

Division for Palestinian Rights
**Chronological Review of Events Relating to the
 Question of Palestine**
 Monthly media monitoring review
 November 2005

Monthly highlights

- Israeli-Palestinian Agreement on Access and Movement reached, including on operating Rafah Terminal between the Gaza Strip and Egypt ([15 November](#), [25 November](#))
- EU sets up Border Assistance Mission (BAM) to monitor Rafah Terminal ([21 November](#))
- International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People observed ([29 November](#))
- Quartet Special Envoy issues first report on implementation of Access and Movement Agreement ([30 November](#))

1

Militants in the Gaza Strip fired two Qassam rockets at the western Negev region in Israel. (*Ha'aretz*)

An IDF air strike on a car in the Jabalya refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip killed Hamas leader Hassan Al-Madhoun and Hamas operative Fawzi Abu Al-Qara, and injured nine bystanders. "This is open war," said Hamas spokesman Musheer al-Masri. (*Ha'aretz*)

IDF forces arrested 25 Palestinians in Jenin, Hebron and Ramallah, and 13 were arrested in Qabatiya, south of Jenin, and in Bil'in, west of Ramallah. (*International Press Center (IPC)*, *Wafa*)

Dozens of Israeli tanks, jeeps and bulldozers entered Jenin and surrounded a building where several Islamic Jihad gunmen were holed up, triggering fierce clashes. Two Palestinians were wounded, while troops arrested a local leader of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades. (*AFP*)

A Qassam rocket landed in an open field in Israel north of the Gaza Strip, and a mortar shell was also fired into Israel. There were no reports of injuries. The Israeli army launched artillery fire towards the area from where the attacks originated. (*Ha'aretz*)

Israel's Security Cabinet approved the deployment of European inspectors at the Rafah crossing. According to the plan, only Palestinians would be allowed entry via Rafah; other nationals would enter through the Kerem Shalom crossing. (*Ha'aretz*)

Palestinian Authority (PA) Minister of Planning Ghassan Khatib expressed "deep frustration" with Israel's "refusal to coordinate in good faith." "In recent meetings, Israel called for live transmissions to monitor crossings, veto power over persons and goods traveling through Rafah, or agreements with Egypt, rather than Palestinians, to ensure ultimate Israeli control," he said in a statement. (*Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA)*)

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics reported that between September 2000 and 27 September 2005, 776 Palestinian children under the age of 18 had been killed by IDF soldiers, constituting 19.9 per cent of the total deaths. (*Wafa*)

Italian Foreign Minister Gianfranco Fini met with PA President Mahmoud Abbas and Deputy Prime Minister Sha'ath in Ramallah. During a press conference with Mr. Fini, Mr. Sha'ath announced that an Italian-Palestinian committee had been formed to enhance bilateral relations. Mr. Fini said he believed that ensuring freedom of movement and security for Palestinians was necessary to guarantee economic recovery, reaffirming his country's support for the Palestinian Authority in the fields of health, education, economy and media. He announced that the first meeting of the committee would be held when Mr. Abbas visits Rome in early December. (*IPC*)

2

Israeli forces arrested a "wanted" Palestinian in Beit Rima, north-west of Ramallah. (*Ha'aretz*)

An Israeli soldier was killed after Palestinian gunmen shot him in the head during an army operation to arrest a suspected Hamas militant in Marakeh village near Jenin. The armed wing of Hamas, Izz ad-Din Al-Qassam Brigades, said it had killed the soldier. (*AFP*, *AP*, *Reuters*)

A member of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, Rafat Turkman, was killed by Israeli soldiers during a raid in Qabatiya, south of Jenin, according to residents. The Israeli army said troops had come under fire and shot back during an operation in the village, hitting three gunmen. (*AFP*, *AP*)

Israeli troops, backed by tanks, stormed Husan village near Bethlehem and launched a door-to-door search, arresting 10 children, aged 16 and 17. (*Wafa*)

IDF troops shot and seriously wounded a 12-year-old (9-year-old, according to *AP*) Palestinian youth who had been spotted carrying a toy rifle as the soldiers carried out arrests in the Jenin refugee camp. According to Palestinian sources, the youth, Ahmed Ismail Khatib, was shot after a gunbattle erupted between the troops and Palestinians. IDF troops transported the youth to Rambam Medical Centre in Haifa. PA President Abbas appealed for calm at the start of the Muslim holidays. (*AFP*, *AP*, *Ha'aretz*)

Five Israelis were lightly wounded when Palestinians fired mortar shells that hit the community of Hetiv Ha'asarah, located just north of the Gaza

Strip. One of the rockets hit a vehicle. A house and a high-tension electrical line were also damaged and the community was plunged into darkness. Following the shelling, IDF artillery units opened fire on targets in the Gaza Strip. (*Ha'aretz*)

Hamas spokesman Mushir Al-Masri said his group would not renew the truce, which expires at the end of the year. Mr. Al-Masri said, "In the face of this Zionist aggression, no one should dream about the renewal of this truce," but he also said the group would not pull out of the truce right now. (*AFP, AP*)

Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz said that Israel would not interfere with the Palestinian elections despite its opposition to the participation of Hamas in the ballot, *Army Radio* reported. "This is a Palestinian issue, but Abu Mazen (PA President Abbas) made a commitment at Sharm el-Sheikh to lead one authority, one rule and one gun," the radio quoted Mr. Mofaz as telling US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in Washington. (*Ha'aretz*)

In a statement, the European Commission said that it was "ready to play its part in responding to the request from both parties that the EU should provide a third-party presence at the Palestinian border with Egypt, to facilitate the early reopening of the Rafah crossing point." European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy Benita Ferrero-Waldner said senior EU officials would be going to the region in the coming days to explore "options" for an EU role in the reopening and efficient management of the border. "This mission can play an important part in rebuilding confidence between the parties and helping to kick-start the Palestinian economy in Gaza," Ms. Ferrero-Waldner said. (*DPA, europa.eu.int*)

Spain's Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos said his country was studying the possibility of helping police the border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt. "Spain, within the European Union, is prepared to contribute and that is why we are exploring the possibility of participating in border controls between Gaza and Egypt following an accord between Israelis, Palestinians and Egyptians," Mr. Moratinos told a news conference. (*AP*)

3

Seventeen Palestinians were arrested overnight in Jenin, Ramallah and Bethlehem. Meanwhile, 30 Israeli army jeeps, supported by helicopters, moved into the centre of Jenin. (*BBC News, Ha'aretz*)

An IDF soldier was slightly hurt as Palestinian mortar shell landed near Kibbutz Nahal Oz, in southern Israel. (*AP, Ha'aretz*)

IDF troops prevented dozens of Israeli Arabs from visiting their families in the Gaza Strip for the Eid Al-Fitr festival in contradiction of a pledge made by the Israeli Government to the High Court of Justice. Soldiers told Israeli Arabs gathering at the Beit Hanoun (Erez) crossing that men would not be allowed to enter the Gaza Strip. The men were forced to remain behind while their wives and children entered the Gaza Strip to visit family. (*Ha'aretz*)

Hamas would only renew the truce, due to expire at the end of the year, if Israel stopped attacks and freed Palestinian prisoners, according to Hamas leader Mahmoud Al-Zahar. (*Ha'aretz, Reuters*)

Israeli Defence Minister Mofaz had contravened for several months a Cabinet decision aimed at making it more difficult to establish illegal outposts and easier to punish offenders. The decision was taken on 10 March 2005, following the completion of a report by Senior State Prosecutor Talia Sasson. Security sources said a delay in the implementation of the decision served the interests of extremists among the settlers, including those who had invaded private Palestinian land and attacked senior army officers. (*Ha'aretz*)

A joint Israeli-Palestinian petition, filed by the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme and Physicians for Human Rights-Israel with the Israel High Court of Justice, sought to halt air force jets from breaking the sound barrier over the Gaza Strip. The tactic was abuse of human rights, causing widespread fear, especially among children, and medics said it induced miscarriages. The petitioners said that according to international law, "the boom are collective punishment against the civilian population and thus illegal." A UN spokesman in the Gaza Strip, Khaled Abdul Shafi, said, "We, at the United Nations, have already submitted a letter of protest to the Israeli Government urging them to stop ...". (*BBC News*)

4

Mohammed Asa Ikmei, 22, a member of Hamas, died of injuries sustained in a shootout with Israeli troops earlier in the week in the West Bank town of Qabatiya. (*AFP*)

Israeli troops arrested eight Palestinians, including five suspected militants. Among those detained were two suspected members of Islamic Jihad and three from Hamas. (*AFP*)

A cameraman from Al-Jazeera was briefly detained after scuffling with Israeli police during a demonstration against the wall in the town of Bil'in, west of Ramallah. Mr. Nabil Mazzawi was arrested, along with four protestors, who chained themselves to a construction site. Israeli police said the cameraman had attacked a border guard. (*AP*)

5

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades claimed responsibility for launching two short-range homemade mortars from the Gaza Strip at the Israeli town of Kfar Azza, east of the Gaza Strip. A spokesperson for the group said the attack was in revenge of Israel's assassination of the group's commander in the northern Gaza Strip a week earlier. (*Ha'aretz*)

Four Palestinians were wounded by Israeli troops' gunfire in the village of Qabatiya, near Jenin, in the West Bank. Sources said Israeli soldiers opened fire at a group of Palestinian teenagers, aged between 13 and 15, in a raid of the village. An Israeli army spokesperson said the youths had been throwing stones and bottles. (*Xinhua*)

6

Jenia Polise, a 66-year-old Israeli woman, died of wounds from the suicide bombing in Hadera on 26 October, raising the death toll to six. (*Ha'aretz, Reuters*)

Two Palestinians, including a police officer, were injured when a rocket fired by Hamas members mistakenly hit a house in the town of Deir Al-Balah in the Gaza Strip. (*AFP, Ha'aretz*)

The Israeli army arrested Istiqbal Al-Qasrawi, a 15-year-old Palestinian girl, who tried to stab an Israeli soldier with a knife in Hebron. (*Xinhua*)

A Palestinian couple, whose son had died on 5 November after being shot by Israeli soldiers, had donated his organs to six Israeli patients waiting for transplants. Mr. Ismail Khatib said his decision to donate his son Ahmed's organs was rooted in his memories of his own brother, who had died at 24 waiting for a liver transplant, and in his family's desire to help others, regardless of their nationality. "I don't mind seeing the organs in the body of an Israeli or a Palestinian. In our religion, God allows us to give organs to another person and it doesn't matter who the person is." On the same day, three Israeli girls underwent surgery to receive his son's lungs, heart and liver. (*AP, Ha'aretz*)

PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat said that Israel had suspended talks with the PA on all issues except the reopening of the Rafah crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt under EU supervision. Mr. Erakat said the PA leadership would discuss the operation of the Rafah crossing with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice during her visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory the following week. Meanwhile, the Israeli Cabinet had postponed a vote to approve the reopening of the Rafah crossing due to disagreement over the role of the EU. "Israel wants the EU to have powers of arrests should its inspectors encounter a terrorist at the crossing, while the EU wants to limit its role to oversight and reporting only," a source said. The PA rejected the idea of installing observation cameras, which would show Israel's attempt to control the crossing, according to Mr. Erakat. Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz said he hoped the crossing would reopen within two weeks. (*AP, AFP, Ha'aretz, Reuters, Xinhua*)

7

IDF troops arrested three Palestinians in the West Bank. Soldiers arrested two members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. One arrest was made in Beit Furik, south of Nablus, and a second was carried out in Dura, south-east of Hebron. An Islamic Jihad member was also arrested south-west of Nablus. (*Ha'aretz*)

The Israeli State Prosecutor informed the High Court of Justice that it did not oppose renewed deliberations and a ruling on a petition brought by the Public Committee against Torture protesting the IDF's policy of targeted killings of Palestinian militants in the Occupied Palestinian Territory since 2000. (*Ha'aretz*)

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said Israel would not interfere in the forthcoming Palestinian parliamentary elections if Hamas took part, but would not offer the PA any assistance during the campaign. He said Israel would make it hard for Hamas to campaign by not lifting restrictions in the West Bank. Mr. Asi Shriv, an aide to Mr. Sharon, added that Hamas would be barred from attending meetings of joint Israeli-Palestinian committees and any Hamas campaigner would be risking his life. The Palestinians wanted West Bank roadblocks lifted during the campaign and the 25 January ballot to allow freedom of movement of candidates and voters. (*AP, DPA, Ha'aretz*)

The EU agreed to dispatch a three-year civil police mission to the Occupied Palestinian Territory to train Palestinian police forces for three years, beginning 1 January 2006. The mission would comprise some 30 to 40 police experts and would focus on advising and training senior Palestinian officials as well as penal system authorities. EU Foreign Ministers agreed, at a meeting in Brussels, to "assume the third party responsibility" for monitoring the border crossing, Javier Solana, the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, told reporters as an EU delegation toured the border area. Mr. Solana said Israeli and Palestinian negotiators were still discussing the matter, hoping to reach an agreement by 15 November. The Palestinians want the Europeans to serve as advisers, while Israel wants the EU to be in charge, with the PA to carry out arrests or confiscate luggage, if necessary. Trying to resolve the impasse over the Rafah crossing, the Middle East Quartet's Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement James Wolfensohn was to chair a three-way meeting with Israeli and Palestinian officials later in the day, also hoping to make progress on the issue of crossings from Gaza into Israel. (*AP, AFP*)

EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process Marc Otte commented on Palestinian preparations for the opening of the Rafah crossing, saying, "I am very impressed by the professional attitude, the competence of the people and the installations you've got here. He expressed hope that the final agreement on the border would soon be reached. He added, "We are not here to control anybody. We are not here to control Palestinians in the name of somebody else. We are here to help, assist and make it happen." (*AFP*)

8

The IDF entered the northern part of Nablus. An IDF officer looking for "wanted" militants was lightly wounded after an explosive device had gone off next to his jeep in the city. The IDF soldiers returned fire and reported wounding two militants. Dr. Ghassan Hamdan, a Palestinian doctor who arrived at the scene, said he had seen four people wounded, including one man who was lying on the street. Dr. Hamdan said that when he attempted to reach the wounded, IDF soldiers fired in his direction. A statement released by Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades and Al-Quds Brigades claimed responsibility for detonating the explosive device. (*Ha'aretz*)

Israeli forces shot dead a 16-year-old (15-year-old, according to *AFP*) boy, Muhammad Abu Salha, in Nablus. Four other Palestinians were wounded during the operation, including a 10-year-old child, who sustained moderate wounds in the chest. The Israeli army said its troops had opened fire on Palestinians suspected of planning to plant an explosive to ambush troops on a road leading to a nearby settlement. (*AFP, AP, Ha'aretz*)

Israeli troops shot and seriously wounded an Islamic Jihad militant, Samir Al-Ghul, after he refused to stop his vehicle at a military checkpoint near the Qabatiya refugee camp, south of Jenin. He died of his wounds shortly after. (*Ha'aretz*)

Israeli forces stormed Dura and other towns near Hebron, arresting four Palestinians. Also, Israeli forces thrust into the Dheisheh refugee camp in Bethlehem and launched an all-out search campaign, arresting a 24-year-old Palestinian. Moreover, Israeli forces seized 10 houses in Qabatiya, south of Jenin. (*Wafa*)

A Palestinian hurled a firebomb at an Israeli vehicle travelling near Shabtin village, north-west of Ramallah, causing no injuries or damage. (*www.idf.il*)

IDF Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Dan Halutz said Israel would continue with its targeted killings of Palestinian militants. Mr. Halutz told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee that the policy had proven to be extremely effective in curbing terror activity. The targeted strikes will focus on Islamic Jihad members, he said. At the same meeting, Prime Minister Sharon said the targeted killings and military pressure on the terror organizations would continue. (*Ha'aretz*)

The Middle East Quartet's Special Envoy James Wolfensohn held separate meetings on the Rafah crossing issue with PA President Abbas and Israel's Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz. At the same time, EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process Marc Otte met Israel officials to thrash out a European role at the Rafah Terminal. A European diplomat told *AFP*, on condition of anonymity, "Hopefully, we will sign an agreement after a tripartite meeting on Wednesday". He said that the EU would not accept any role unless there was a "clear-cut mandate with a protocol between Israelis and Palestinians". (*AFP*)

The office of PA President Abbas announced that King Abdullah of Jordan would visit Ramallah on 14 November. (*AFP, AP, Reuters*)

9

The Israeli army said it had arrested five wanted Palestinians in the West Bank: an Islamic Jihad member west of Ramallah, a Hamas member north of Ramallah, two wanted Palestinians north and south-east of Ramallah, and another wanted Palestinian in Tulkarm. (*www.idf.il*)

The Israeli army said it had closed two offices associated with the "Dawa" section of Islamic Jihad in Jenin. The army had alleged that the "Dawa" foundation was being used to hide fund transfers to the group. (*www.idf.il*)

Israeli police shot dead a Palestinian in East Jerusalem who they said had tried to run them over with a car. Dozens of Palestinians rushed to the streets in the Mount Scopus and the French Hill areas, clashed with police and torched one vehicle. Several people were reportedly injured as the police used tear gas, stun grenades and rubber coated bullets. (*Ha'aretz, IPC*)

In an interview broadcast on *Israel Radio*, Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar said his group would consider holding negotiations with Israel. "Negotiations are not our intention; negotiation is a method. If the method is noble, to liberate our land, to liberate our people from the Israeli deals, to reconstruct what is destroyed by the Israeli long-standing occupation, at that time we can discuss," Mr. Zahar said. Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom responded by saying Mr. Zahar's comment was "a tactical statement intended only to please public opinion." (*AP, Ha'aretz*)

Palestinian sources said significant progress had been made among Palestinian factions over the past few days regarding future talks in Egypt to renew the ceasefire. The Egyptian security delegation, which had been in the Gaza Strip since the eve of Israel's disengagement, had continued efforts with the factions to set out basic principles for a future summit in Cairo aimed at discussing the extension of the ceasefire. (*Ynet*)

PA Planning Minister Ghassan Khatib said, "The Israelis for the first time committed themselves not to close the [Al-Muntar (Karni)] crossing

automatically, as was customary in the past. They said they would not use it as pressure for incidents in Tel Aviv or Hebron or other places. Of course, the crossing could be closed in other cases where there is danger to security at the Karni point itself.” (*Ha’aretz*)

Palestinian Legislative Council members voted to cancel all attempts to hold a vote of no confidence in the Cabinet, saying the time before the PLC elections in January was too limited to install a new government. (*AFP, DPA, Reuters*)

In a report recently sent to the Palestinian Authority, a World Bank technical team examining the provision of safe routes between the Gaza Strip and the areas of the West Bank controlled by the Palestinian Authority recommended that convoys carrying passengers and cargo operate on three routes connecting the Strip to the southern, central and northern West Bank several times a day, *Ha’aretz* reported. The World Bank also suggested that convoys of trucks carrying goods be used for travel between Palestinian areas and Israel’s Ben-Gurion International Airport, as well as Ashdod and Haifa ports. (*Ha’aretz*)

The Quartet had requested that James Wolfensohn, the Middle East Quartet’s Special Envoy, continue with his duties through the end of March, 2006, the Deputy Spokesman for the Secretary-General announced. (*UN News Centre*)

An EU advance team arrived in the region to examine the Rafah Terminal to determine how many EU monitors would be needed there and the type of equipment and protection they would need to carry out their work, EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process Marc Otte said. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

10

The IDF killed a Palestinian militant near the “Kissufim” crossing on the Israel-Gaza Strip border, Palestinian medical and security sources said. A spokesman for Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades said that Akram Abu Ghadieen, 22, a member of the group, and two of his fellow members had been attacked by Israeli soldiers while attempting to plant roadside bombs. (*AP, Xinhua*)

Approximately 40 Palestinians took part in a demonstration in an open field near Bani Na’im, east of Hebron, hurling rocks at Israelis working in the field. An Israeli force arrived to disperse the demonstrators and identified a Palestinian holding a lighted firebomb, fired at his leg and wounded him.

Also, a mortar shell fired by Palestinians landed near the Al-Muntar (Karni) crossing between Israel and the southern Gaza Strip, causing no injuries or damage. (www.idf.il)

Israeli forces thrust into the Al-Makfia neighbourhood in Hebron and conducted a house-to-house search campaign, arresting four Palestinians. Two more were arrested in Soureef village in Hebron. Also, Israeli soldiers, backed by tanks and armoured vehicles, swept into the Aida refugee camp, north of Bethlehem, and broke into some houses, arresting two Palestinians. Moreover, Israeli forces arrested three Palestinians in Qalqilya and four in Tulkarm. (*Wafa*)

Palestinians hurled three firebombs at Israeli troops south of Nablus, causing no injuries or damage. Soldiers returned fire, wounding one of the attackers. Also, Palestinians opened fire at an Israeli vehicle east of Ramallah, causing no injuries or damage. (*Ha’aretz, The Jerusalem Post*)

A 17-year-old Palestinian, Fadhel Abu Arram, died of wounds he had sustained in an explosion of a phosphorous tank shell left by Israeli forces in Khirbet Janba, south of Hebron. (*IPC*)

The negotiation on reopening the Rafah crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt were deadlocked over an Israeli demand for surveillance cameras to be installed at the terminal, PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat said. “We’re trying to close the final points,” James Wolfensohn, the Middle East Quartet’s Special Envoy, said. “I think that it is essential for both sides to reach a resolution regarding Rafah. I don’t think the Israelis want it to be a prison, and I don’t think the Palestinians want it to be a prison. Unless we reach an agreement, Rafah becomes a closed place.” (*AP, Xinhua*)

PA Prime Minister Qureia strongly condemned the bombings in three Amman hotels, while the PLC suspended its regular session as a mark of respect for the dead. Four senior PA officials, including two responsible for security matters, had died in the attacks. (*DPA, IPC*)

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People held a meeting marking the thirtieth anniversary of General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX), which established the Committee. “Today is not a cause for celebration but rather an opportunity for all of us to reflect upon decades of failed efforts to resolve the question of Palestine,” the Bureau of the Committee said, in a statement released on the occasion. (*UN press releases GA/PAL/993 and GA/PAL/994*)

11

The Israeli army said it had arrested an Islamic Jihad member in Beit Liqya, west of Ramallah. (www.idf.il)

A 14-year-old demonstrator was hit by a rubber-coated bullet in the head in clashes between Israeli forces and protestors against the construction of the separation wall in Bil’in, west of Ramallah. At least 15 were injured and three were arrested. (*Ha’aretz*)

Palestinians fired a Qassam rocket towards the southern Israeli town of Sderot. It landed in an open field and did not cause any injuries or damage.

Israeli artillery gunners responded by shelling launching sites in the northern Gaza Strip. (*Ha’aretz, Reuters*)

In an interview with *Ha’aretz*, PA Foreign Minister Nasser Al-Kidwa said, “Israel will not be able to evade the legal implications of the International Court of Justice about the separation fence even in 100 years. It is nonsense to think you can separate yourselves with a fence from the other without asking yourself what the situation is and giving rights. Geography will prove that you are wrong. ... Israel is rapidly closing the window of opportunity for two states. It is close to forming a bi-national state. Today the situation is very similar to the one in Yasser Arafat’s era, and things depend on Israel much more than they depend on us.” (*Ha’aretz*)

At the Conference for Export and International Cooperation, held in Tel Aviv, British Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rt. Hon. Gordon Brown, proposed a plan for Palestinian economic development, which would help ensure long-term peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians, to be supported by the international community. He said that the economic plan should accompany the [Road Map](#) and be based on the framework set out by James Wolfensohn, the Middle East Quartet’s Special Envoy. Mr. Brown also announced that Britain will coordinate a London economic initiative in December to lay the ground for the completion of the plan, as well as meetings of the G8 Finance Ministers, European Finance Ministers and one for donor coordination, all supporting the plan. A meeting to be hosted by Britain and the World Bank is also planned in December to promote private sector growth in Palestine. (www.hm-treasury.gov.uk)

12

Khaled Abu Ryala, 17, was critically wounded when an Israeli navy patrol fired on his fishing boat, Palestinian hospital officials said. An Israeli military statement said the naval vessel fired warning shots at a fishing boat that entered Israeli waters, headed for the patrol boat and refused orders to halt. The statement said that after the shots were fired, the Palestinian boat returned to the Gaza shore and the naval crew were not aware of any casualties, although the incident was still being investigated. Israeli navy maintains a strict sea blockade after the withdrawal of the Israeli ground forces, allowing Palestinians to fish only in a narrow zone along the coast. (*AP, Reuters*)

Bilal Al-Shahr, 19, was shot and killed by Israeli soldiers in the southern Gaza Strip. His body was found near the security fence separating Gaza

from Israel. Israeli gunfire also reportedly injured another Palestinian. An IDF spokeswoman said that “Two Palestinians were identified as they were crawling towards the security fence in the southern Gaza Strip. They were cutting part of the fence and apparently they were placing an explosive device on the ground. The forces opened fire at the two, hitting them”. (AFP)

In Jenin, Israeli forces shot and killed Shujah Al-Balawi, 20, a local Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades leader. Heavy clashes erupted on the streets as a large number of Israeli troops pushed into the city. *Israel Radio* said soldiers shot the man to death after wounding him. An Israeli military source said that “an IDF unit spotted three armed Palestinians and opened fire at them during a patrol in the area south of Jenin”, thinking they were going to open fire on a nearby IDF post. (AFP, AP, Xinhua)

Up to 200,000 Israelis packed the Tel Aviv square where Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated 10 years ago to mourn the former Prime Minister and express hope that his memory would spur new peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians. (AFP, AP)

“Israel has become a partner for permanent struggle, not a partner for potential peace in the foreseeable future,” PA Prime Minister Qureia said at a seminar entitled “Jerusalem is the key of peace and freedom” in Ramallah. “Israel made sure of this through its repeated announcement of plans and projects to Judaize Jerusalem, to annex it and isolate it, both geographically and demographically, as if trying to take us from inside. I mean by this, they have spread despair and disappointment ... ultimately weakening our attachment to the holy city and destroying our efforts to resume the peace process in addition to fanning the fires of hatred,” he said. (AFP, Xinhua)

The PLO will submit a request to the Security Council to “form an international investigating commission into the assassination of the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat,” Farouk Kaddumi, the head of the PLO’s Political Department, said. Speaking to reporters after a meeting of Palestinian factions in Damascus, he said that all Palestinian groups had a common stand on the issue and Israel bore full responsibility for Arafat’s “murder”. (DPA)

Ha’aretz reported that Defence Minister Mofaz and security officials decided to lift the ban on Palestinian entry into Israel, which was imposed following a suicide attack which killed five Israelis on 26 October. (Ha’aretz, Xinhua)

The second annual “Forum for the Future” in Manama was attended by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and UK Foreign Secretary Jac Straw, along with 13 foreign ministers from Arab countries, including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Syria. The Arab ministers insisted that progress on democratic reforms would be difficult, if not impossible, without a resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Moroccan Foreign Minister Mohammed Bin Issa called on the international community to “link the reforms with renewed efforts toward the settlement of conflicts in the Middle East and toward finding a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict”. (AFP)

Former US President Clinton, speaking in Jerusalem, praised Prime Minister Sharon for his “very courageous” step in pulling all Israeli troops and settlers out of the Gaza Strip, but warned that unilateralism would not ensure a secure future for Israel. “As a strategy for the long term, the idea that Israel can continue unilateral moves ... seems to me highly premature,” he said. “If unilateralism becomes a strategy rather than a tactic, it will require a very high wall”. (AFP)

13

Palestinians fired a mortar that landed north of the Al-Muntar (Karni) crossing late, causing no damage to property and wounding none, *Israel Army Radio* reported. IDF artillery units responded by firing six salvos towards northern Gaza fields from where the mortar was suspected to have been fired. IDF sources said that the artillery barrage would last into the night. “Our response will be exaggerated and disproportionate,” said another IDF source, adding that if the mortar attacks continued, the IDF response would grow even stronger. (The Jerusalem Post)

Israeli warplanes broke the sound barrier over the Gaza Strip to “disrupt terror activities, engender fear among terrorists planning to attempt to fire rockets, deceive, create disinformation and a sense of threat and confusion among terrorists concerning the extent of IDF operations – their nature and specific locations”, the State Prosecutor told Israel’s High Court of Justice in response to a petition filed against the sonic booms by Physicians for Human Rights-Israel and the Gaza Community Mental Health Program two weeks ago. (Ha’aretz)

Israel allowed thousands of Palestinian labourers into the country, easing restrictions imposed after a Palestinian suicide bombing in Hadera on 26 October, a spokesman for the Government’s coordinating body for the Occupied Palestinian Territory said. Some 8,000 labourers from the West Bank and 500 from the Gaza Strip were allowed to enter Israel to get to their jobs, mainly in Israeli agriculture and construction. A further 7,000 Palestinian merchants were permitted to trade in Israel and 1,000 Palestinians were allowed to get to work in the Atarot industrial zone, north of Jerusalem. In addition, 500 Palestinians from the West Bank were allowed into East Jerusalem to take up their jobs in hotels there and 1,700 Palestinians who work with international aid agencies were allowed to enter Israel and the Gaza Strip. The spokesman said the latest easing of restrictions was open-ended, but depended on what he called “the security situation” and could be cancelled after further attacks by Palestinian militants. (DPA)

“Palestinian security forces last month foiled 48 attempted attacks against Israeli targets. This is because Palestinian security is making a 100 per cent effort,” PA Prime Minister Qureia told reporters. He was speaking ahead of talks with the Foreign Ministers of Hungary and Norway, Ferenc Somogyi and Jonas Gahr Støre. (AFP)

Middle East Quartet’s Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement Wolfensohn warned that time was running out for Israel and the PA to agree on opening the Gaza Strip’s border crossings, saying it would be a “tragedy” if an agreement was not reached soon, as the area was in danger of becoming a giant prison. (AP)

“Situations at Karni industrial crossing are worse than the period before the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip,” PA Civil Affairs Minister Mohammed Dahlan said at a joint press conference following a Gaza tour with Middle East Quartet’s Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement Wolfensohn. The two visited the former “Netzarim” settlement, the Rafah and the Al-Muntar (Karni) crossings. (Xinhua)

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, speaking at a conference in Jerusalem, pressed Israelis and Palestinians to prove their willingness for peace and said a Palestinian State would enhance Israel’s security. She urged both sides to meet their commitments under the [Road Map](#), saying, “If Palestinians fight terrorism and lawless violence and advance democratic reform and if Israel takes no actions that prejudice a final settlement and works to improve the daily lives of the Palestinian people, the possibility of peace is both hopeful and realistic”. Ms. Rice said no democracy could “tolerate armed parties with one foot in the realm of politics and one foot in the camp of terrorism”. At the same time, she urged Israel to ease restrictions on Palestinians to make it easier for them to do business. (Reuters)

The Right Rev. David Lacy, the moderator of the Church of Scotland’s General Assembly, said his visit to Bethlehem, now separated from Jerusalem by a concrete barrier, had left him “gobsmacked,” *The Scotsman* reported. “I was very much in sympathy with why the Israelis built a wall here, and still am to a certain extent,” he said. “But when you actually see where it is, you see that it’s not for security, it’s for making political statements. It’s the theft of land and I don’t know how you can justify it on the grounds of anti-terrorism”. (UPI)

The father of a Palestinian boy, killed by Israeli troops’ gunfire, said that he would address the Knesset the following day with a message of peace after donating his son’s organs to Israeli patients. The boy, Ahmed al-Khatib, 12, sustained serious wounds by Israeli soldiers’ gunfire in a raid on Jenin earlier in the month. The IDF said soldiers mistook Ahmed waving a toy gun for an armed militant. The boy died later in a hospital. (Xinhua)

14

Israeli troops shot and killed a Palestinian and wounded three more in the eastern Gaza Strip. The incident happened east of the Bureij refugee camp in open fields close to the fence separating the territory from Israel, Palestinian officials said. (AFP, AP)

Amjad Al-Hanawi, the 34-year-old head of Izz ad-Din Al-Qassam Brigades in Nablus, was killed early in the morning during an Israeli arrest operation that disintegrated into a shoot-out. Eight other Hamas members were arrested by Israeli troops during the same operation, Palestinian security sources said. Hamas militants vowed revenge after IDF troops had shot dead Mr. Al-Hanawi, the group's top commander. (AFP, AP, Ha'aretz)

Hamas military wing, Izz ad-Din Al-Qassam Brigades, said in a statement that "the painful retaliation of Al Qassam is coming, we say to the Zionists that you are going to pay the price". (Ha'aretz)

Palestinian militants fired at an Israeli vehicle in the Halhul region, south of Hebron, causing no casualties. One bullet, however, penetrated the vehicle.

Earlier, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip fired a mortar shell towards Israel, but the shell landed in an open Palestinian area, near the security fence, on the border with Israel. The IDF artillery units fired from Israel at targets in the Gaza Strip. (Ha'aretz)

The IDF arrested three Palestinian youths carrying an improvised bomb at the Hawara (Huwwara) checkpoint near Nablus, Israel Army Radio reported. (The Jerusalem Post)

Five Islamic militants, armed with assault rifles and pistols, burst into the Palestinian Election Committee office in Rafah, saying they would shut it down because the upcoming PLC election was "taboo in Islam," election committee officials said. But they fled without firing a shot as Palestinian police approached the building and took it over. The gunmen, who said they belonged to the Islamic Army, had demanded that the office be shut down, and had ordered employees to leave. The election committee had recently launched a voter registration drive for the upcoming vote, setting up 300 local registration points throughout Gaza. Committee officials said that the Rafah office would remain open, and that the registration drive would continue. Militants affiliated with Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades stormed the Khan Yunis municipality, demanding the PA merge them into the security forces. Some 100 armed men set fire to car tires before the municipal council as well as on the crossroads of the Bani Suhaila part of the city. (AP, Xinhua)

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice urged Israelis and Palestinians to capitalize on the opportunity for peace and cooperation offered by Israel's unilateral pullout from the Gaza Strip, saying a deal is "in sight" on border issues. Ms. Rice delayed her departure from Israel, apparently hoping to help reach a deal on Gaza border crossings. (AP, Reuters)

"We have discussed issues ... to avoid transforming the Gaza Strip into a big prison and we spoke of the necessity of opening the Rafah crossing point," PA President Abbas said at a joint press conference with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in Ramallah. "We are on the verge of reaching an agreement on [reopening the Rafah Terminal]. The agreement is close and will be implemented soon," Mr. Abbas also said. However, just moments before the Ramallah news conference began, PA Civil Affairs Minister Mohammed Dahlan told said, "We have reached an agreement on the subject of reopening and operating the Rafah Terminal". PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat said the Palestinians had accepted a compromise solution put forward by the Middle East Quartet's Special Envoy Wolfensohn. "The Americans are now waiting for Israel's agreement," one of his aides said. Mark Regev, a spokesman for the Israeli foreign ministry, denied any deal had been signed but said it was imminent. (AFP)

The new head of Israel's Labour Party has filed a bill in the Knesset that would provide compensation to Israeli settlers who choose to leave the West Bank. A spokesman for Amir Peretz said the measure would compensate settlers in enclaves where at least 60 per cent of the population wants to leave. In a statement accompanying the bill, co-sponsored by MKs Yuli Tamir and Ilana Cohen, Mr. Peretz wrote that the successful implementation of the disengagement should be leveraged for the sake of progress toward a permanent peace accord with the Palestinians.

(Ha'aretz, Reuters)

15

Israeli forces arrested 19 Palestinians: a Hamas member and six other wanted Palestinians in Bir Zeit, north of Ramallah, three Hamas and five Fatah members in Hebron, an Islamic Jihad member in Yatta, south of Hebron, a Hamas member west of Hebron, an Islamic Jihad member east of Bethlehem, and a Fatah member south of Bethlehem. (The Jerusalem Post)

Israeli troops fired 15 artillery barrages into a Palestinian shooting zone in the northern Gaza Strip throughout the night. The shelling was in response to an anti-tank missile that had been launched into Israel from the Gaza Strip. No casualties or damage were reported on either side. (Ha'aretz, Xinhua)

An Israeli army captain, accused of riddling with bullets the body of Iman al-Hams, a 13-year-old Palestinian girl on her way to school in Rafah, after she was shot by his troops, was cleared by a military court of any wrongdoing, the IDF said. "The officer was found innocent of all charges," an army spokesman said, giving no further details. Israeli media reports said that the military court had found discrepancies in the testimony of troops from the outpost and that one witness had withdrawn his allegations, saying Captain "R.", as the accused officer was identified by the army, had been unpopular and his men had lied in a bid to oust him. (Reuters)

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announced that an agreement had been reached to reopen the Rafah crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt in 10 days' time, following intensive talks with officials from both sides. With EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana and James Wolfensohn, the Middle East Quartet's Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement, by her side, Secretary of State Rice said, "I am pleased to be able to announce today that Israel and the Palestinian Authority have concluded an agreement on movement and access".

The Palestinian Authority welcomed the deal as important for improving the life of the impoverished territory's 1.3 million Palestinians, triumphant that Israel would no longer control the crossing. The accord set 25 November for the opening of the Rafah Terminal and provided for the continuous operation of Gaza crossing points such as Al-Muntar (Karni) and Beit Hanoun (Erez) crossings into Israel. It also allowed convoys to facilitate the movement of goods and people between Gaza and the West Bank. Secretary Rice cautioned the agreement was fragile, as were the prospects for reigniting talks to end more than five years of violence that have left nearly 5,000 people dead. (AFP, usinfo.state.gov)

A senior Israeli Government official said Israel would avoid arresting Hamas candidates during the Palestinian Legislative Council elections unless they were suspected of involvement in terrorist activities. The official also said Israel would enable the elections to take place in East Jerusalem in accordance with the Oslo Accords, but would not "make an effort" to assist the election process as it had done before. "For us it would be just a regular weekday, and we will not take into consideration the fact that this is an election day. ... There won't be a regime of free movement in the entire [West Bank], as was the case in the previous elections," the official said. (Ha'aretz)

In a televised address marking the anniversary of the Palestinian declaration of independence made in exile in 1988, PA President Abbas accused Israel of trying to avoid peace talks and pushing Palestinians into civil war by insisting that militants be disarmed ahead of any negotiations on statehood. He said that Israel was acting as though it had "no peace partner". Mr. Abbas accused Israel of "a determination that Palestinians pass through a civil war", insisting that negotiations could not start before the disarming of militant groups. He said, "[Israel] is seeking to impose a very dangerous option, and that is a long-term solution based on setting up a state with provisional borders controlled by the Israelis, divided by settlements into isolated cantons". (Ha'aretz)

The following statement was issued by the Spokesman for the Secretary-General on the Middle East:

The Secretary-General welcomes today's agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority on the Gaza-Egypt border crossing. He sees this development as a positive step towards building confidence between the two parties.

The Secretary-General believes that the opening of the Rafah crossing will contribute to improving the Palestinians' freedom of movement and economic activity.

The Secretary-General expresses his appreciation to the Quartet's Middle East Envoy, James Wolfensohn, and to the United States Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, for their efforts in brokering the deal, and he thanks the European Union for its proposed technical assistance in its implementation.

(UN press release SG/SM/10211)

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, representing the EU Presidency, and EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, issued a joint statement welcoming the "Agreement on Movement and Access" between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The following is an excerpt from the statement: "The EU is willing in principle to provide assistance with the operation of crossings at Gaza's borders on the basis of an agreement between the parties. We are now undertaking the necessary preparations and planning. With this border control monitoring mission, the EU will significantly reinforce its role in the field of security in the region." (www.eu2005.gov.uk)

European Commissioner for External Relations and Neighbourhood Policy Benita Ferrero-Waldner issued the following statement: "I welcome the significant breakthrough reached this morning in Jerusalem. ... The European Commission is already active in capacity-building on border issues, and in supporting the modernisation of the Palestinian customs services. A €40 million infrastructure facility was launched during my visit to the region last week. And I hope it will soon also be possible to unblock €25 million which I have earmarked for building a new cargo terminal for the Gaza airport. The EU stands ready to further support the agreement reached today with a range of measures, which respond to requests from the Israelis and the Palestinians." (europa.eu.int)

Referring to a meeting between PA President Abbas and former US President Clinton in Amman, PA Deputy Prime Minister Nabil Sha'ath said Mr. Clinton had gathered \$2 billion to support the peace process, 20 per cent of which is to be allocated to infrastructure and development projects in the Gaza Strip. (Wafa)

At a press conference in Jerusalem, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announced that President Bush had nominated Major-General Keitt Dayton to succeed Lt.-Gen. William Ward as US Security Coordinator for the Middle East "in an expanded mission to assist the Palestinian Authority and the State of Israel." (www.state.gov)

16

Israeli forces arrested six wanted Hamas members in the West Bank: three in Beitunya, south-west of Ramallah, and another three in the Hebron area. (The Jerusalem Post)

Israeli troops arrested a 16-year-old Palestinian boy carrying an explosive belt at the Hawara checkpoint near Nablus. (Ha'aretz, The Jerusalem Post)

Israeli soldiers, backed by military vehicles, thrust into Jenin and conducted an all-out search campaign, forcing residents out of their homes. Also, Israeli soldiers entered Allar town, north of Tulkarm, and arrested a 20-year-old Palestinian woman after breaking into her house. (Wafa)

Unemployed Palestinian workers held a demonstration in the Gaza Strip, demanding that more attention be paid to help improve their living standards. (Xinhua)

Following a meeting with PA President Abbas in Tunis, Secretary-General Kofi Annan said, "We had a chance to discuss developments in Palestine, the agreement that was signed between the Israelis and the Palestinian Authority, based on the six plus three programme that Mr. Wolfensohn put forward. ... [The Palestinians] need material help and support to get the job done. We are fortunate that it is someone like President Abbas who is leading the effort. He has indicated to me that the reforms will go forward, the elections will go forward as planned, in January. We, the United Nations, will be working with them on the elections as we did in the past. So, I want to congratulate you on yesterday's agreement. Agreement is fine, but the most important is implementation. So I hope both sides will implement it faithfully and expeditiously." (Office of the Spokesman for the Secretary-General)

EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process Marc Otte said the EU would dispatch 50 inspectors to the Gaza-Egypt border by 2 November, the target date for opening the crossing to Palestinian traffic. The team would help train Palestinian border officials, while ensuring Israel's security concerns were addressed, Mr. Otte said. (AP)

The European Union had reportedly decided to upgrade the assistance it provides to the Palestinian Authority and deploy a police mission to the Gaza Strip and other parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The mission will assist in the implementation of the Palestinian Civil Police Development Plan, advise and mentor senior members of the Palestinian Civil Police and criminal justice system, and coordinate EU and international assistance to the Palestinians. The mission will have a three-year mandate and will be composed of 33 unarmed personnel. (The Jerusalem Post)

Quartet Special Envoy James Wolfensohn reportedly said he might resign from his post, frustrated at his inability to persuade Israelis and Palestinians to work together. He acknowledged that it had needed the intervention of US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to broker an agreement on the reopening of the Rafah Terminal. "I am just going to see in the next quarter of this year what my own plans are and see whether I can still make a contribution or maybe there will be others who can do better than me," Mr. Wolfensohn said. (AFP)

17

IDF soldiers shot dead two members of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades near Jenin, PA officials said. (DPA, Reuters)

About 1,000 Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades militants, brandishing assault rifles and rocket launchers, marched through Gaza City and vowed not to give up their arms. (AP)

Israeli fighter jets broke the sound barrier over the northern Gaza Strip. Israeli tanks stationed near the borders of the Gaza Strip continued bombarding different parts of the area. In the West Bank, IDF forces arrested two Palestinian teenagers in Tulkarm, and another Palestinian near Bethlehem. (Wafa)

PA National Security Adviser Jibril Rajoub told reporters that Russia had decided to donate to the PA two helicopters and 30 army vehicles. (Xinhua)

Prime Minister Sharon and Labour Party leader Amir Peretz had agreed to hold elections in late February or March of 2006. (Ha'aretz)

PA and Israeli security officials would meet regularly to discuss the management of the Gaza Strip border crossings and settle any disputes, PA Minister of Planning Ghassan Khatib told the *Voice of Palestine*. He also clarified that PA and Israeli security officials, along with the EU monitors, would receive at a joint control room, several kilometres away from the Rafah Terminal, live pictures from monitoring cameras installed at the crossing. PA Director of Crossings and Borders Salim Abu Safiya confirmed that the Rafah Terminal would be opened on 25 November as scheduled. (Xinhua)

"I don't think that there are cells of Al-Qaeda in the Gaza Strip," PA President Abbas told *Associated Press Television News*. He added: "We told the Americans and we told the Israelis that Hamas is a part of the Palestinian people and we adopted democracy as a state for our life..."

Democracies do not pick and choose. The Palestinian people understand they ... have the right to elect and have the right to be candidates.” (AP)

18

Israeli troops shot and lightly wounded a Palestinian youngster near Ramallah after mistaking his toy gun for a real weapon. An Israeli spokesperson said troops were called to an area near Silwad, north of Ramallah, after an Israeli woman reported “hearing some shots.” The youth, 17, was transferred to Hadassa Hospital in Jerusalem. (AFP, Ha’aretz)

A Palestinian threw a firebomb at Israeli troops in Nablus. One soldier was lightly hurt. Meanwhile, troops arrested seven Palestinians in the West Bank. (Ha’aretz)

Israeli forces shot dead a Palestinian in Hebron. According to an army spokesman, the soldiers heard a blast as they were driving near Hebron while on patrol in search of militants, and they searched the area and saw a Palestinian man lying on the ground, holding a suspicious-looking object. Suspecting the object contained explosives, the soldiers shot the man. (AFP, Reuters)

Israeli soldiers, stationed in military towers along the border with the Gaza Strip, opened fire at a Palestinian working on his land in the Gaza Strip and wounded him in the foot. In Awarta, south of Nablus, Israeli settlers attacked an 88-year-old Palestinian who had been harvesting olives from his trees and beat him to the ground. (Wafa)

Israel continued the construction and expansion of settlements in the West Bank. The Israel Land Administration invited bids to develop 13 plots of land in the settlement of “Ma’aleh Adumim”, while the Housing Ministry issued tenders for building infrastructure in “Ariel,” “Ma’aleh Adumim”, and “Adam.” The Israeli organization Peace Now issued a protest against the construction and announced that the building was in violation of the [Road Map](#). (Ha’aretz, Reuters, Xinhua)

The Beit Hanoun (Erez) Terminal on the Gaza-Israeli border was partly closed due to a terror threat. Before dawn, the border was totally closed, but had been partly reopened by morning. Humanitarian cases and VIPs would be allowed to cross the border, *Israel Radio* reported. (Ha’aretz)

The PA was instituting changes in its embassies around the world, retiring ambassadors and establishing a code of conduct in reforms aimed at transforming its foreign services into a professional diplomatic corps. Some 22 ambassadors were retired and 13 others had been moved into different posts. Most of those retired were between 60 and 76 years old. Retirement age is 60. About 33 new ambassadors were appointed, most of them prominent academics. Among them was Ilyas Sonber, professor at the University of Paris, who will become the Palestine Ambassador to UNESCO, and Manuel Hasasyan, deputy chairman of Bethlehem University, who will be Ambassador to the UK. As part of the reforms, the Foreign Ministry raised ambassadors’ salaries. Under the new law, ambassadors can only serve four years on one posting. (AP)

Fatah postponed its first ever primaries, which had been scheduled to start today, saying it was unprepared to run the poll and citing internal dissent and extortion attempts by certain activists. The delay was not expected to affect the timing of parliamentary elections scheduled for 25 January 2006. (AP)

19

The Israeli army said it had arrested five Hamas members in the West Bank: two in Khirbet Karmel, south of Hebron, one in Tuqua, south of Bethlehem, and two in Arura, north of Ramallah. Also, Palestinians hurled three firebombs at an Israeli vehicle north of Ramallah. The vehicle was damaged, but the driver was not injured. An IDF force identified a Palestinian who had hurled one of the firebombs, and shot and injured the man. (www.idf.il)

Israeli troops and security forces arrested at least five Palestinians at checkpoints across the West Bank, all of whom were carrying some form of weapon. A 17-year-old youth with two pipe bombs was stopped at the Salem checkpoint near Jenin. A short while later, three other youngsters carrying two knives, a loaded ammunition clip for an M16 rifle and a number of bullets for a machine gun were stopped by troops at the Hawara checkpoint outside Nablus. In a third incident, Israeli border police, manning a checkpoint between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, arrested a Palestinian woman in her 20s who was carrying a knife. (AFP, Ha’aretz)

PA Finance Minister Salam Fayyad had tendered his resignation. In a letter submitted to PA President Abbas, Mr. Fayyad said he had decided to resign because he was contemplating running for the Palestinian Legislative Council elections scheduled for 25 January 2006, according to sources in the office of PA President Abbas. (DPA, Reuters)

Czech Foreign Minister Cyril Svoboda met with PA Foreign Minister Nasser Al-Kidwa in Ramallah. At a joint press conference after the meeting, Mr. Svoboda announced that his country would finance a \$2 million project to help provide electricity to eight villages in the northern West Bank.

Mr. Svoboda met with PA President Abbas the following day. (DPA, Xinhua)

According to a poll conducted by the TNS Teleseker company in Israel, 74 per cent of the Israeli public support a new “evacuation-compensation” bill that would enable settlers to leave their settlements and move within the Green Line border in return for alternative housing, and 35 per cent of the settlers, living east of the separation wall, support this bill. The poll was conducted among 500 members of the general public in Israel and among 500 people living in settlements on the West Bank side of the separation wall. (Ha’aretz)

20

Israeli troops swept into Hebron and arrested three Palestinians. (Wafa)

The Israeli army announced that it had reopened the Beit Hanoun (Erez) crossing for Palestinian labourers and traders. (www.idf.il)

A spokesman for the PA Interior Ministry, Tawfiq Abu Khousa, said the Ministry had embarked on a campaign to confiscate illegally-held weapons in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as part of a drive to improve security. He said that the new security drive was first being rolled out in Nablus, Bethlehem and Tulkarm and then would be moved into the Gaza Strip. (AFP)

PA President Abbas had issued a decree reiterating that the PLC elections would be carried out in all governorates and East Jerusalem on 25 January 2006. The registration for candidates was to start on 3 December and last for 12 days, and election campaigns would be allowed from 3 to 23 January 2006. (Wafa)

A poll conducted by the Centre for Opinion Polls and Survey Studies at An-Najah National University projected that 39.5 per cent of the Palestinians would vote for Fatah and 19.9 per cent would vote for Hamas during the upcoming PLC elections. (Wafa)

21

The Israeli forces arrested five wanted Palestinians: three Hamas members in Nablus, an Islamic Jihad member in Husan, west of Bethlehem, and a Fatah member in Jit, west of Nablus. (www.idf.il)

The European Union announced that the European Commission would deploy in mid-December an EU Election Observation Mission (EOM) for the PLC elections scheduled for 25 January 2006. The EOM will be led by Véronique de Keyser, Member of the European Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee and the EP Delegation for Relations with the Mashreq countries. (<http://europa.eu.int>)

The European Union formally agreed to set up a mission to oversee the Rafah Terminal between the Gaza Strip and Egypt. "The Council ... decides to launch, as a matter of urgency, a ... mission to monitor the operations of the Rafah border crossing point and welcomes the provision of EU assistance to reinforce Palestinian border management capacities," EU foreign ministers said in the conclusions adopted at the EU's 2691st External Relations Council meeting. An EU official said that up to 20 EU observers would be in place for the crossing to be opened "on time" on 25 November and could handle the crossing of 500 people until the entire mission of 50 to 70 observers was deployed within the following weeks. (AP, Reuters, <http://ue.eu.int>)

PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat told reporters that PA President Abbas would deliver the keynote address during the reopening of the Rafah Terminal on the Gaza Strip-Egypt border on 25 November. (Xinhua)

Prime Minister Sharon announced that he had decided to break away from Likud and establish a new political party because he did not want to squander peacemaking opportunities created by Israel's pullout from the Gaza Strip or waste time with political infighting. "There is no additional disengagement plan," he told a televised news conference. "There is the [Road Map](#)." He said that some West Bank settlements would eventually have to be removed, as well as the unauthorized settlement outposts. "We will work to set the permanent border of the nation while insisting on the dismantling of terrorist groups," he said. (AP, Reuters)

"On principle, we don't interfere in domestic Israeli affairs. What matters for us is to see a Prime Minister in Israel committed to the peace process," PA spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeineh said. "The PA is waiting to see the political programme of the next Israeli Government to see whether it will be a Government of peace or a Government that will continue to procrastinate and shy away from peace." "I've never seen anything of this significance," PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat said. "I believe this is an eruption of an Israeli political volcano and I hope that when the dust settles, we will have a partner in Israel to go towards the end of conflict." (AFP, Ha'aretz)

The Secretary-General told reporters: "Until now, we thought the only election was the Palestinian election in January and that the Israeli elections were going to be much later in the year. Given the political developments, that is also coming up about March, and of course we need to monitor it during this election period. Maybe there are certain proposals or issues that cannot be pushed and things are going to be at a standstill for a while.

And I hope that these elections will go smoothly and we can get back to pressing the parties of the peace process." (UN News Centre)

22

IDF troops wounded five Palestinian children in Hebron when clashes broke out between Israeli soldiers and the schoolchildren, who had been forced to enter a check room before reaching their schools, according to administration officials of the Al-Faiha girls' school and Al-Ibrahimia boys' school.

Sources added that Israeli soldiers randomly opened fire, threw sonic grenades and tear gas canisters towards the children, causing injury to five of them. Soldiers also fired tear gas to disperse some 300 schoolchildren who protested at the checkpoint. (AP, Wafa)

"I just finished an hour-and-a-half meeting with a very senior Palestinian personality, one of the most important persons in the PA," Israel's Vice Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said after meeting with PA Finance Minister Salam Fayyad. "We are making efforts to create momentum, to create a better understanding to persuade them to fight terror." He told *Army Radio*, "We want to continue a policy that will bring about the permanent borders of Israel ... in the framework of an agreement that is based on the [Road Map](#) that defines the phases of the agreement: first, to stop terror and afterward, the negotiations." (AP, Ha'aretz)

Outgoing Israeli Housing and Construction Minister Yitzhak Herzog (Labour) announced that he had approved 350 new homes to be built in the settlement of "Ma'aleh Adumim." Mr. Herzog, who held a press conference at the settlement before handing in his resignation letter, stressed the importance of continued building there. "Ma'aleh Adumim" is part of Jerusalem, and we support its communities," he said. An aide to Israel's new Labour Party chief Amir Peretz said Mr. Peretz also approved of the plan for 350 new homes in "Ma'aleh Adumim." (Ha'aretz, The Jerusalem Post, Reuters)

"We do not have contact with Hamas as an organization because it is on this terrorist list," said Benita Ferrero-Waldner, EU External Relations Commissioner. "But to do its job well ... the [EU] Election Observation Mission [for the January 2006 PLC elections] needs to be able to talk to the candidates, but to strictly limit those contacts to what is absolutely necessary." (The Financial Times)

Lawyers of the Palestinian Prisoners' Society reported that Palestinian detainees in the Hawara Prison would begin an open-ended hunger strike because of mistreatment by the Israeli authorities. They had received reports of beatings and torture in the Salem Prison in Israel, they said. (IPC)

In a statement referring to the Palestinian-Israeli agreement on Gaza border crossings, the US Department of State said, "The United States remains firmly committed to tangible progress toward President Bush's two-State vision of Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security." (www.state.gov)

23

A Palestinian was shot dead by Israeli troops during a military operation in Jenin in the West Bank. Khaled Fuqahaa, 24, died after being shot by soldiers who had opened fire to disperse stone throwers. Twelve Palestinians were wounded in gunfights after IDF troops entered Jenin. Three IDF soldiers had also been wounded. Palestinian security sources said a large Israeli troop containing some 80 tanks stormed into the city's centre, accompanied by dozens of jeeps and military vehicles. The Israeli army imposed a curfew in the area while the operation was taking place. As Israeli soldiers went through Jabal Abu Dheir, Al Marah, Jenin Refugee Camp, the industrial area and the eastern neighbourhoods, they encountered fire from Palestinians, witnesses said. Meanwhile, Israeli army units operating northeast of Tulkarm recovered a handgun, two hunting rifles and ammunition, and detained the owner, *Israel Radio* reported. (AFP, AP, Ha'aretz, Xinhua)

The Israeli army arrested a "wanted" Fatah member in Amrisha, south-west of Hebron. (www.idf.il)

Palestinian teachers taught pupils on the road outside an Israeli military checkpoint in Hebron to protest what they considered to be unnecessarily intrusive searches of children on their way to school. Israeli soldiers searched bags and made children lift their skirts before passing through the checkpoint on the way to school. About 200 children and 10 teachers began protesting at 7:00 a.m. PA Education Minister Mohammed Qawasmeh said schoolchildren regularly arrived late for classes and were forced to stand outside in poor weather while waiting to clear the checkpoint's gates every morning. (AP, Ha'aretz)

The senior Palestinian official at the Rafah Terminal, Nazmi Mhanna, said that the terminal would be opened temporarily to allow stranded Palestinians to return to the Gaza Strip. It would be open from 9.00 a.m. until 9.00 p.m. for two days, before its official opening on 25 November.

(Xinhua)

The Palestinian Legislative Council rejected a proposal to change the election law, clearing the way for parliamentary elections on 25 January 2006. Legislators voted 20-10 against the proposal, brought by lawmakers from Fatah. The legislators wanted to have all candidates compete on party lists. Under the current system, half compete on party lists and the others at the district level. (AP, Ha'aretz)

Prime Minister Sharon would offer Palestinians independence in return for security if he was re-elected next spring, according to his campaign adviser Eyal Arad. Mr. Arad added that Mr. Sharon rejected the principle of "land for peace," saying that land was not the root cause of the conflict, but security was. (DPA, Ha'aretz)

The Israeli Justice Ministry and security officials have rejected several recommendations of the Sasson Report on illegal outposts, which had been meant to prevent more outposts from being established and imposed deterrent sentences on those who established them. A Ministry spokesman confirmed the decision that considered four out of eight proposed amendments to security legislation "not necessary due to various legal reasons."

Ms. Talia Sasson said she was surprised by the decision. (Ha'aretz)

The Beit Sahour Municipality called for a protest of Israel's opening of a new military checkpoint near Rachel's Tomb (Bilal Bin Rabah mosque) in Bethlehem. Mayor Hani Al-Hayek said Rachel's Tomb was the main passage in and out of the city. "This is a big obstacle to all internationals going in and out of the district of Bethlehem. These Israeli acts around the city and at the Bethlehem 300 checkpoint are illegal and unilateral," the Mayor said. (Wafa)

The Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Ekmeleddin Iqbaloglu, expressed his grave concern at the deteriorating conditions of religious and historical sites in Jerusalem. He described the deteriorating conditions as results of Israeli practices, particularly excavations underneath the Al-Aqsa mosque and the wall of the Old City. (Wafa)

PA Minister of National Economy Mazen Sanakrot said the PA was planning to build 10 industrial zones in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. One would be built near Beit Hanoun in the Gaza Strip, with a \$3 million donation by the United States. Another zone would be built east of Khan Younis in the Gaza Strip. Mr. Sanakrot also said there would be a number of development projects totalling \$2.25 billion. (Xinhua)

24

The Israeli army arrested two "wanted" Palestinians in Yatta, south of Hebron, and a Palestinian youth carrying three explosive devices and two handguns at the Hawara checkpoint near Nablus. (www.idf.il)

Israeli forces arrested three Palestinians in Nablus, two in Bethlehem, and another in Ramallah. (PA State Information Service/IPC)

A senior Islamic Jihad leader, Iyad Abu el-Rob, surrendered to Israeli troops who had mounted a day-long siege of his hideout in Jenin. He gave himself up, along with an aide, after the soldiers had fired rockets at a five-storey building where the two men were hiding and began demolishing part of the structure. The army alleged that Mr. Rob had plotted three suicide bombings in Israel, including an attack in Hadera in October 2005 that killed six Israelis. (AFP, AP, Reuters)

25

PA President Abbas declared open the Rafah Terminal in an official ceremony. "It is a dream come true for us to be here to celebrate the reopening of the Rafah Terminal as a free crossing between us and our brothers in Egypt. ... Any Palestinian with his passport can cross the terminal when he wants," he said. Joined by EU Special Envoy to the Middle East Marc Otte and Egyptian Intelligence Services Chief Omar Suleiman, Mr. Abbas then cut a ribbon before symbolically handing over his passport to an official. The crossing was to be opened to Palestinian travellers the following day, initially for four hours a day until the EU monitors settled in. After the test period, opening hours would be extended. (AFP, AP, Reuters)

EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana welcomed the opening of the Rafah Terminal. "Our presence in Rafah is proof of our commitment. The EU is determined to ensure that the agreements facilitated by Quartet Envoy James Wolfensohn work.

This is done in full cooperation with the United States and our other Quartet partners, and in partnership with Egypt, whose positive contribution I welcome. We are also in Gaza because we want to revive the peace process. Resolving the conflict is a key priority for Europe. We want to promote cooperation and trust between the parties and to contribute to Palestinian State-building. I am encouraged by the open and cooperative attitude we have found from both sides," Mr. Solana said in the statement. (www.ue.eu.int)

Fatah held primaries in seven West Bank districts to choose candidates for the PLC elections in January 2006. Primaries were to be held in 16 districts in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, but only seven were ready on time, including Ramallah, Nablus and Jenin. No voting took place in Gaza, where 311 candidates are competing for slots on the Fatah list. Ahmed Diek, coordinator of the Fatah election commission, said PA President Abbas and a team of Fatah Central Committee members would choose the candidates for the other nine districts on 26 November. Mr. Diek said the failure to hold primaries in all the districts had been "due to conflicts, contradictions and differences" over the lists, adding, "This type of democracy is new to Fatah. The structure of the movement is still flabby and couldn't absorb or deal with a wide democracy such as this." (AP) Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti, who is imprisoned by Israel, won some 34,000 votes out of the 40,000 eligible voters during the Fatah primaries in Ramallah. (Ha'aretz)

The International Solidarity Movement (ISM) said that a human rights observer from the United Kingdom had been arrested by Israeli border police in Hebron after having escorted Palestinian children to their school. "He was informed that his visa had expired but explained that he had been given an appointment with the Ministry of the Interior (MoI) for renewal. He had applied for this renewal before his visa had expired and was given an appointment in three weeks time, as is the usual practice of the MoI. He produced documents to prove this appointment. These documents were refused and he alone was put into a Border Police van and taken to [Al-Hisba] Abraham Avinu police station," the ISM said in a press release. (www.palsolidarity.org)

Prime Minister Sharon had drafted a plan for a withdrawal from more than 95 per cent of the West Bank by 2008. Political sources said the plan was based on an assessment that the Palestinian Authority was not prepared to sign a formal peace agreement with Israel, and that under this scenario Mr. Sharon would order a unilateral withdrawal from more than 90 per cent of the West Bank but would retain control over air space. (www.menewslines.com)

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PA police and militants exchanged gunfire in the northern West Bank city of Nablus after police attempted to confiscate a stolen car. (DPA)

The Rafah Terminal was opened to passenger traffic for a few hours per day. (AP, DPA)

Yossi Beilin, head of Israel's Meretz-Yahad party, called on Israel to release jailed Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti. Israel's Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom said it was "out of the question to free an assassin who has blood on his hands and was duly sentenced by a court." "In politics, you

should never say never," said Transport Minister Meir Sheetrit. "If we are to reach a final peace agreement with the Palestinians, so that terrorism ends and total calm prevails, a pardon could be envisaged." PA Prime Minister Qureia called for Mr. Barghouti's release. (AFP, AP, Wafa)
"I want to give more chance to the peace process, and the emergence of Amir Peretz as the leader of the Israeli Labor Party may pave the way for a breakthrough and lead to unification of the dispersed peace camp in Israel," Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah was quoted as telling journalists. (Ha'aretz)

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Israeli settlers cut down and uprooted some 200 olive trees on Palestinian farms near the West Bank city of Nablus, residents and Israeli police said. (Reuters)

"The EU would pay its contribution to the Middle East peace process and continue to support the two-State solution," Prime Minister Blair told a joint press conference with PA President Abbas, held at the start of the Euro-Med summit in Barcelona. Mr. Blair, whose country holds the EU Presidency, welcomed the opening of the Rafah Terminal, saying it was one important step towards eventual statehood. "We'll have more crossing in the future," Mr. Abbas said. (Xinhua)

Israel's Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert urged PA President Abbas to disarm Hamas during their bilateral meeting held on the margins of the Euro-Med summit, an Israeli official said. "Olmert wished Mahmoud Abbas luck in the forthcoming elections to the Palestinian Council," the official said. "At the same time he stressed that Israel sees a danger in the participation of Hamas." (Reuters)

An Israeli security court sentenced Palestinian Legislative Council member Husam Khader to seven years in prison for aiding a militant group and failure to report a planned attack on civilians, the IDF said. "This is a political judgment as there is no legal basis for any Israeli court to judge a Palestinian member of parliament," PA Chief Negotiator Saeb Erakat told AFP. (AFP, Reuters)

The Arab League welcomed the reopening of the Rafah Terminal between Egypt and the Gaza Strip as "a historic achievement for the Palestinians and a fruit of their steadfastness." (Xinhua)

PA Civilian Affairs Minister Mohammed Dahlan announced that he was resigning from the PA Cabinet to run in the upcoming PLC elections. (Xinhua)

"Palestinian police and security services are today starting a security campaign to uphold the rule of law in central Gaza," a PA Interior Ministry spokesman said. The campaign, which will start in Deir al-Balah, will be extended to Khan Yunis next week and after that, to Gaza City and to Rafah. "By the end of December, the campaign of imposing law will be completed and will put an end to all illegal activities," he said, mentioning car theft, weapons and drug smuggling, and illegal construction on Government land. (AFP)

The PA accused Israel of placing obstacles in the path of its efforts to set up an independent telecommunication network based on country code 970. (IPC)

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A roadside bomb exploded near the house of a prominent member of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades in the northern Gaza Strip, but no injuries were reported. (Xinhua)

A Qassam rocket landed in an open area near the border of southern Gaza Strip. No casualties were reported. (Ha'aretz)

Four Palestinians were arrested by the IDF in Nablus and in the Arroub refugee camp north of Hebron. (IPC)

Two grenades were thrown at an IDF roadblock in Hebron without causing any casualties or damage, IDF sources said. (AFP)

Israel fired artillery at fields inside the Gaza Strip after Palestinian militants had fired a mortar and a rocket at Israeli villages just inside Israel, the IDF said. No casualties were reported. (AP)

Palestinian sources said that IDF troops, backed by several armoured vehicles and jeeps, had stormed the Zababdeh village, south of Jenin, and besieged the home of a Palestinian. In Jenin, the IDF surrounded the Arab American University and arrested at least seven students, witnesses said. PA security sources said IDF troops had conducted a raid in Tulkarm in search of two Islamic Jihad militants. The IDF arrested four Palestinians in Hebron; two were injured after the IDF opened fire at their car. (Wafa, Xinhua)

The Fatah primaries were cancelled in the Gaza Strip after gunmen stormed several polling stations. (AP)

PA President Abbas addressed the Euro-Med summit. (Wafa)

Palestinians in the Gaza Strip voted in Fatah primaries. At two polling stations gunmen fired in the air and forced the stations to close temporarily. (AP)

Israel will not allow Fatah primaries to be held in East Jerusalem. (Ha'aretz)

Israel's Magen David Adom and the Palestinian Red Crescent emergency services signed a mutual recognition agreement which officials said should help ease Israel's entry into the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement. "The agreement will bring to a conclusion a 100-year-old controversy regarding the emblem," said Micheline Calmy-Rey, Switzerland's Foreign Minister. (Reuters)

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Dozens of Palestinian inmates and guards were wounded in overnight clashes at an Israeli military prison near Ramallah. (AFP, Wafa)

IDF forces exchanged fire with PA police during a raid into Bethlehem, PA police said. One PA police officer was wounded. (Reuters)

Israel began testing a major crossing at the West Bank separation wall near Qalqilya. (AFP)

PA President Abbas decided to suspend the Fatah primaries in the West Bank because of suspicions of fraud, senior Fatah officials said. (AP)

In a telephone interview, Hamas political bureau chief Khaled Mashaal said, "All circumstances on the ground, the regional political atmosphere and the Palestinian situation are not encouraging to renew the truce. ... Hamas is not going to renew the truce because Israel did not abide by the conditions of the truce." (AP)

Hamas said on its website that three of its leaders were among the group's top candidates for the upcoming Palestinian Legislative Council elections: Mahmoud Zahar, Ismail Hanieh and Hassan Yousef. (Ha'aretz)

Israel's Vice Premier Shimon Peres had decided to leave the Labour Party and join Prime Minister Sharon's next government, should he be elected, a senior adviser to Mr. Sharon said. Mr. Peres will not join Mr. Sharon's new party, Kadima ("Forward"). (The Jerusalem Post)

Presenting Kadima's political platform, Justice Minister Tzippi Livni said the party would seek a "demilitarized Palestinian State not involved in terrorism." A draft party manifesto under debate seeks Israeli sovereignty over East Jerusalem and the largest settlement blocks in the West Bank. Kadima "will strive in this term to reach a final status agreement with the Palestinians and to set Israel's permanent boundaries," Transport Minister Meir Sheetrit said. PA Deputy Prime Minister Nabil Sha'ath stated, "We know that there will be no peace without an independent Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as its capital, and a just and agreed solution to the refugees." (AP)

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed at the United Nations Headquarters in New York and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B of 2 December 1977. At Headquarters, a solemn meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was held in observance of the Day, inter alia, addressed by the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council. Statements during the meeting were also made by the Committee Chairman and PA Foreign Minister Nasser Al-Kidwa. (UN press release GA/PAL/997)

Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Ibrahim Gambar**briefed** the Security Council on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.” Later in the day, the Council issued a presidential **statement** welcoming the opening of the Rafah Terminal. (*UN News Centre; UN press release SC/8565*)

The General Assembly continued its consideration of the item “Question of Palestine.” (*UN News Centre*)

The United Arab Emirates Red Crescent Society announced a donation of \$13 million to UNRWA. The funds would be used to provide new or repaired housing for 600 families in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip. (*UNRWA press release HQ/G/19/2005*)

The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), in its Humanitarian Appeal 2006**called** for funding of nearly \$6.5 million relief and rehabilitation assistance in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. (*www.fao.org*)

The Quartet Special Envoy's Office submitted the first fortnightly report on the implementation of the Agreement on Access and Movement covering the period 15 to 25 November 2005 inclusive. (*www.lacc.ps*)

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