the High Court of Justice against it. The Court had ordered the wall moved closer to the Green Line around Bil'in and the settlements of "Alfei Menashe" and "Tzufin." (*Haaretz*)

Israeli forces destroyed a six-storey building belonging to a Palestinian in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Beit Hanina, on the pretext that it was built without a permit. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A plan by a group of activists from Europe to sail to the Gaza Strip from Cyprus on 5 August under the slogan "breaking the siege" was reported. The boat would be stocked with humanitarian aid and medical supplies for residents, including children. Another small vessel, carrying members of the international media, more activists and doctors, would sail alongside. (*Haaretz, Wafa*)

The UK-based movement Palestine Solidarity Campaign called for the British Government to ban settlement products in the UK. (www.palestinecampaign.org)

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The IDF suspended the Commanding Officer of the soldier who had been captured on video shooting a blindfolded, handcuffed Palestinian protester, an IDF spokesman said. (*AFP, DPA, Haaretz*)

The IDF arrested nine Palestinians in Bethlehem, Nablus and Hebron, security sources said. (*Ma'an News Agency, Wafa*)

Israeli soldiers killed 11-year-old Ahmed Moussa and wounded 10 others during an anti-wall protest in the West Bank village of Niflin. The Governor of Ramallah, Said Abu Ali, said that the autopsy indicated that the boy had been struck by a bullet from an M16 rifle. Palestinian sources also reported that a man was wounded by a rubber-coated bullet, shot at close range, and another was arrested. An IDF soldier and an Israeli border guard officer were also lightly wounded.

(*Ynetnews, Wafa*)

At least five people were hurt in a huge explosion at a Hamas training base in southern Gaza, witnesses and a health official said. Neither Hamas nor the Israeli military had an immediate comment. (*AP*)

"Our goal as the United States is to work as hard as we can to encourage the parties to resolve the differences between them," US Secretary of State Rice said.

"They are working very, very hard. They are also working very seriously." State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said, "Our focus is to work with both sides to get as far as we can in achieving a settlement on all final status issues by the end of the year". Ms. Rice said she had been assured that Israel remained committed to working for a deal on the hardest problems this year, but she made no promises during a news conference. "I expect to continue to help the parties find points of convergence, to help them to continue to try to work toward this," Ms. Rice said, adding "I'm assured that they're all committed to trying to make it happen, but nobody should underestimate the difficulty of doing that." (*AP*)

An Israeli court convicted a Palestinian, Majdi Rimawi, for his part in the 2001 assassination of Israeli Cabinet Minister Rehavam Ze'evi. (*AP, Ynetnews*)

Reporters Without Borders condemned the arrest of a cameraman, Sawah Abu Saif, working for the German TV station *ARD* in the Gaza Strip and called on Hamas to release him. (www.rsf.org)

Saeb Erakat, Head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO, said that the Palestinian Authority rejected Israeli Prime Minister Olmert's earlier statements that he was not convinced peace could be achieved at the end of the year due to differences on the issues of Jerusalem and refugees. "Olmert's statements reflect Israel's intentions to escape implementing its commitments in the Road Map plan and reflects its desire to turn the year 2008 into a year of settlements instead of a year of solution," Mr. Erakat told reporters. (*Xinhua*)

PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad had requested \$120 million in emergency funding from the World Bank to pay Palestinian Authority staff salaries, one of his aides said. (*AFP, Reuters*)

Hamas Political Bureau member Mohammed Nasr and Hamas Political Bureau Deputy Chief Moussa Abu Marzouq were expected to travel to Cairo for talks with Egyptian officials on a prisoner exchange with Israel, truce with Israel and crossings into the Gaza Strip. (*AFP, AP, Reuters*)

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IDF troops wounded three Palestinians in Ramallah in a clash with protesters at the funeral of the 11-year-old boy killed in Ni'lin a day earlier, Palestinian medics said.

They said that the troops had shot the three with rubber bullets while fighting stone-throwing protesters. (*Haaretz*)

A preliminary investigation by Israeli police concluded that the IDF had used live ammunition against demonstrators in Ni'lin, where an 11-year old Palestinian boy had been killed by a shot to the head on 29 July. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The German *ARD* television channel announced it was closing its office in the Gaza Strip in protest of the arrest of its cameraman, Sawah Abu Saif, 42, by Hamas security forces. (*AFP*)

Only 6 per cent of investigations into offences allegedly committed by Israeli soldiers against Palestinians in the West Bank yield indictments, the Israeli Yesh Din human rights group said. The report came as the armed forces vowed to investigate the death of an 11-year-old Palestinian boy during a protest against Israel's separation wall in Ni'lin a day earlier. Of a total of 1,246 investigations by the military police into suspected offences against Palestinians or Palestinian property between 2000 and 2007, only 76 had ended in indictments, the group said. A total of 132 people had been charged, of whom 110 had been found guilty of various offences, four acquitted, eight indictments annulled and the trials of 10 others still underway, the report said. According to figures provided to Yesh Din by the IDF, only a few of the investigations had followed complaints from within army ranks. (*The Sydney Morning Herald*)

Human Rights Watch released a report saying that security forces loyal to Hamas and Fatah had both committed serious human rights abuses over the past year, including arbitrary arrests and torture. (*Haaretz, www.hrw.org*)

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice met with Palestinian and Israeli negotiators in Washington. Ms. Rice said that the meeting had been "very fruitful" and State Department spokesman Sean McCormack stated that as far as the peace process was concerned, the US would "try to push it as far as it will go, as far as the parties will go". Saeb Erakat, Head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO, said after the meeting that the Palestinians, Israelis and Americans had agreed that "we are negotiating the issues of Jerusalem, borders, refugees, security, prisoners and water and we want to achieve an agreement on all issues, or no agreement," and added that the Palestinians "will not agree to a solution based on a partial agreement". Mr. Erakat also said that Ms. Rice would visit the region on 20 August for more bilateral and trilateral meetings with Palestinian and Israeli officials. (*AFP, AP, Xinhua*)

The Jerusalem District Court rejected a petition submitted by the Israelis squatting in an Arab neighbourhood in East Jerusalem and ordered them to evacuate the premises immediately. The squatters had been living for some time in a seven-story building they call "Beit Yehonatan," in the heart of the Silwan neighbourhood of East Jerusalem. The structure was built illegally by the Ateret Cohanim organization. (*Haaretz*)

In his meeting with Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak in New York, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon discussed the Israeli settlements. (*UN News Centre*)

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Eight Palestinian were wounded and one died following a clash with the IDF after the funeral of the 11-year old boy killed in Ni'lin. (*AP, Haaretz*)

A Palestinian was wounded in the leg by the IDF during a clash in the village Anabta, east of Tulkarm. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The IDF arrested eight Palestinians in the West Bank. (www.idf.il)

Israeli forces detained two young Palestinians, 15 and 17, in the town of Kifi Harith in the West Bank and stole three thousand shekels from the house after destroying its contents, local sources said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Sawah Abu Saif, the cameraman working for the German TV station *ARD*, was released by Hamas in Gaza. (*AFP, AP, DPA, Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency, Reuters, Ynetnews, Xinhua*)

"The Israeli Army has continued its foot-dragging over fulfilling the requirements of the truce," Saraya Al-Quds, the armed wing of Islamic Jihad, said in a statement.

Gazans had not, it continued, "been given full access to basic human needs." Militant groups should consider a return to violence if Israel continues to violate the terms of the truce, Mohammad al-Baba, a leader of the Popular Resistance Committees, said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Egypt invited the representatives of Palestinian factions to Cairo in an attempt to restart the inter-Palestinian dialogue. (*Xinhua*)

"We will continue to deal with Ehud Olmert until the Israeli people elect a new leader," PA President Abbas told reporters. Saeb Erakat, Head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO, said the Palestinians did not deal with political parties or individuals in Israel, but with Israel as a State. He added that the Palestinians would continue to deal with any Prime Minister who succeeds Olmert to advance the peace process. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

PA President Abbas told reporters in Tunisia that he would meet soon in Cairo to begin national unity talks, which would be based on the Arab initiative and that of Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, denying there was an "international veto" on reconciliation with Hamas. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon held talks with Israeli Minister for Foreign Affairs Livni in New York, with the two discussing the Middle East peace process.

According to Mr. Ban's spokesperson, Michele Montas, they also talked about operational issues regarding humanitarian aid to Gaza and the West Bank, as well as Palestinian students who were not able to exit Gaza. (*UN News Centre*)
