

Division for Palestinian Rights

*Chronological Review of Events Relating to the
Question of Palestine*

Monthly media monitoring review

January 2013

Monthly highlights

- Palestinians celebrate the 48th anniversary of the founding of Fatah ([1, 3 January](#))
- PA President Abbas signs directive to start using "State of Palestine" on all official documents ([6 January](#))
- First Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait in 22 years to present credentials ([8 January](#))
- Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon calls on Israel to rescind settlement plans in the "E-1" area ([14 January](#))
- President Abbas and Hamas leader Mashaal agree to revive their long-stalled reconciliation accord by the end of the month ([17 January](#))
- Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu vows to rebuff international demands for a Palestinian State within pre-1967 borders and East Jerusalem as its capital ([20 January](#))
- Hamas and Fatah are to form a tripartite committee with Egypt to implement national reconciliation ([21 January](#))
- Benjamin Netanyahu wins a third term as Israel's Prime Minister ([23 January](#))
- British Foreign Office includes Israel as "a country of concern" in its quarterly report on human rights and democracy ([24 January](#))
- US Senator John Kerry, at his confirmation hearing for the post of the US Secretary of State, says that he hopes for a revival of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks ([24 January](#))
- Israel boycotts the meeting of the Working Group of the UN Human Rights Council Universal Period Review ([29 January](#))
- The Human Rights Council's International Fact-Finding Mission on Israeli Settlements in the OPT states that a multitude of the human rights of the Palestinians had been violated ([31 January](#))

I

An arrest raid by undercover Israeli soldiers ignited clashes in Tammun in the northern West Bank, residents said, leaving 10 Palestinians wounded. The Israeli military said that it had arrested a "terrorist affiliated with the Islamic Jihad terror group". Two soldiers were injured. (AP)

In Jerusalem, where Palestinian demonstrations were not allowed by Israeli authorities, Fatah supporters celebrated the 48th anniversary of Fatah's founding. Celebrations also took place in Hebron and Gaza. (Euronews)

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in an apparent response to President Shimon Peres' earlier criticism of his Government's handling of the peace process, said: "I think that the peace process requires us to act responsibly instead of hastily." He asserted that a peace agreement would not stop a Hamas takeover of the PA-controlled territories in the West Bank, and the establishment of another "Iranian terror base", and stressed that peace would only come once security was assured. (The Jerusalem Post, Ynetnews)

Hamas official Salah Bardawil said that the movement "opposes any dialogue with Israel, especially concerning the diplomatic issue." Mr. Bardawil was responding to a statement by President Peres, who had said that Israel was ready to enter into negotiations with Hamas if it recognized the terms set by the Quartet. (Ynetnews)

The League of Arab States announced that Algeria had transferred \$26 million to the PA. (The Times of Israel)

A Knesset committee had agreed to tighten reporting requirements for the physical transfers of cash from Israel to Gaza to crack down on money laundering. (Haaretz)

A Palestinian truck in the village of Beit Ummar was torched and walls were sprayed with hate graffiti in apparent "price tag" attacks by settlers from the nearby "Yizhar" settlement. (JTA)

Settlers attacked the village of Qusra, southeast of Nablus, damaging homes and uprooting some 200 olive trees, witnesses said. (Wafa)

According to a court document, the Israeli Supreme Court had again ordered to postpone the demolition of the settlement outpost of "Amona" to the end of April.

Settlement watchdog Peace Now said that the original demolition orders were issued in October 2004. The previous deadline for the eviction was 31 December. (AFP)

Israeli bulldozers demolished the house of a brother of a Palestinian prisoner, Samer Al-Issawi, in East Jerusalem. The family said that it was a pressure tactic to force Mr. Al-Issawi to end his hunger strike. The Israeli authorities said that the house had been constructed without permit. (GulfNews)

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The Israeli navy opened fire on a number of Palestinian fishing boats off the coasts of Khan Yunis and Rafah in the southern part of the Gaza Strip and forced them to return to their docks. (IMEMC)

A Palestinian man was arrested at the Atarot checkpoint near Jerusalem after having been found with a 15 cm-long knife during a routine search. The man told the soldiers at the checkpoint that he had intended to carry out a terror attack. (Ynetnews)

Israeli soldiers arrested four former Palestinian prisoners in Beit Ummar, north of Hebron. Several residents were wounded during clashes with soldiers. (IMEMC)

An Israeli military court indicted Ahmed Moussa, of Beit Lakiya, the alleged mastermind behind the Tel Aviv bus bombing. (Haaretz)

Gaza Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh convened a meeting of Hamas and Fatah delegations ahead of the first Fatah rally in the Gaza Strip since their bitter division. Fatah will hold its 48th anniversary celebrations in al-Saraya square in Gaza City on 4 January. (Ma'an News Agency)

During the US Department of State daily press briefing, Spokesperson Victoria Nuland stressed that it was 'now [...] time for leaders on both sides to display real leadership, to focus on the work that's necessary, to return to direct negotiations'. She urged both sides "to clearly demonstrate that they're serious about achieving two States living side by side in peace and security" and called on both Israel and the Palestinians "to cease any kind of counterproductive, unilateral actions and to take concrete steps to return to direct negotiations..." (US State Department)

The Palestinian Authority (PA) announced that it was cancelling outstanding electricity debts for every West Bank resident on the heels of a deal that aimed to help assuage the electricity companies' own arrears. (Ma'an News Agency)

Palestinians clashed with security forces in Nablus during a protest over a decision to make refugee camp residents pay for electricity. (UPI)

Israel renewed restrictions on foreign nationals who lived and worked in the West Bank that prohibited them from entering East Jerusalem or Israel. (Haaretz)

The regional Government of Andalucia had confirmed a €1 million donation to support mother and child health care services provided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). (www.unrwa.org)

3

Israeli soldiers detained eight Palestinians in the Al-Issawiya neighbourhood of East Jerusalem during a raid on several homes. More than 100 residents of the area have been detained in the past 22 days. (IMEMC)

Four young Palestinian men were injured in Jerusalem during clashes with Israeli forces during a march organized to show solidarity with Palestinian prisoner Al-Issawi, who was on hunger strike. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli forces raided Jenin in search of a suspected Palestinian militant, setting off clashes with residents. At least two Palestinians were wounded. (Reuters, AFP)

According to Mohammad Awad, a spokesperson for the Palestinian Popular Committee to Resist Settlements in Beit Ummar, Israeli forces arrested two young Palestinians from the village of Beit Ummar, north of Hebron. (Palestine News Network)

According to eyewitnesses, four Israeli military bulldozers briefly entered the Gaza Strip near Juhor al-Dik, in central Gaza, and levelled 100 metres of land. An Israeli military spokeswoman said that routine activity had been carried out in the area. (Ma'an News Agency)

During a confrontation with Palestinians in the industrial zone in Jenin, Israeli soldiers fired live ammunition at a 23-year old Palestinian. (Wafa)

According to security sources, Israel planned to step up arrests of suspected terrorists in the West Bank to prevent the simmering civil unrest in the region from escalating into a full-blown uprising. (Ynetnews)

Israeli undercover troops broke into a West Bank apartment building in a failed arrest raid, igniting a violent protest. According to officials, the incident could signal problems for future Israeli-Palestinian security coordination. (AP)

A recently-concluded study by an Israeli researcher showed that the social networking activity of Hamas during "Operation Pillar of Defense" had been more effective than that of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). (Haaretz)

Hundreds of thousands of Fatah supporters gathered in Gaza City to celebrate the 48th anniversary of the movement's founding. A delegation of senior Fatah officials arrived in Gaza for the first time in more than five years. (Ma'an News Agency)

US State Department Spokesperson Nuland said: "We've been very clear with the PA that we oppose and object to any additional moves in the UN to advance their status; that we don't think that's the way to get to a Palestinian State, that that can only happen through negotiations". She added that "Some \$450 million ... is available to go to the PA when Congress is prepared to release it. We have made clear that we think that money should go forward." (www.state.gov)

The PLO Executive Committee considered a detailed report that included concrete steps on accession to international treaties and joining other international bodies.

Hassan al-Ouri, President Abbas' legal adviser, said that the Palestinians were considering the possibility of joining several international institutions but may be limited due to the current financial crisis. (Ma'an News Agency)

According to an opinion poll, the Israeli ultra-nationalist party Jewish Home, that held three seats in the Knesset, would emerge as the third-largest party by winning 17 seats during the elections scheduled to take place towards the end of the month. The party was opposed to a Palestinian State. (Israel Radio)

Three Israeli right-wing parties, that included two that were expected to be part of the next Government, were seriously talking about annexing all or part of the occupied West Bank. (AFP)

President Abbas said: "We are doing our best to make the financial safety network pledged by the Arab countries at the Baghdad Summit a reality...Without the safety network, the situation will aggravate and get even worse." The PA faced a \$1 billion budget deficit due to the lack of foreign aid and the withholding of its tax revenues by Israel. (Xinhua, Wafa)

Ofir Gendelman, Spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, said that the Israeli Government had not yet decided on whether to transfer tax revenues to the PA during the month. (Ma'an News Agency)

While the Palestinian economy had grown at a healthy 6.1 per cent during the first three quarters of 2012, according to figures released this week by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the outlook for the coming year was plagued with uncertainty. (The Jerusalem Post)

The PLO Executive Committee issued a statement after a meeting affirming the need to ask the Security Council for a resolution against Israeli settlement construction. The Committee stressed the State of Palestine's commitment to the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (Ma'an News Agency)

A group of settlers from the "Esh Kodesh" settlement entered the Palestinian village of Jalud, hurled stones at windows and, according to security sources, attacked and seriously injured a child who had to be taken to a hospital. (The Jerusalem Post)

According to eyewitness accounts, Jewish settlers destroyed a Palestinian-owned car in the village of Qablan, south of Nablus, and sprayed anti-Palestinian graffiti in the area. (Palestine News Network)

According to Ir Amim, construction in Jerusalem neighbourhoods beyond the Green Line peaked in 2012. According to the organization, 6,932 units were approved for future construction, compared to 1,772 homes in 2011 and 569 in 2010. (Haaretz)

While Palestinian owners were barred from farming land in the Jordan Valley, settlers had been farming more than 5,000 dunums of private Palestinian land located between the border fence and the actual border with Jordan. (Haaretz)

4

Egyptian security services announced the discovery of a weapons-storage facility with advanced missiles, including anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons, that arms dealers intend to smuggle into the Gaza Strip via border tunnels. (IMEMC)

The Israeli Prime Minister's office had delayed the filing of the "E-1" settlement construction blueprints that had been approved by Minister of Defense Ehud Barak.

(Ynetnews)

Palestinian refugees fleeing the violence in Syria must pay visa fees to enter Lebanon which had been preventing some refugees from making it across the border. An UNRWA spokeswoman said that UNRWA had been advocating for the elimination of the visa fee but had been unsuccessful. "For humanitarian reasons, we are asking that Palestinian refugees coming from Syria be treated equally with Syrian refugees," who were exempt from the fee, she said. (*The Daily Star*)

Palestinian support for military operations against Israel had registered its most significant jump in 10 years, spurred by the recent Gaza conflict, ongoing Israeli settlement expansion and frustration over a peace process that had been essentially deadlocked for more than four years. According to a recent poll, the percentage of Palestinians supporting such operations had reached 50.9 per cent, up from 29.3 per cent in January 2011. (*The Christian Science Monitor*)

5

A six-year-old boy in Gaza died and three others were wounded in an explosion in Khan Yunis, Palestinian medical sources said. The cause of the explosion was unknown. (*AFP*)

According to Palestinian medical sources, a Palestinian farmer was wounded by Israeli army gunfire near the security fence, east of Beit Hanoun. A spokeswoman for the Israeli army confirmed that "cautionary shooting was executed towards a group of six suspects approaching the fence". (*AFP*)

PA Preventive Security Forces in the West Bank arrested members of a newly-established group that had declared the beginning of a third intifada. In a video posted on YouTube in December 2012, nine masked men from Hebron had declared the establishment of a group called the Brigades of National Unity, calling for a third intifada. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Fatah and Hamas representatives met in Gaza to discuss their long-stalled reconciliation process. Hamas' Abu Yousef said that the parties wanted to take advantage of the goodwill between them after Fatah held its first major political event in the Gaza Strip the previous day, and Hamas was given permission to hold West Bank rallies for its anniversary the previous month. "We must build on these meetings ... otherwise everyone will lose," he said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Central Council of the PLO was expected to meet within the next few days to discuss political developments, Qais Abdul Karim, a senior member of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), said. He said in a statement that the Central would discuss the next steps following the UN vote on Palestine's status, as well as the changes that must take place within the PA in order for it to cope with the recent developments. (*Wafa*)

Saeb Erakat, a member of the PLO Executive Committee and head of its Negotiations Department, called on the international community to prevent Israel from evicting Palestinians from their homes and lands in East Jerusalem. Mr. Erakat said that Israel planned to evict several Palestinian families from their homes in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah. He called on the international community "to intervene and stop the racist policies and the ethnic cleansing in the holy city." (*Saudi Gazette*)

Israeli soldiers intervened to break up clashes between settlers from the "Esh Kodesh" outpost and Qusra residents. Palestinian security sources and eyewitnesses said that settlers had used the cover of fog to approach the town south of Nablus to uproot dozens of olive saplings but were confronted by farmers who threw stones at them. (*AFP*)

An undercover Israeli police unit detained six Palestinian youths in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Silwan, a police spokeswoman said. She said that the teens were suspects in the hurling of stones and Molotov cocktails at a settler house in the Palestinian neighbourhood. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces raided a Negev jail and forced prisoners to stand in the prison yard in the cold weather, prisoners said. A detainee, who identified himself as Abu Samih, said that police dogs had been used in the raid and prisoners had been forced to wait outside while their cells were searched. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Pressured by the US pro-Israel lobby, the French Government had banned broadcasts of the television channel Al-Aqsa, the voice Hamas. As reported by the Iraqi news agency *Nakheel*, the programmes of Al-Aqsa would no longer be accessible through the European satellite provider Eutelsat. (*Pravda.ru*)

6

Two weeks before the Israeli parliamentary elections, Prime Minister Netanyahu said that he continued to support Palestinian statehood. Before the recognition of a demilitarized Palestinian State, however, the Palestinians must recognize Israel as a Jewish State. He said, "It cannot be that we transfer this territory or another and they continue to wage war from it," adding that the demands were not preconditions for talks to start but rather conditions for negotiations to end and culminate in a deal. (*DPA*)

PA President Abbas instructed officials to start issuing Palestinian passports, ID cards, postage stamps and license plates carrying "State of Palestine", instead of Palestinian Authority. Mr. Abbas said that the decision was an implementation of the General Assembly vote on 29 November that raised the status of Palestine to an observer State, thus recognizing Palestine as an occupied State. (*BBC, IMEMC*)

Hamas would pick a new head for its Political Department through internal elections later in the month to succeed current leader Khaled Mashaal, Hamas senior member Salah al-Bardawil said. In 2012, Mr. Mashaal, who had been in office since 1996, had announced that he would not run for a new term in line with the internal regulations of Hamas. According to well-placed sources at Hamas, however, the Shura Council, which would elect the new political chief, wants Mr. Mashaal to continue in his post. (*Xinhua*)

PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad said in an interview that the Palestinian self-rule Government was in "extreme jeopardy" due to an unprecedented financial crisis largely because Arab countries had failed to send aid that they had promised. "The status quo is not sustainable," Mr. Fayyad said, adding that the cash crunch had gradually worsened in recent years, and that the PA had reached the point of not being able to pay the salaries of some 150,000 government employees. (*AP*)

The League of Arab States announced that it would hold a meeting of Arab ministers for foreign affairs on 13 January in Cairo to discuss the Palestinian financial crisis. League Deputy Secretary-General Ahmad Ben Hilli stated that the minister will also discuss ways to aid the refugees who had fled from Syria to Lebanon and other nearby countries. (*IMEMC*)

Egypt allowed the entry of building materials into the Gaza Strip via the Rafah crossing, the second shipment of its kind since Hamas seized control of the territory in 2007. Sixty-two truckloads of gravel entered the coastal enclave, part of a shipment from Qatar that had pledged \$400 million to finance reconstruction in Gaza. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Six Palestinians were killed in Syria, including a five-year-old girl in the Sbeineh refugee camp. Yarmouk has been under total blockade by the Syrian army for four days, preventing the entry of fuel, food and medical supplies (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Jailed Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti, who was serving five life terms in Israeli prison for his role in attacks against Israel during the second intifada, called on Palestinians to launch widespread protests in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to force Hamas and Fatah to end their division. He said that the Palestinians should not wait for Egypt or any other country to achieve reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah. Mr. Barghouti added that although the recent General Assembly vote that had upgraded Palestine's status to that of a non-member observer State was a step forward, the only way to establish a Palestinian State was through actions on the ground and not in New York. (*The Jerusalem Post, Ma'an News Agency*)

7

The Israeli army arrested 13 Palestinians, three of them minors between the ages of 15 and 17, in several raids across the West Bank, Beit Ummar, Beit Fajjar, Jenin and Tubas, according to officials. (*Wafa*)

A Shin Bet report revealed that the last two months of 2012 had seen a significant rise in [Palestinian] attacks in the West Bank and Jerusalem. In December, 111 attacks had been reported, 166 in November during "Operation Pillar of Defence". By comparison, 70 attacks had occurred in October, 67 in September and only 28 in August. The incidents in December had included 98 Molotov cocktail attacks, 29 of which had taken place in Jerusalem, six bombings, three grenade attacks, two shootings and a stabbing. (*Ynetnews*)

After meeting with League of Arab States Secretary-General Nabil Elaraby in London, British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs William Hague said that they had agreed that 2013 offered new opportunities to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by negotiation. They agreed that the League and the European Union should assist the PA overcome its current financial difficulties and that Israel should fulfil its obligations to transfer revenues. (*www.gov.uk*)

US State Department Spokesperson Nuland stressed that US policy was to continue using the term "Palestinian Authority" until such time that there is a negotiated agreement for a State with borders. (*US State Department*)

The Israeli Central Command Chief, Nitzan Alon, ordered the legalization of two settlement outposts built on private Palestinian land in central West Bank, raising the number of settlements in the Shomron Regional Council to 32. The Government recognized the "Rahlim" settlement, south-east of Nablus, after two outposts were merged into one settlement. (*Palestine News Network*)

Israel's Electricity Authority was expected to renew the operating license of East Jerusalem's electricity company although it owed NIS 458 million to the financially-strapped Israel Electric Corporation. The regulator explained that it had little choice in the matter, claiming that the move was preferable to allow the company to continue operating without a license. (*Haaretz*)

PLO leaders, the Free Syria Army and Syrian regime forces were in ongoing talks to finalize an agreement to allow Palestinian refugees, who had fled the fighting in Yarmouk, to return, Anwar Abdul-Hadi, a senior PLO official in Damascus, said. PLO representatives had put forward the following demands during the negotiations: all armed groups, including Palestinian gunmen, must withdraw from the camp; food and fuel must be allowed in for residents; and the neutrality of the camp must be respected by all sides, Mr. Abdul Hadi said. He added that the PLO would not call for the return of refugees to Yarmouk while gunmen still operated inside the camp. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, Nabih Berri, urged the heads of international, Muslim, Arab, Asian, Francophone and Euro-Mediterranean parliamentary federations to act to stop Israel's repressive measures against the Palestinian people, particularly concerning the thousands of Palestinians held in Israeli jails. (*The Daily Star*)

8

The Israeli army detained four Palestinians across the West Bank. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

According to Palestinian sources, the Israeli Government had ordered the closure of the Erez crossing. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Palestinian factions in Syria called for a ceasefire after fighting flared up at the Yarmouk refugee camp in Damascus. (*The Washington Post*)

According to Palestinian sources, Israeli forces arrested four Palestinians after raiding Jenin and Bethlehem. (*Petra*)

During a meeting in Jordan, PA President Abbas told visiting US Middle East Envoy David Hale that he was willing to continue to cooperate with the US and the Obama Administration to achieve a peace agreement with Israel based on the two-State solution. (*IMEMC*)

The PA Ministry of Information said that it would start using "State of Palestine" on all its official papers, including press cards and licenses, as instructed in a Presidential decree passed on 3 January. (*Wafa*)

Rami Tahboub, the first Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait in 22 years, arrived in Kuwait and was to present his credentials to the Emir. Diplomatic representation ceased in 1990 after the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat supported the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. (*Kuwait Times*)

PLO Executive Committee member Hanan Ashrawi urged the European Union to put a quick end to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory. In a statement, Ms. Ashrawi stressed "the importance of the European role in supporting the two-State solution, in bringing about an end to the illegal occupation of Palestine, and Israel's stepped-up illegal settlement campaign before it is too late." (*Wafa*)

King Abdullah II of Jordan and visiting US Senator Rand Paul discussed developments in the Middle East including efforts to achieve Israeli-Palestinian peace. (*NAM News Network*)

President Abbas was not rushing to change the passports and ID cards of Palestinians to cross into Israel, according to officials, so as not to complicate the lives of ordinary Palestinians. (*AP*)

PA Minister of Communication Safa Nassereddin said that the first stamp carrying the name "State of Palestine" would be issued for the benefit of Palestinian diplomatic offices abroad. Given that the printing and issuing of new stamps required Israeli approval, it had been decided that the new stamps would be printed in Bahrain which would contribute to the cost. (*Wafa*)

US Deputy Secretary of State William Burns said that the Palestinians had not broken the US law requiring the closing of the PLO office in Washington, D.C. He said that the Palestinians had not "obtained in the UN or any specialized agency thereof the same standing as member States or full membership as a State outside an agreement negotiated between Israel and the Palestinians." (*JTA*)

President Abbas received the Jordanian Minister of Public Works and Housing, Yahia Kasabi, in Ramallah, to discuss cooperation. (*Petra*)

Gaza leader Haniyeh had asked Morocco, the current head of the Al-Quds Committee of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, to call a meeting to devise moves to defuse Israel's "Judaization" plans for the city. (*Fars News Agency*)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu claimed that Israel's construction and expansion of Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank, mainly in and around occupied East Jerusalem, did not pose any threat to the peace process. (*IMEMC*)

Israeli bulldozers demolished a Palestinian-owned home in Silwan, in East Jerusalem, that Israel claimed had been built without permit. (*IMEMC*)

The Jerusalem Zoning Committee had decided to move forward with the construction of 1,100 hotel rooms on Hebron Road in Jerusalem, which was located beyond the Green Line. (*Ynetnews*)

9

The European Union would remain a key supporter of the peace process and an advocate of the two-State solution, EU Special Representative to the Middle East Peace Process Andreas Reinicke said. In a phone interview with *The Jordan Times*, he said that his visit to Jordan was to discuss with officials the prospects of reviving the peace process. He called on Israel to fulfill its obligations by handing over the taxes it collected on behalf of the PA. "Unfortunately, this amount [of EU aid] cannot be increased due to the financial situation the EU is facing itself," he said. (*The Jordan Times*)

According to Egyptian and Palestinian officials, Egyptian President Mohamed Morsy met with the leaders of Hamas and Fatah in a renewed effort to help them heal their five-year-old feud. (*Reuters*)

According to local and security sources, Israeli forces arrested seven Palestinians from the West Bank cities of Hebron and Bethlehem. (*Wafa*)

Former Shin Bet Chief Yaakov Perry, who was also a Yesh Atid candidate for the next Parliamentary elections, warned that Israel faced the prospect of a new Palestinian uprising in the event that the next Israeli Government and the Palestinians failed to kick start a new peace initiative. Palestinian Islamists were becoming increasingly frustrated with the gridlock in peacemaking. (*Haaretz*)

Jordan's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nasser Judeh, met with European Envoy to the Middle East Peace Process Reinicke to discuss efforts to revive direct peace negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis with the aim of achieving the two-State solution. (*Petra*)

President Abbas and Hamas leader Mashaal had reportedly agreed, in a meeting in Cairo, to implement the Egyptian-brokered unity deal. Yasser Ali, a spokesman for Egyptian President Morsy, said that details of the agreement would be disclosed in a statement to be subsequently issued by President Morsy's office. (*DPA, Ynetnews*)

Israel had quietly "legalized" the unauthorized settlement outpost of "Nofei Nehemia", south of Nablus, the Peace Now settlement watchdog said. Peace Now's Hagit Ofran said that the outpost, established after March 2001, was to have been removed by Israel as outlined in the road map. A military order officially included it within the boundaries of another nearby outpost called "Rechelim" which was retroactively legalized by the Government in April 2012, Mr. Ofran said. (www.reliefweb.int)

The Palestinian Civil Defense reported that the storm currently engulfing Palestine and nearby countries had caused several casualties and excessive destruction of property. At least four Palestinians were killed after they were swept away by the resulting flooding. (*IMEMC*)

10

Israeli soldiers detained three Palestinians from the villages of Al-Yamoun and Jaba near Jenin. (*IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency*)

Six Israeli military vehicles, including two bulldozers, crossed into northern Gaza, 200 metres inside Beit Lahia agricultural land, leveling an area. An Israeli military spokeswoman said that the incident had been "routine activity". (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces blocked the entrance to the southern West Bank town of Beit Ummar, preventing an ambulance from leaving. The ambulance had been taking a woman in labour and another patient to a hospital in Hebron. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli President Peres warned that the Palestinians could launch a new uprising if Israel did not do more to try to reach a peace accord, stepping up his criticism of Prime Minister Netanyahu. (*AP, Ynetnews*)

Dozens of extremist Israeli settlers from the "Yizhar" settlement attacked a number of Palestinians playing with snow in Orif village, south of Nablus. At least one resident was injured. In the nearby village of Qasra, settlers from the "Esh Kodesh" outpost fired on Palestinians, injuring one. (*IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency*)

Prime Minister Netanyahu said that President Abbas' latest reconciliation talks with Hamas leader Mashaal "gave an embrace to the head of a terror organization who

only a month ago stated that Israel should be wiped from the map. That is not the behaviour of somebody seeking peace.” He said: “We know that any territory we evacuate will be taken over by Hamas and Iran. We won’t let that happen.” (AFP, *The Jerusalem Post*)

Jordanian Minister for Foreign Affairs Judeh met with UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Robert Serry and discussed efforts to realize peace in the region. Mr. Judeh highlighted the need to advance peace and relaunch direct negotiations leading to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State based on the 1967 borders. He also stressed the role of the Quartet in pushing peace efforts forward. (Petra News Agency)

Hamas leader Mashaal met with Secretary-General of the League of Arab States Elaraby in Cairo and discussed Palestinian national reconciliation. Hamas Political Department member Izzat al-Rishq said that Hamas and Fatah “agreed to call on all Palestinian factions to implement the reconciliation agreement”. Fatah and Hamas officials were to meet to discuss further developments, Mr. Al-Rishq added. (AFP, *Ma'an News Agency*)

President Abbas said that he rejected a conditional Israeli offer to allow Palestinian refugees from war-torn Syria to resettle in the West Bank and Gaza since Israel had linked the offer to the condition that refugees relinquish their right of return to what was now Israel. (AP)

In an interview with the London-based daily *Al-Hayat*, Prime Minister of Jordan Abdullah Ensour said that Jordan would not allow Palestinian refugees fleeing Syria to enter the Kingdom adding that “There are those who want to absolve Israel once again of its responsibility for banishing Palestinians from their homes.” (The Times of Israel)

Gaza's Minister of Housing Yousef Subhi Al-Ghariz said that the United Arab Emirates had donated \$50 million to build a housing project for Palestinians released from Israeli jails. (Ma'an News Agency)

The President of the United Arab Emirates, Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, ordered emergency humanitarian assistance for Palestinians whose houses and properties had been destroyed by floods in the last few days. (www.reliefweb.int)

Settlers in the northern West Bank opened fire and wounded two Palestinians in separate incidents, Palestinian security forces said. The Israeli military confirmed "clashes" between Palestinians and Israeli settlers in two locations, but said that they had no information on settler gunfire or Palestinian casualties. (AFP)

11

A 22-year-old Palestinian man was killed and another wounded by IDF fire in the northern Gaza Strip, east of Jabalya. According to an IDF official, soldiers had fired warning shots at the legs of a Palestinian attempting to cut the fence. Medical sources said that the dead man had been shot in the chest. (Ynetnews)

Three days of intense rainfall had caused the flooding and collapse of many of the tunnels under Gaza's border with Egypt, Egyptian security officials said. Two workers were trapped in a tunnel as a result of collapsed underground passages, PA Civil Defence Force crews reported. (Ma'an News Agency)

Palestinian settlement monitoring official Ghassan Daghlis reported that settlers from the “Esh Kodesh” outpost raided the village of Qusra and uprooted at least 210 olive trees. (Ma'an News Agency)

PA President Abbas said that the PA will act on the international level to stop Israel's illegal settlement construction and expansion activities, adding that there were 63 UN organizations that the Palestinians can now join. (MEMC)

A group of Palestinians installed tents near the Az-Zayyim village in the “E-1” corridor between occupied East Jerusalem and the “Ma'ale Adumim” settlement where Israel had planned new settlement construction. Calling it Bab Ash-Shams Palestinian village, the organizers said that the encampment was an act of non-violent resistance and that they would not leave until the “Palestinian owners of this land are allowed to realize their right to it.” Israeli police blocked off the area. (Haaretz, MEMC, Reuters, The Jerusalem Post, Ynetnews)

In its new report on Israel's policy of administrative detention, the Arab Organization for Human Rights in the UK gave details on the practice and called for international actions against such policy. (Middle East Monitor)

12

Israeli troops shot dead a Palestinian who had been trying to cross the separation wall to enter Israel from the West Bank. The victim's family said that he was trying to cross into Israel to find work. (Reuters)

The DFLLP said that Egypt had agreed to host the PLO for reconciliation talks scheduled for the beginning of February. (Ma'an News Agency)

An Egyptian delegation from the Ministry of Youth and Sports headed by Minister Farouk Al-Amiri arrived in Gaza for a meeting to support bilateral sports ties between Gaza and Egypt. (Ma'an News Agency)

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said at a Holocaust memorial: “I worry about the continued stalemate in negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. We now have a whole generation of young people on both sides who risk growing up with a demonized, dehumanized – and utterly false – concept of their neighbours. ... The only way to build peace is to build bridges and break down walls.” (UN News Centre)

13

Yediot Ahronot had quoted Israeli officials as saying that the EU had been working on a detailed plan meant to restart Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and establish an independent Palestinian State based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. The plan would set a clear timetable for a discussion on all core issues over the course of 2013 and would likely be presented in March after a new Israeli Government had been formed. (Ynetnews)

League of Arab States ministers for foreign affairs had agreed to form a delegation to press member States to fulfil their financial obligations to the Palestinians.

The delegation would be composed of PA Prime Minister Fayyad, League Secretary-General Elaraby and the Iraqi and Lebanese Ministers. (Ma'an News Agency)

Palestinian medical sources in Rafah said that a Palestinian had been killed and three others injured when a tunnel on the border with Egypt collapsed. (MEMC)

Peace Now reported that the Israeli Ministry of Defense had published plans for 170 new housing units and another 84 guest rooms in the “Rotem” settlement in the Jordan Valley. (AFP)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu pledged to move ahead with construction of a new settlement in the “E-1” area, speaking just hours after Israeli forces had dragged away dozens of Palestinian activists who had pitched tents at the site. Mustafa Barghouti, one of the protest leaders, claimed success, saying that their overall strategy was to “make occupation costly”. (AP)

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A farmer was killed in the Gaza Strip in the town of Beit Lahia. An Israeli military spokeswoman said: “Apparently, the incident is not related to the Israeli army.” (Reuters)

Israeli forces detained two leaders of Hamas in al-Bireh, including the former mayor of the city, locals said. (worldbulletin.net; Ma'an News Agency)

An IDF spokesman said that Israeli forces had uncovered a tunnel leading from Gaza into Israel. He said that the tunnel was a grave attempt to carry out a terrorist attack against Israeli civilians and security forces. (The Jerusalem Post)

Israeli forces arrested nine Palestinians in the West Bank overnight. (MEMC)

Several Israeli military vehicles crossed the border with the Gaza Strip, east of Khan Yunis. An Israeli military spokesman said that the troops had conducted a “routine activity”. (Ma'an News Agency)

In a Channel 2 interview, Prime Minister Netanyahu said, “Today, there is no peace process because Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas won't agree to talk without preconditions.” He also said that he would make peace when he had someone before him who “does not embrace Hamas”. (The Jerusalem Post)

According to a statement from the Jordanian Royal Palace, King Abdullah told a visiting delegation from the American Israel Public Affairs Committee that regional changes should drive the Israeli Government to embrace peace. He called on Israel to stop settlement construction and urged Israel, the Palestinians and the US to resume peacemaking efforts, calling for direct talks based on a two-State solution. (AP)

Israeli forces demolished two residential sheds housing 12 family members, an animal barn and two shacks used for agricultural purposes in Hebron. (WAFA)

Azzam Al-Ahmad, a Fatah Central Committee member, said that representatives of Fatah and Hamas would meet in Cairo on 16 January to discuss means to implement the reconciliation agreement. (MEMC)

The Prime Minister of Tunisia, Hamnadi Jebali, met in Gammarth, Tunisia, with President Abbas. Mr. Jebali told the press that “Tunisia will spare no effort at the level of the League of Arab States to encourage Arab leaders to lend financial support to their Palestinian brothers.” (albawaba.com)

Egyptian authorities resumed the shipment of Qatari fuel into the Gaza Strip via the Israeli-controlled al-Auja crossing after unrest had blocked the delivery route for over two months, a Palestinian official said. (Ma'an News Agency)

In response to Prime Minister Netanyahu's announcement that Israel was moving ahead with settlement construction in the “E-1” corridor, Tommy Victor, a

spokesman for the US National Security Council said: "We believe these actions are counterproductive and make it harder to resume direct negotiations or achieve a two-State solution." President Obama had reportedly told several people that this sort of behaviour on Mr. Netanyahu's part was what he had come to expect and had become inured to what he saw as self-defeating policies moving Israel toward near-total isolation. (*Bloomberg.com*)

Former Israeli Minister for Foreign Affairs Avigdor Liberman, of the Yisrael Beiteinu party, visited settlers in and around Hebron. "This visit is a provocation [against] Palestinian feelings," PA Spokeswoman Nour Odeh said. (*Yahoo News*)

The UN Secretary-General was following with concern developments regarding the announced plans for the "E-1" area, and repeated his call that any such settlement plans should be rescinded, a [statement](#) said. He stressed the importance for protests to continue to remain peaceful and for the right to peaceful protest to be respected. (*UN press release SG/SM/14760*)

The [EU](#) must ban produce from Israeli settlements in the West Bank from entering its markets in order to cut off "a vital source of revenue which allows settlements to thrive", the Palestinian human rights organization Al Haq [reported](#). (*The Guardian*)

Israel was advancing a plan to invest in places it considered part of its national heritage, including nine West Bank sites, the Government said. Israeli Cabinet Secretary Tzvi Hauser said that Israel was to add handicapped access to the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron. Other plans would include the renovation of the West Bank site of Tel Shilo and possibly building a replica of the tomb of King Herod on a hilltop near Bethlehem. PA Spokeswoman Odeh called on the international community to condemn the Israeli announcement. (*AP*)

15

A 17-year-old Palestinian was shot dead by Israeli troops near Budrus, in the West Bank, not far from the separation wall, according to Palestinian medical and security sources. An Israeli military spokeswoman said that several Palestinians had approached the wall and attempted to infiltrate into Israel. (*AFP, Reuters*)

Israeli forces arrested three Palestinian workers at a military checkpoint south of Hebron. (*Palestine News Network*)

Israeli forces arrested five Palestinians during a raid in Jenin. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Egyptian authorities said that Saudi Arabia would send six plane loads of medical aid to the Gaza Strip via Egypt. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Radio Bethlehem 2000 reported that Israeli soldiers invaded the Aida refugee camp, north of Bethlehem. They broke into and searched several homes after forcing the residents out. (*IMEMC*)

A group of settlers attacked Palestinian farmers in the town of Tuqu, East of Bethlehem. The Mayor of Tuqu said that farmers found a mobile home and several animal barns on their land erected by settlers who, protected by soldiers, attacked them, which led to confrontations. Israeli forces fired tear gas and acoustic bombs at the farmers causing several injuries. (*Wafa*)

Jerusalem municipal workers demolished, without any prior notice, a Palestinian house in Beit Hanina in East Jerusalem, on the grounds that it had been built without permit, the owner said. (*Wafa*)

A spokesman for the Human Rights Council told reporters at the United Nations Office in Geneva that Israel had asked for the Universal Periodic Review of its human rights record, scheduled for 29 January, to be postponed without giving any reason. (www.unog.ch)

The European Union had [decided](#) to bring forward the first part of its 2013 assistance package for the Palestinian people to the beginning of the year. The amount of €60 million will be allocated to the European mechanism for support to Palestinians (PEGASE) and will contribute to the payments of PA salaries and pensions for the first three months of 2013. The decision also allocated an initial amount of €40 million to UNRWA's 2013 regular budget. (*Europa.eu*)

16

Israeli soldiers fired several artillery shells into the central Gaza Strip. No injuries were reported. (*IMEMC*)

Some 50 Palestinians rioted near Rachel's Tomb [in northern Bethlehem](#), hurling stones, Molotov cocktails and pipe bombs at Israeli security forces. One soldier sustained mild injuries. (*Ynetnews*)

In a statement, the Islamic Jihad said that Israel detained several of its members who had been organizing solidarity events for prisoners on hunger strike in overnight raids in the West Bank. An Israeli military spokesman said that six Palestinians had been detained in overnight raids in the West Bank. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

An IDF probe had concluded that Israeli soldiers had fired 80 bullets without justification in November 2012, killing a 31-year-old Palestinian during clashes in the West Bank village of Nabi Saleh. (*Haaretz*)

A 42-year-old Palestinian man was found dead inside a tunnel on the Gaza-Egypt border that had collapsed on 13 January. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

France will introduce a new initiative to jump start Middle East peace talks, French President François Hollande reportedly told *Israel Radio*. The French Ambassador to Israel, Christophe Bigot, told *Israel Radio* that his Government considered it urgent to have the Palestinians and Israelis renew negotiations. He stressed the need for a concerted effort involving all parties, including the United States, the European Union, Egypt and Jordan. (<http://www.israelhayom.com>)

PA Minister of Finance Nabil Qassis said that Saudi Arabia had pledged \$100 million to the PA to ease the Government's financial crisis. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

PA employees, including public school teachers, began a two-day strike to protest the Government's failure to pay the balance of their salaries for November and their salaries for the month of December. (*Wafa*)

The Israeli Ministry of Housing released two tenders for the construction of 198 new settlement homes: 114 in "Efrata", near Bethlehem, and 84 in "Kiryat Arba", adjacent to Hebron. (*DPA, Ynetnews*)

In a statement issued by its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the French Government condemned the issuance by the Israeli Government of invitations to tender for the construction of 198 new homes in the settlements of "Kiryat Arba" and "Efrat" in the southern West Bank. It was especially concerned about the impact of the two projects on the territorial contiguity of a future Palestinian State. It called on the Israeli Government to reverse its provocative and illegal decision. (<http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr>)

Witnesses said that Israeli soldiers had prevented villagers from Fureidis, near Bethlehem, from reaching their land while soldiers trained settlers in the use of automatic weapons. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli settlers began razing land to expand the "Maskiyot" settlement, in the northern part of the Jordan Valley and "Elon Moreh," north-east of Nablus. (*Wafa*)

In a new [report](#), Peace Now said that the current Israeli Government's settlement policies and actions showed a clear intention to render impossible a viable two-State solution. Under the Netanyahu Government, construction started on 6,867 new settlement units, 38.2 per cent of which were in isolated settlements located east of the separation barrier, as opposed to in "settlement blocks," while only 20 per cent of the previous years' construction took place east of the barrier. (*AP, www.peacenow.org.il*)

A West Bank settler, who was an American immigrant, had been convicted of killing two Palestinians – a taxi driver in Jerusalem and a shepherd in Hebron – while visiting the area as a tourist in 1997. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Police and Israel Land Administration personnel dismantled the Palestinian protest camp named Bab al-Shams village in the "E-1" area. Ahead of the move, the PA decided to create a new village council called Bab al-Shams which would be part of the Jerusalem district of the PA. (*The Jerusalem Post, DPA*)

A petition had been submitted to the Israeli High Court of Justice against the expulsion of Palestinian residents from an area in the southern Hebron Hills in the West Bank that had been declared an army live-fire zone. Israeli Minister of Defense Barak had decided in July 2012 that 8 of 12 Palestinian villages in the area had to be evicted. According to the legal opinion attached to the petition, the Palestinians could bring the case to the International Criminal Court if Israel followed through

with the eviction. (*Haaretz*)

During a hearing at the Israeli High Court of Justice over the eviction of Palestinians from the Bab al-Shams village, the State Attorney of Israel claimed that senior PA officials had been involved in the creation of Bab al-Shams in an attempt to create serious public disturbance. (*Haaretz*)

According to media reports, Egypt was exerting diplomatic pressure on Israel to resolve the crisis of Palestinian prisoners on hunger strike. (*DPA*)

17

The Chairman of the Permanent Commission for International Affairs of the House of Representatives of Belarus, Nikolai Samoseiko, met with the Ambassador of Palestine to Belarus, Khalid Arikat. Mr. Samoseiko congratulated Palestine on receiving observer status in the UN. He said that Belarus was in favour of peaceful coexistence by the Israeli and Palestinian peoples and it hoped that a mutually acceptable solution would be found. Belarus advocated a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict via negotiations. (www.news.belta.by)

President Abbas and Hamas leader Mashaal had agreed to revive their long-stalled reconciliation accord by the end of the month, Azzam Al-Ahmad, the head of Fatah's delegation to talks in Cairo said. "We are in agreement on the mechanisms and timetable to end the division, the most important being the resumption of operations by the Central Election Commission in the Gaza Strip on the 30th of the month at the latest, and afterwards, in the West Bank," he said. He added that there would also be a renewal of talks on forming a non-partisan transitional Government ahead of elections. Mr. Al-Ahmad said that both sides also agreed to a session on 9 February of the PLO, charged with bringing non-members Hamas and Islamic Jihad into the organization. (www.middle-east-online.com)

An Israeli committee had advanced a controversial plan to build a military college on the Mount of Olives in East Jerusalem, the Israeli non-governmental group Ir Anim said. The local committee had reportedly approved the plan and a decision would be taken by the district committee. Israel's Ministry of Interior had already approved construction of the military academy which would reportedly cover 42,000 square metres. (www.naharnet.com) Israeli forces demolished some 70 structures, including residential sheds and animal barns that belonged to 12 Palestinian families, in Wadi el-Maleh, north of the Jordan Valley. (*Wafa*)

Palestinian detainees held at the Eshil prison in Israel declared to go on hunger strike to protest the transfer of 27 detainees into solitary confinement. The detainees said that the army had escalated its attacks against them and that the prison administration had decided to deny family visits for a month. (*IMEMC*)

According to a Hamas official, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan had telephoned both PA President Abbas and Hamas Chief Mashaal. During the calls to the two Palestinian leaders, Mr. Erdoğan had promised to support the upcoming Palestinian unity Government financially and politically, and had urged them to end their political division. (*Xinhua*)

PA Prime Minister Fayyad said that there were "signs" that the difficult financial situation would be solved during the following month, after Saudi Arabia's donation of \$100 million. The Government announced that it would pay public sector workers partial December salaries the following Sunday. Civil servants have been striking over continued salary delays. Minister of Finance Qassis had announced Saudi Arabia's pledge to the PA and that salaries would be paid as soon as the funds were received. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Twelve Palestinian refugees, including four women and six female children, were killed and more than 20 were injured in an air strike on southern Damascus, according to local media. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

UNRWA announced that it would provide thousands of temporary jobs to Gaza refugees following a European Commission donation of €14 million over three years to its Job Creation Programme. (*Wafa*)

18

A 15-year-old Palestinian was shot by Israeli soldiers following confrontation between soldiers and youths at the Aida refugee camp near Bethlehem. The young man was taken to Hadassah University Hospital in Ein Karem. (*Haaretz*)

Israeli forces detained nine Palestinians from the Bethlehem-area town of Beit Fajar after raiding their homes, locals said. An Israeli military spokeswoman said that two Palestinians had been detained overnight near Ramallah and she was checking reports of detentions near Bethlehem. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

British Foreign Secretary Hague, Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Bob Carr, British Secretary of State for Defence Philip Hammond and Australian Minister for Defence Stephen Smith issued a communiqué after the annual Australia/UK Ministerial (AUKMIN) meeting in Perth, Australia. The communiqué stated that the Palestinians and Israelis need to sit down for "negotiations without preconditions". Mr. Carr told reporters that "only the United States has the capacity and the authority and the influence that will bring this to fruition". (www.news.com.au)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said that no settlements in the West Bank would be removed during his next term in office if he won the elections on 22 January. He told *Ma'ariv* newspaper: "The days when bulldozers uprooted Jews are behind us, not in front of us." (*BBC*)

A [report](http://www.peacenow.org) issued this week by the Israeli settlements watchdog group Peace Now said that tenders and approvals for construction in East Jerusalem had reached record levels under Mr. Netanyahu's Government. (www.peacenow.org)

Dozens of Palestinian residents, accompanied by Israeli activists, arrived in the "Metzpeh Yair" settlement area in the southern Hebron Hills. Israeli soldiers, who immediately declared the area a closed military zone, pushed the activists off the land and in the process arrested 10 Palestinians and 5 Israeli activists. (*Scoop World Independent News, Wafa*)

UNRWA [condemned](http://www.unrwa.org) the killing of Palestinian refugees following a day of intense armed engagements in the Husseiniyeh camp in southern Damascus, and called again on the parties to pull back from civilian areas, including refugee camps. UNRWA Spokesman Chris Gunness said that "The Yarmouk experience is being repeated in other parts of Greater Damascus and that is putting the refugee community at ever greater risk." (www.unrwa.org)

According to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Fayege Abdul-Halim Sanbour, aged 32, from Nablus, had been released from Israeli custody after spending nine and a half years in Israeli jails. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

19

Israeli soldiers imposed a strict siege on the northern plains area of the West Bank and installed several roadblocks on the area's main roads. (*Ma'an News Agency*) Palestinian medical sources reported that a Palestinian teenager was killed when a siege-busting tunnel in Rafah collapsed on him. Two Palestinian were still missing under the rubble. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

According to PA officials, Palestinian and Israeli officials have reached an agreement to facilitate the entry of Palestinian olive oil into Israel without obstacles. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

PA President Abbas arrived in Saudi Arabia to attend the third Arab Economic, Social and Developmental Summit. At the summit, Arab leaders were expected to discuss economic and social issues in their countries, including railway land linkage, increase of investment, trade and aviation. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Israeli forces prevented a Palestinian humanitarian aid convoy from reaching Palestinian Bedouins in the Jordan Valley who had been severely affected by a storm that had hit the region the previous week. (*Press TV*)

According to Aref Daraghme, the head of the Al-Maleh Village Council, Israeli forces destroyed tents that shepherds had built for shelter in the Wadi el-Maleh area, north of the Jordan Valley. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

According to local sources, Jewish settlers from the "Sdaa Boaz" settlement uprooted some 20 olive trees belonging to Palestinians in the town of al-Khader, south of Bethlehem. (*Wafa*)

20

According to an Egyptian security official, Egyptian authorities seized a record 1 ton of explosives bound for the Gaza Strip. (*Haaretz*)

Palestinian security forces shot and injured three Palestinian youths during a riot that had broken out in the al-Amfari refugee camp in Ramallah. (*Ynetnews*) According to Israel Radio, Palestinians tossed a Molotov cocktail at an IDF post near Beit Omar between "Gush Etzion" and Hebron. No one was injured in the incident. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

According to the PA Minister for Foreign Affairs, Riad Malki, the Iraqi Government had pledged to contribute to the "Arab safety net" through monthly donations to the indebted Palestinian Authority. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The League of Arab States called on Palestinians in Israel to vote in Tuesday's Israeli parliamentary election, as Israel's political system seemed set to shift further to the right. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Osama Hamdan, the unofficial Minister for Foreign Affairs of Hamas, who was based in Lebanon, arrived for his first visit in the Gaza Strip where he will stay for several days. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

During a meeting with US Senators John McCain (R-AZ), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Kelly Ayotte (R-NH), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and Christopher Coons (D-DE), Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu stated that "Building in Jerusalem is not the world's problem; a nuclear Iran is the world's problem". (*Israel Hayom*)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu had vowed to rebuff international demands to allow a Palestinian State with a border based on the pre-1967 Green Line and its capital in East Jerusalem, as hard-line pro-settler parties and factions were expected to make unprecedented gains in elections scheduled for 21 January. (*The Guardian*)

Hamas Government in Gaza said that it would give small grants, up to the amount of \$10,000, to citizen-led projects in the coastal enclave. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Nine Palestinians from East Jerusalem were arrested in connection with a violent snowball attack against two Haredi Orthodox men. (*The Global News Service of the Jewish People*)

According to activists, dozens of people were slightly injured as Israeli forces raided a newly erected Palestinian protest village on the north-western outskirts of Jerusalem. (*Aljazeera, Ma'an News Agency*)

21

Israeli forces shot and injured a Palestinian worker near the Erez crossing in northern Gaza. (*Ma'an News Agency, Ynetnews*)

Israeli forces arrested five people after raiding their houses in Borga, near Nablus, in Jenin and near Hebron, locals said. (*Ma'an News Agency IMEMC*)

Israeli forces removed Palestinian protest tents from land adjoining a Jewish settlement in the West Bank, the second such camp to be torn down in a week. (*Reuters*)

At the third Arab Economic, Social and Developmental Summit in Saudi Arabia, PA President Abbas called on Arab States to provide funds to implement a strategic plan that had been agreed upon at previous Arab summits to support Jerusalem. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

President Abbas met Jordanian King Abdullah II on the margin of the Arab summit in Riyadh and discussed reconciliation efforts between Fatah and Hamas and the economic situation in the territories. The meeting also tackled ways to promote pan-Arab action and solidarity. (www.petra.gov.jo)

President Abbas met with Yemeni President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour in Riyadh. The Yemeni President praised the Palestinian President's political efforts that led to the UN recognition of Palestine as a non-Member observer State, stressing Yemen's firm and strong support for the Palestinian legitimate cause. (www.sabanews.net)

Hamas and Fatah will form a tripartite committee with Egypt to implement national reconciliation, Fatah leader Azzam al-Ahmad said. Hamas and Fatah had agreed to form a Government of technocrats and independents that will govern for six months to oversee national elections. An Egyptian delegation will visit the West Bank and Gaza to follow up on reconciliation after a PLO leadership meeting on 9 February, Mr. al-Ahmad said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

PA Minister of Finance Qassis said that the PA had been able to pay its 147,000 civil and military employees partial salaries after Saudi Arabia had channelled \$100 million to the Palestinian treasury. (*Saudi Gazette*)

The PA had taken steps to stop Israel's move to recruit 'collaborators'. (*Gulf News Agency*)

Israeli Defense Minister Barak ordered the closure of the breach in the barrier between Jerusalem and the "Ma'aleh Adumim" settlement, thereby positioning the fence between the Palestinian village of Al-Zaim and the contested "E-1" area. By changing the route of the separation fence near Jerusalem, the Israeli Government would effectively cut off the village by a fence to the east and by a wall to the west. (*Haaretz*)

The Palestinian Higher Sharia Judicial Council had demanded that candidates running for the Israeli general elections should not use the Al Aqsa Compound [Al Haram Al Sharif] in East Jerusalem to try to make electoral gains. (*GulfNews.com*)

A group calling itself "the European initiative to remove the fence and the settlements" launched a new media campaign in Europe entitled "Palestine without a fence and with no settlements, and called for a 'Palestinian Spring'". (*Israelnationalnews.com*)

A prisoner released in November after six years in an Israeli jail had died from health complications, the Palestinian Prisoners' Society said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's [message](#) to the Third Arab Economic and Social Development Summit in Riyadh stressed that the stalemate in the peace process was especially troubling. He confirmed the UN commitment to work with all international partners, in particular the Arab League and its Follow-up Committee, and with the parties themselves. He concluded by saying that he counted on the generous support of Arab donors to deliver the financial "safety net" promised the PA the previous month. (www.un.org)

22

Several dozen Palestinians in the Nabi Saleh area hurled stones at Israeli security forces using "crowd dispersal measures". (*The Jerusalem Post*)

British Foreign Secretary Hague, speaking before the Parliament, said: "I hope that whatever Israeli Government emerges [following today's elections], will recognize that we are approaching the last chance to bring about [a two-State] solution." Mr. Hague said: "I speak regularly to Israeli leaders stressing our profound concern that Israel's settlement policy is losing the support of the international community and will make a two-State solution impossible." (*Reuters*)

Malaysian Prime Minister Mohd Najib bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak pledged solidarity with the Palestinians on his first trip to Gaza where he was met by Hamas leader Haniyeh and backed reconciliation efforts between Hamas and Fatah. Speaking at a press conference in Rafah with Foreign Minister Anifah Aman and other officials shortly after his arrival, Mr. Najib said: "We may come from thousands of miles away ... but we are one Umma (Muslim nation) and we believe in the struggle of the Palestinian people." (www.asiaone.com)

The Deputy Head of Hamas' Political Bureau, Moussa Abu Marzouq, said: "We have agreed on the next Government, headed by President Abbas, but the process of its formation and the selection of its members will be discussed further." (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Settlers accompanied by Israeli troops began work expanding the "Halamish" settlement in the central West Bank and set up 50 mobile homes on land belonging to the Nabi Saleh village, near Ramallah, witnesses said. Nabi Saleh was a centre of popular resistance in the West Bank against the confiscation of its land and the takeover of its natural spring. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Settlers opened a new road through Palestinian-owned land, destroying some 50 newly planted olive trees, in the town of al-Khadr, south of Bethlehem, according to a local activist. (*Wafa*)

Israeli forces arrested a Palestinian inside the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem and then transferred him to an interrogation centre. Eyewitnesses also said that Israeli authorities allowed 100 Israeli settlers to enter the Mosque under the programme entitled "foreign tourism to Al-Aqsa". (*Palestine News Network*)

The Israeli Prime Minister's office had denied President Abbas' statement that Israel had agreed to allow 150,000 Palestine refugees to enter the West Bank from Syria. (*Ynetnews*)

Palestine refugees who had fled Syria to neighbouring Lebanon were living in "horrible" conditions, UNRWA Commissioner-General Filippo Grandi said after touring

the Shatila camp in Beirut. "The donor community must help Lebanon bear the immense burden of this huge refugee problem," Mr. Grandi said. "I would like to appeal to [Jordan] to exercise all humanitarian considerations when Palestinian refugees ask to be admitted to Jordanian territory from Syria," he added. (*Reuters*) Malaysia will donate \$800,000 to fund two health care projects in the Gaza Strip, the Malaysian Prime Minister's wife announced during the couple's visit to Gaza. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The incidence of psychological trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder in the Gaza Strip had risen by more than 100 per cent following the most recent conflict, according to [new figures](#) from UNRWA. (www.unrwa.org) Farmers in the village of Sebastiya near Nablus said that their fields had become a dump for waste-water from the nearby Israeli settlement "Shave Shomron". (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In his address to the General Assembly on 2013 priorities, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said: "As illegal settlement activity continues and Israelis and Palestinians remain polarized, five key priorities stand out: first, we must renew collective international engagement; second, we must resume meaningful negotiations; third, we must preserve stability in Gaza; fourth, we must make progress on Palestinian reconciliation, and fifth, we must prevent the financial collapse of the Palestinian Authority." (www.un.org)

23

Dozens of Palestinian workers heading to jobs in [Israel] suffered suffocation after Israeli forces fired tear gas toward them at the al-Taybeh crossing, southwest of Tulkarm. (*Palestine News Network*)

An IDF soldier shot two Palestinian women north of Hebron, killing one and lightly wounding the other. The IDF said that the troops had come under a fire bomb attack. (*Haaretz*)

Israeli forces detained three Palestinians after they raided and ransacked their houses in Hebron, locals said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A Palestinian teenager, who had been shot by Israeli forces during clashes in Bethlehem the previous week, had died, the boy's family said. (*Ma'an News Agency*) A Palestinian forces arrested Palestinian human rights defender and youth organizer, Hassan Karajeh, in Saffa village near Ramallah, according to his lawyer. (*Palestine News Network*)

Hundreds of Jewish worshipers escorted by Israeli soldiers visited Joseph's tomb in Nablus. Clashes erupted as local youths threw stones at Israeli soldiers, who fired tear gas and stun grenades. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

With 99.8 per cent of votes tallied in the Israeli elections, the right- and centre-left blocs were tied with 60 Knesset seats each. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Presidential Spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeineh said that the Palestinians "will deal with any Israeli Government that abides by the UN General Assembly resolution that calls for the establishment of a Palestinian State based on the 1967 borders with Jerusalem as its capital." (*Wafa*)

Head of the PLO Negotiations Affairs Department Erakat said that the new Israeli Government must save the two-State solution if it sought peace. He added that the implementation of the two-State solution would be after the Israeli Government agreed to cease settlement construction and release all Palestinian prisoners.

(*Palestine News Network*)

While congratulating Prime Minister Netanyahu on the election results, German Minister for Foreign Affairs Guido Westerwelle stressed: "We are convinced that first and foremost, the Middle East peace process must be promoted through negotiations with the Palestinians. We will support measures which will bring us closer to the goal – a two-State agreement." (*Ynetnews*)

During the monthly Security Council meeting, PA Minister for Foreign Affairs Malki expressed his Government's frustration with the expansion of Israeli settlements, and told reporters after the meeting that if Israel built in the "E-1" area that crossed "red lines", the Palestinians would take the matter to the International Criminal Court. (www.un.org, www.voanews.com, *Reuters*)

Hamas official Salah al-Bardawil said that the leadership in Gaza would invite the Central Elections Commission to resume work in Gaza "soon". (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Hamas Spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said that the results of the Israeli Knesset elections showed a victory for the "Palestinian resistance" after the week-long attack on the Gaza Strip in November. (english.ahram.org)

The PA's financial crisis was structural, Minister of Finance Qassis said, adding that the deficit had exceeded \$1.4 billion. "A structural solution is needed," he said.

He called for greater cooperation between his Ministry and the Palestinian Legislative Council to find solutions and minimize expenses, and noted that the 2013 budget had not yet been completed because of the "foggy" financial situation caused by the current crisis. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Democratic Palestinian Youth Union called for the establishment of a fee-free university for Palestinians in Lebanon to be run by UNRWA and the PLO.

"Palestinian refugees in Lebanon cannot afford the high cost of Lebanese universities," the petition sent to UNRWA Commissioner-General Grandi, who was on a visit to Lebanon, stated. (*The Daily Star*)

Eight teenagers from Beit Ummar have spent almost a year in Israeli jails, accused of hurling stones at settlers' vehicles. One of them, a 14-year-old, had recently been released and placed under house arrest after his family paid a \$1,340 fine. The families had sought assistance from the PA but had been told that the PA did not pay fines and was facing a financial crisis. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In his [briefing](#) to the Security Council, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry, noted that the peace process was entering a critical period that required "courageous" steps by Israelis and Palestinians. "No international effort alone is sufficient for progress absent the requisite will from the parties themselves," he noted. He reported a "dramatic" increase in Israeli settlement announcements after the General Assembly had accorded Palestine non-member observer State status. He urged both sides "to abstain from actions that will make efforts to resume meaningful negotiations even harder" and called on Israel to restore transfers of revenues "without further delay." He added that, ultimately, there was no future for the PA without a two-State solution. (www.un.org)

The Permanent Representative of the United States to the UN, Susan Rice, objected to the use of the nameplate in the Security Council that read "State of Palestine".

She said that any reference to the State of Palestine in the UN, on the placard in the Council, in the invitations or other arrangements for participation in the meeting, did not reflect acquiescence that Palestine was a State. The meeting was attended by PA Minister for Foreign Affairs Malki, who addressed the meeting.

(*AP, Division for Palestinian Rights*)

24

Israeli soldiers invaded several districts in the West Bank, broke into and searched homes, installed roadblocks, and interrogated and detained several residents.

Soldiers also invaded an area east of Khan Yunis, in the Gaza Strip. (*IMEMC*)

US Senator John Kerry, at his confirmation hearing for the post of the US Secretary of State, said that he hoped for a revival of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. (*Reuters*)

Israeli Defense Minister Barak said that Israel should overcome its concerns and find a way to withdraw from the West Bank in order to avoid becoming inseparable from it in a single State that would ultimately have an Arab majority. (*AP*)

PLO official Yasser Abed Rabbo said that the recent Israeli elections "constitute a new chance for the Israelis to express themselves", adding that "we extend a political invitation to Israeli parties, particularly the new ones among them, to open a dialogue before the formation of a new government". (*AFP*)

Sources close to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said that he was considering leaving the far right-wing Jewish Home Party out of the coalition and accede to demands by centrist parties to resume Israeli-Palestinian talks. (*Haaretz*)

The British Foreign Office included Israel as "a country of concern" in its quarterly report on human rights and democracy. The report cited the Gaza war in November 2011 and other recent violence on the joint border, Israeli settlement expansion and Israel's withholding of Palestinian tax revenues. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The Prime Minister of Malaysia, Najib Razak, said that his visit to Gaza had been a humanitarian gesture of solidarity with the plight of the people in the occupied

territories and should not be misconstrued as an attempt to interfere in domestic Palestinian affairs. The Palestinian Presidency had strongly condemned his visit to Gaza, saying that the visit would deepen internal Palestinian division. (www.thestar.com, *Aljazeera, Xinhua*)
Hamas Prime Minister Haniyeh invited the head of the Palestinian Central Elections Commission, Hanna Nasser, to Gaza to discuss the updating of electoral registers, a key step towards Palestinian reconciliation. Mr. Haniyeh's spokesman said that the invitation was extended "in the context of the application of understandings reached in Cairo, and we hope to move forward simultaneously on the other issues." (AFP)
According to the Lebanese *Al-Liwa* newspaper, the DFLP Secretary-General, Nayif Hawatmah, will return shortly from Syria to the West Bank. Mr. Hawatmah, the last veteran PLO leader still in exile, co-founded the Arab Nationalist Movement and founded the DFLP. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The European Union had established partnership with four organizations in the field of agriculture: Agricultural Development Association (PARC), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Oxfam Italy and the Union of Agricultural Work Committees, to continue its work in the fields of olive production and livestock. The projects, which were started during the year with a total budget of €11.45 million, were fully in line with the "Agriculture Sector Strategy: A Shared Vision", developed by the PA Ministry of Agriculture. (www.reliefweb.int, www.eeas.europa.eu)
Former Israeli Minister for Foreign Affairs Liberman said that a new Israeli Government would not freeze the construction of settlements in the West Bank. (DPA)
Israeli forces demolished four homes in the northern Jordan Valley, in al-Jiftlik, as well as a home in a nearby hamlet, claiming that they had been built in "Area C" without permit. (*Ma'an News Agency*)
Israeli police removed a tent that had been set up by a Palestinian landowner on his land in the Jerusalem neighbourhood of Shufat to protest a plan by the West Jerusalem municipality to seize 117 dunums of Shufat and nearby Beit Hanina land to build a road that would connect settlements to the east and west of the neighbourhoods. (Wafa)
Israeli forces released the PA Minister of Public Works and the Deputy Minister of Information after detaining them from the sit-in tent in the Al-Bustan neighbourhood of Jerusalem and taking them to an investigation centre. The PA's Deputy Minister for Prisoner Affairs said that the Prisoner Affairs Ministry had despatched a legal team to the detention facility to seek their release. (*Ma'an News Agency, Middle East Monitor*)

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People will convene the UN Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People entitled "Assistance to the Palestinians — challenges and opportunities in the new reality of a State under occupation" at the FAO Headquarters in Rome, on 27 and 28 February 2013. (*Division for Palestinian Rights*)

The United Nations had launched an inquiry into the use of unmanned drones in counter-terrorism operations after criticism of the number of innocent civilians killed by the aircraft. The inquiry, announced in London, will investigate 25 drone strikes in Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Afghanistan and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. UN Special Rapporteur on Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights Ben Emmerson said that "it is imperative that appropriate legal and operational structures are urgently put in place to regulate its use in a manner that complies with the requirements of international law". (*Ma'an News Agency, PBS*)

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Following protests in the wake of the killing of a Palestinian college student by Israeli soldiers in the West Bank, Israeli authorities erected a number of new military checkpoints, mostly at the main roads leading to Hebron and its suburbs. (*Middle East Monitor*)

Israeli forces arrested three Palestinians in Hebron. (PNN)

At the World Economic Forum in Davos, King Abdullah Jordan said that "the time to take action in the Middle East is now", adding that "if we're not too late, the two-State solution will only last as long as US President Barack Obama's term". (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The Prime Minister of Egypt, Hesham Qandil, said that he hoped that the elections results in Israel would bring about change in the peace process with the Palestinians. He added that such a change would bring about an improvement in relations with Egypt and other countries in the region. (*Israel Radio*)

The US Representative to the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Eileen Chamberlain Donahoe, said that the US had "encouraged the Israelis to come to the Council and to tell their story and to present their own narrative of their own human rights situation". Israel had asked for the postponement of the Universal Period Review session to 29 January and Ms. Donahoe said that it was very unlikely that Israel would participate. Israel's last review was in December 2008. In May 2012, Israel suspended its relations with the Council. (AFP, *Ynetnews*)

Dozens of activists protested near the "Haggay" settlement near Hebron and demanded that Israel reopen a road linking the city with southern towns. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

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Four Palestinians, two from Beit Fajjar near Bethlehem and two from Hebron, were detained on by the IDF. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

British Liberal Democrat MP David Ward, who had accused "the Jews" in Israel of "inflicting atrocities on Palestinians... on a daily basis", apologized publicly for the "unintended offence". (BBC)

27

Shots were fired at an Israeli bus travelling in the West Bank. No injuries were reported. (*Ynetnews*)

PA President Abbas stated, in the wake of the Israeli elections, that the conditions for peace will remain unchanged: freeze on settlements building in the West Bank; release of political prisoners, and agreement on final status issues including Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees and the 1967 borders. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The office of the President of Tunisia, Moncef Marzouki, said that Mr. Marzouki was postponing his visit to the Gaza Strip until March 2013. (AFP, *Ma'an News Agency*)

Abdul Aziz Qudaih, a reconciliation committee official, said that Morocco had pledged \$500 million to support reconciliation among Palestinian factions. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Bethlehem's Governor, Abdel Fattah Hamayel, issued an order banning Palestinian institutions in his district from having any direct contact with Israel. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

On the occasion of India's Republic Day in Ramallah, the Representative of India to the PA, B.S. Mubarak, reiterated the unwavering support of India for the Palestinian struggle to achieve a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital. (Wafa)

The IDF broke into a mosque in the Al-Ezariyya town, in East Jerusalem. The Israeli army said that the soldiers had been conducting a search campaign in the area after a bus carrying settlers had come under fire that had resulted in damages but no injuries. (IMEMC)

28

B'Tselem issued a report on "Israel's Use of Crowd Control Weapons in the West Bank" stating that Israeli security forces had been "extensively and systematically" violating their own rules of engagement against Palestinian protesters. The report stated that 48 Palestinians had been killed since 2005 by live ammunition fired at stone-throwers, six more by rubber-coated bullets fired at less than the permitted range, and two by tear gas canisters fired directly at protesters. (AP, *The Washington Post*)

The Israeli border police stopped three men in the West Bank carrying explosives, a pistol and a knife. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Nine Palestinians were injured and seven arrested in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Silwan after clashes had erupted as Jerusalem Municipality workers demolished several structures in the area. (*France 24*)

Former Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Yossi Beilin said that Prime Minister Netanyahu was willing to establish an interim Palestinian State without a final agreement. Mr. Beilin said that he had heard from Mr. Netanyahu that he would be ready for establishing a "provisional border with the Palestinians" so that he would not have to negotiate about Jerusalem at the present time. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

League of Arab States Secretary-General Elaraby met with the EU Special Representative Reinicke in Cairo to discuss efforts to bring peace to Palestine. (*Dailynewsegypt.com*)

The Twentieth African Union Summit that concluded in Addis Ababa adopted the customary Declaration on Palestine that welcomed the General Assembly's resolution granting the State of Palestine non-member observer State status. It urged the international community to pressure Israel to comply with UN resolutions and previous agreements. (www.au.int)

Noting that the confluence of President Obama's re-election and recent Israeli elections had opened a very narrow window for action, UK Foreign Secretary Hague, speaking in Washington, D.C., said: "This Administration could be the last chance to inject the necessary momentum on this issue", warning that, due to the pace of Israeli settlement building and the hardening of Israel's internal politics, time was running out for the two-State solution. (Telegraph.co.uk)

"I am optimistic about the Palestinian reconciliation. The international community must respect the Palestinian need to end division," Hamas leader Mashaal was quoted as saying after meeting King Abdullah in Amman. "We have made excellent steps in the reconciliation talks in Egypt," he added. King Abdullah told Mr. Mashaal: "Supporting reconciliation efforts is the basis for Palestinian unity which will help the Palestinians restore their rights... a two-State solution is the only means to achieve security and stability in the Middle East." (ahram.org.eg)

Hamas leader Mashaal would seek the Chairmanship of the PLO, *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* reported. According to the report, that was behind his decision not to stand for reelection as head of the Hamas Political Bureau. The paper had quoted Palestinian sources as saying that several Arab States, led by Jordan and Qatar, were pushing for Mr. Mashaal to chair the PLO as a way of getting Hamas to sign on to the Oslo Accords and recognize Israel. ([The Jerusalem Post](http://TheJerusalemPost))

PA Minister of Finance Qassis met with Quartet Representative Tony Blair in Ramallah. Mr. Qassis called on the Quartet to pressure Israel to release Palestinian tax revenues and stressed that financial support must be provided to the PA to help it meet its obligations. ([Ma'an News Agency](http://Ma'anNewsAgency))

Delivery of Qatari-donated fuel to the Gaza Strip had been suspended until further notice because of the security situation in Egypt. ([Ma'an News Agency](http://Ma'anNewsAgency))

On the eve of a pledging conference on humanitarian assistance for Syria to be hosted by the Emir of Kuwait and chaired by Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, UNRWA Commissioner-General Grandi praised the initiative and also urged donors not to ignore the plight of some 525,000 Palestinian refugees in Syria. ([UNRWA press release](http://UNRWApressrelease))

Lawyers representing families in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Silwan, whose homes had been targeted for demolition, succeeded in stopping the destruction of their homes but not before heavy damage to structures and land in the area, according to one of the lawyers. (Wafa)

Israeli settlers set up a new outpost near Qalqilya, north-west of the West Bank. ([Ma'an News Agency](http://Ma'anNewsAgency), IMEMC)

The IDF and Israeli police in the West Bank will urge the High Court of Justice to drop complaints by Palestinian farmers against attacks by settlers. (Haaretz)

A survey by the Israeli Civil Administration had revealed that at least 166 houses in the West Bank settlement of "Eli" had been constructed on private Palestinian land. (Haaretz)

PA Minister for Prisoners' Affairs, Issa Qaraqe, said that he had filed a complaint with the Security Council, citing the ill-treatment of Palestinians in Israeli jails as well as the plight of those on hunger strike. Mr. Qaraqe said that the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the UN, Riyad Mansour, had submitted a letter to the Security Council demanding that action be taken against Israel for its "inhumane actions" against Palestinian prisoners. (middleeastmonitor.com)

The Ahrar Center for Detainees Studies and Human Rights reported that the Israel Prison Service had been denying Palestinian political prisoners access to books and educational materials. (IMEMC)

29

Israeli soldiers invaded the villages of Al-Mogheer and Aaba, near Jenin, broke into and searched houses and arrested a resident. Israeli soldiers also invaded Nablus and arrested two residents after searching dozens of homes. (IMEMC)

Palestinian medical sources reported that a young Palestinian man was shot and injured by Israeli military fire in the northern part of the Gaza Strip. Eyewitnesses reported that Israeli soldiers stationed near the northern border, had opened fire at several Palestinian workers collecting scrap metal for recycling. (IMEMC)

Said Musa Maragha, or "Abu Musa", a hard-line Palestinian military commander who rebelled against Yasser Arafat to form his own rival party, died in Damascus of natural causes. (abcnews.go.com).

In a statement issued at the conclusion of its meeting in Ramallah, the Executive Committee of the PLO, chaired by President Abbas, called on the new Israeli Government soon to be formed to start a serious political process to save the peace process. It stressed that this would require a complete halt to settlement activities, including in East Jerusalem, the release of all prisoners, and acceptance of all relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly the General Assembly resolution that admitted the State of Palestine as a non-member observer State, "in order to implement the two-State solution on the basis of the 1967 borders, including Jerusalem" (Wafa)

PA Ministry of Finance officials will meet with their Israeli counterparts the following day to discuss resuming the transfer of taxes withheld by Israel, an official said. ([Ma'an News Agency](http://Ma'anNewsAgency))

Egypt was to allow ten tons of medical supplies to enter the Gaza Strip via the Rafah crossing, Egyptian security sources said. The supplies had been donated by the Arab Doctors Union and would be transferred into Gaza under the supervision of the Egyptian Red Crescent. Another shipment of medical supplies was expected to enter Gaza via Rafah on 30 January, security sources added. ([Ma'an News Agency](http://Ma'anNewsAgency))

A.M. Fachir, Director-General of Information and Public Diplomacy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, said that his Government will provide training in the fields of microeconomics, agriculture, taxation and fisheries to 1,000 Palestinian citizens. (Bisnis.com)

Five tons of medical supplies donated by the Russian Solidarity Society in Moscow have been delivered to the Gaza Strip via Egypt's Rafah crossing. (KUNA)

The Israeli army denied the transport of construction materials and saplings into the village of Beit Iksa, north of East Jerusalem. The Head of the village council stated that the army claimed that the youth in the village used the construction materials during protests against the annexation wall, settlements and the occupation.

He also said that the army, for the past two weeks, had imposed a strict siege on the village and was preventing residents from entering or leaving. (IMEMC)

Local farmers, backed by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, said that the Israeli army had been carrying out training exercises near three Palestinian villages south of Hebron, in violation of a High Court of Justice order that also ruled against the eviction of villagers from their homes, said. An IDF spokesman said that the army had been holding exercises in firing zones and not in farmlands, without causing any damage. (Haaretz)

Israeli settlers began building a settlement outpost on the land of the village of Jayyous, near the city of Qalqilya. Under the protection of the Israeli army, settlers reportedly put up seven caravans on land that belongs to a Palestinian family, while army vehicles razed the land in the area and connected the caravans with electricity. The separation wall, constructed on the land of Jayyous in 2002, had confiscated over 8,600 dunums of land that belonged to the residents of the village. After filing a lawsuit, the residents regained 6,200 dunums back. Settlers, in response, put up the caravans there. (Wafa)

A Palestinian man stabbed and moderately wounded an Israeli settler in the northern West Bank. The suspect was arrested. ([Ma'an News Agency](http://Ma'anNewsAgency), [The Jerusalem Post](http://TheJerusalemPost))

Israeli forces delivered demolition notices to all Palestinian families in the Fuheidat neighbourhood east of Anata village in north-east Jerusalem reportedly because of its close proximity to the Anatot military base. ([Ma'an News Agency](http://Ma'anNewsAgency))

UK Consul-General to Jerusalem Sir Vincent Fean met with the Governor of Hebron, Kamil Hmeid, and expressed concerns about Israeli settlement expansion.

([Ma'an News Agency](http://Ma'anNewsAgency))

A conference was held at the headquarters of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society in Bireh in support of prisoners held in Israeli jails and in a reaction to the recent Israeli escalation of punitive measures against the prisoners. (presstv.com)

Israel boycotted the meeting of the Working Group of the UN Human Rights Council Universal Period Review where it had been scheduled to be reviewed. The Council's President, Renigiusz Henczel, Poland's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva, called it "an important issue and unprecedented situation". The forum adopted a motion regretting Israel's no-show and urged Israel to cooperate in a review at its October-November session "at the latest".

(Reuters, [The New York Times](http://TheNewYorkTimes))

On the eve of the Syria pledging conference in Kuwait, UNRWA Commissioner-General Grandi said that the Agency had less than 5 per cent of the funding needed to help the Palestinians of Syria. (www.unrwa.org)

30

Israeli Forces arrested a Palestinian from the village of Dura in the Hebron area of the West Bank. ([Palestine News Network](http://PalestineNewsNetwork))

In a [statement](#), the EU missions in Jerusalem and Ramallah expressed deep concern at the number of Palestinians killed recently in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in separate incidents involving recourse by the Israeli forces to lethal force. The statement called for thorough investigations and reiterated “the need for security forces, whether Israeli or Palestinian, to refrain from use of lethal force”. It furthermore expressed “concern at the continuing incursions by Israeli forces into Area A” which “put in jeopardy the internationally recognized success of Palestinian institution-building efforts”. ([eeas.europa.eu](#))

The Assistant Secretary-General of the League of Arab States for Palestine and the Occupied Arab Territories, Mohamed Sobeih, said that an Arab delegation would be visiting Washington, D.C. in the near future, in an attempt to ignite the peace process between the Israelis and the Palestinians. (*Ynetnews*)

A delegation from the Palestinian Central Elections Commission headed by its chairman, Hanna Nasser, arrived in Gaza to restart voter registration suspended since July. The Commission will be in Gaza for two days during which it will hold meetings with Hamas leader Haniyeh and other officials, as well as members of the civil society. The actual voter registration in Gaza and the West Bank was expected to be held between 9 and 16 February but an official of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine said that Commission would start updating the voter registry on 11 February. (*Ma'an News Agency, Wafa*)

Senior Fatah official Yahya Rabah said that the reconciliation meeting was unlikely to take place due to the unrest in Egypt and the failure by factions to implement decisions agreed in previous discussions. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel said that it would transfer the previous month's tax revenues of some \$100 million over to the PA in a one-off arrangement meant to ease the PA's economic woes. (*AP*)

A delegation from the Vatican headed by Under-Secretary for Relations with States, Ettore Balestrero, met with PA Minister for Foreign Affairs Malki in Ramallah to discuss a draft bilateral agreement. The Vatican pledged had €100,000 to repair the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, James Rawley, in a [statement](#), expressed concern at increased casualties resulting from the use of live ammunition by Israel in the West Bank, urging maximum restraint to avoid further civilian casualties. (*ochaopt.org*)

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Israeli forces arrested six Palestinians in the West Bank.

The Israeli army announced that Israeli forces had busted a Hamas militant cell operating in the southern West Bank. The cell had reportedly plotted to kidnap an Israeli soldier. (*Xinhua.net*)

The *Al-Hayat* newspaper had reported that France and Britain were preparing an initiative meant to ensure the resumption of direct peace talks between Israel and Palestine, and were also trying to get the US involved. Diplomatic sources said that the US would likely resume its efforts to restart talks which would delay the European initiative. The sources added that the new US Secretary of State, John Kerry, was likely to host an international conference in the US. (*IMEMC*)

PA Minister for Foreign Affairs Malki said that the Government was studying steps towards joining more international organizations and agreements. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Yasser al-Wadiyeh, head of a coalition of independents, said that PA President Abbas would convene a summit of the PLO Reform Committee in Cairo on 8 February. The leadership of Hamas and Islamic Jihad would participate in the summit along with other parties. The Committee to restructure the PLO was formed in the wake of a May 2011 reconciliation deal between Fatah and Hamas that had never been implemented. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Twelve hours after [Palestinian](#) electricity workers had cut off power to a building because of non-payment by one of the tenants, the building went up in flames, killing a family of six. (*The New York Times*)

Gush Etzion area council head Davidi Perl reported that the Israeli Ministry of Defense had advanced plans to build 346 housing units in the area. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The International Fact-Finding Mission on Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, established by the Human Rights Council, had released a draft copy of its [findings](#). The report stated that a multitude of the human rights of the Palestinians had been violated, including the denial of the right to self-determination and systemic discrimination against the Palestinian people. In the conclusions, the Mission warned that the International Criminal Court could hold Israeli officials culpable for West Bank settlement activity if Palestine became a party to the Rome Statute. The Council debate on the matter is to take place on 18 March. ([www.unog.ch](#))

In a statement, the Presidency of the State of Palestine welcomed the Human Rights Council report on the human rights implications of the Israeli settlements for the Palestinians in the OPT. (*Wafa*)

The Israeli High Court of Justice heard two petitions affecting the future of the Palestinian part of the village of Sussiya. One of the petitions, filed by the Regavim organization and villagers from the Jewish part of Sussiya, was to expedite the demolition of portions of the Palestinian village. Although the IDF had ordered the demolitions, Regavim believed that the IDF had been too slow to carry them out and permitting continued new “illegal” building activities. Regavim had previously obtained a temporary injunction from the High Court barring any new building by the area's Palestinians. The other petition, filed by some of the Palestinian villagers and various human rights groups, sought to restore the villagers' access to 300 hectares of land that they had been blocked from farming. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

According to a report by the Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, six Palestinian prisoners continued to be on hunger strike, some in serious condition. (*Wafa*)

Groups representing a broad swath of Palestinian civil society condemned a new [European Union](#) funding programme designed to promote a “two-State solution”. According to the terms of the new funding programme, humanitarian aid to Palestinians was made dependent on joint programmes involving “Jews and Arabs”. (*The Electronic Intifada*)
