

Division for Palestinian Rights

Chronological Review of Events Relating to the Question of Palestine

Monthly media monitoring review

November 2009

Monthly highlights

- PA President Abbas announces he will not seek re-election ([5 November](#))
- General Assembly endorses Goldstone report ([5 November](#))
- Central Elections Commission-Palestine says it could not hold elections in January 2010 ([12 November](#))
- PLO Chief Negotiator announces plan to seek Security Council's endorsement of Palestinian State within 1967 borders ([15 November](#))
- Jerusalem Municipality approves construction of 900 new housing units in the settlement of "Gilo". ([17 November](#))
- Israeli Prime Minister announced a 10-month partial construction freeze in West Bank settlements. ([25 November](#))

I

The Israeli military said it had fired on a Palestinian man riding a farm tractor, near the Erez border crossing, in northern Gaza. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli forces shot and injured a mentally disabled Palestinian man during an arrest raid near Nablus. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Two Palestinians were killed when smuggling tunnels collapsed on them on the Gaza-Egypt border in Rafah, medics said. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In an interview in Abu Dhabi, PA President Mahmoud Abbas told the Dubai-based Al-Arabiya television: "[The] US position is illogical. A six-month settlement freeze does not mean halting settlements completely, which is a condition for the resumption of the peace process". However, the PA President said that "there is no disagreement between the Palestinian Authority and US on resuming the peace process because Washington is negotiating with Tel Aviv, not with the PA". (*Ma'an News Agency*)

At a Cabinet meeting, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that he hoped that the PA would "get a grip" and drop its precondition of a settlement freeze. "We've done things that have not been done until today, although while we are taking steps toward negotiations, we have encountered preconditions demanded by the Palestinian side, which were never demanded before," Mr. Netanyahu said. He told his Cabinet that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had decided that US Middle East Envoy George Mitchell would extend his current visit to the region to bridge the differences between the sides. (*Haaretz*)

From Abu Dhabi, Saeb Erakat, head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), expressed his deep concern over the future of the Middle East peace process, saying, "We are at a critical moment. By rejecting a return to negotiations based on the principles of the Quartet Road Map, Israel has put America and the international community in a difficult position. The way forward, however, is not to drop the demand for Israel to comply with its obligations. Such a decision threatens to deal a fatal blow to the peace process because without a settlement freeze and the eventual dismantlement of settlements, there will be no Palestinian State to negotiate and no two-State solution left".

(*Wafa*)

In a joint communiqué issued at the end of a short visit to Cairo by King Abdullah II of Jordan, where he held talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, the two leaders warned that Israel's unilateral actions in East Jerusalem and other Arab areas were derailing efforts aimed at resuming peace negotiations with the Palestinians, and would thereby have a "catastrophic" effect on the region. They "stressed the need for an immediate cessation of Israeli unilateral actions, particularly the building of settlements and jeopardizing the identity of Jerusalem and holy places, which could only derail the chances of peace". (*Haaretz*)

In Marrakech, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that Israel's restraint on, but not freeze of, settlement building was an unprecedented and positive step, but it fell short of United States expectations. However, she said it would have a "significant and meaningful effect" on limiting the growth of settlements. She said that "successive American Administrations of both parties have opposed Israel's settlement policy", adding that "... the Obama Administration's position on settlements is clear, unequivocal and it has not changed. As the President has said on many occasions, the United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements". Mrs. Clinton was expected to meet Morocco's King Mohammed VI as well as hold a separate meeting with the Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal. (*AP, Haaretz*)

Palestinian security guards at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound stopped an Israeli man with a machine gun strapped to his back while attempting to reach the area using a ladder. Worshippers reported a struggle as the man attempted to flee, but there were no reports that he tried to open fire. He was handed over to Israeli police, whose spokesperson, Mickey Rosenfeld, confirmed that a "28-year-old disturbed man" had been picked up when he was found wandering around the area, but denied that the man was armed. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli police said that they had arrested Jack Teitel, a West Bank settler of United States origin, and charged him in an array of killings and terrorist attacks over the last 12 years, including the murder of two Palestinians, the bombing of a left-wing Israeli professor's home and the maiming of a 15-year-old boy who belonged to a community of Jews who believed in Jesus. (*The New York Times*)

Israel released Hatem Qafisha, a Hamas-affiliated member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), according to sources close to the official. Mr. Qafisha had been seized in 2007 from his home in Hebron. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

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The Israeli military arrested three Palestinians in the West Bank. (*IMEMC*)

A Qassam rocket fired from the Gaza Strip landed in an open field in the Sderot area in southern Israel. No injuries or damage were reported. (*Ynetnews*)

David Miliband, Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, and his counterpart from the Russian Federation, Sergey Lavrov, said in a joint statement: "We urge Israel immediately to end all settlement activities, including in East Jerusalem, and to allow access to the Gaza Strip. We urge the Palestinian National Authority to continue in its efforts to strengthen security and the rule of law, building on achievements reached so far. We affirm the statements of the Quartet and believe that a conference on the Middle East, to be hosted in Moscow, in consultation with the parties, shortly after the resumption of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, is an important stage in order to consolidate the positive dynamics on this track of the Arab-Israeli settlement and to help start movement on the other tracks including the multilateral dimension of the peace process". (www.fco.gov.uk/www.mid.ru)

In an interview ahead of a regional economic conference in Marrakesh, Arab League Secretary-General Amre Moussa warned that the Arab-Israeli peace process was on the brink of "total failure", as the Obama Administration had been unable to secure a total Israeli settlement freeze in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Mr. Moussa said that he still held out hope for United States President Barack Obama to push the peace process forward. (*The Wall Street Journal*)

An announcement by the Gaza electric company said that the company would immediately cut power to some areas because of Israel's refusal to allow the import of spare parts to repair the only power plant in the Gaza Strip. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel would be opening the Kerem Shalom and the Karni crossings, but would keep closed the Nahal Oz crossing, which was used for fuel and gas deliveries. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

According to a statement from the Al-Quds Centre for Social and Economic Rights, Israeli bulldozers had demolished two Palestinian houses in the Abu Tor neighbourhood of Jerusalem, resulting in damage to a third house and displacing 20 Palestinians. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israel released six Hamas PLC members who had been detained since 2006, officials said. This brought to 31 the total number of Hamas lawmakers released in recent months. (*AFP*)

Following a referendum, students at Sussex University in Brighton in the United Kingdom this week voted to boycott Israeli goods. The decision came in line with the international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign, calling upon Israel to respect international law and end the occupation of Palestinian territory. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

An Israeli judge announced the establishment of a new military court dealing solely with the sentencing of Palestinian children, Israeli daily *Ma'ariv* reported. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

3

Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) Chief of General Staff, Gabi Ashkenazi, stated that he believed a new war in Gaza was nearing. He said that the army could be fighting in cities, mosques, hospitals, schools and even kindergartens and added that "the enemies want to force us to fight this way". (*IMEMC*)

Maj. Gen. Amos Yadlin, head of Israel's Directorate of Military Intelligence, announced that Hamas had launched a rocket some 60 km into the sea, apparently as an experiment. Such a rocket could strike Israeli cities, including Rishon LeZion, Holon and Bat Yam, and possibly Tel Aviv. (*Haaretz*)

Rioting Israeli settlers forced a Palestinian family out of their home in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood in East Jerusalem, after the regional court denied the residents' appeal to remain on the premises. Shortly after the verdict was passed, dozens of settlers stormed their house with hired security guards and a violent riot erupted between the settlers and Palestinian residents in the neighbourhood, and police were called in. The Palestinians who currently reside in the area had been housed there as refugees by the United Nations after they fled western Jerusalem following the war in 1948. (*Haaretz*)

A Palestinian patient was reported to have died from lung cancer after he had been unable to leave the Gaza Strip for life-saving medical care. (*IMEMC*)

Detainees at Nafha prison in Israel, made up almost entirely of Palestinians, had gone on a hunger strike, the Palestinian Detainees' Society announced, as a reaction to prison guards performing cell searches at night and preventing detainees from carrying money to purchase food from the prison cafeteria. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A joint French-British UN initiative would call on Israel and the Palestinians to hold immediate, independent investigations into allegations of war crimes stemming from the war in Gaza as part of a bid to send the Goldstone report back to Geneva and out of the hands of the Security Council or the International Criminal Court, *Haaretz* reported. A source at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel said that French President Nicolas Sarkozy had informed Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu of the details of the initiative during a telephone conversation. Mr. Netanyahu asked Mr. Sarkozy to take action along with European Union partners in an effort to form collective opposition to any resolution at the United Nations concerning the Goldstone report. (*Haaretz*)

The US House of Representatives condemned the Goldstone report, by a non-binding [resolution](#), which described the report as "one-sided and distorted". The resolution was supported by 334 representatives against 36, with 22 abstentions. It called on United States President Obama to work to curb the report in international institutions. The draft of the resolution had been proposed by two members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee: Howard L. Berman (D-Calif.) and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.). (*The Washington Post*, *Reuters*, *Ynetnews*)

In preparation for discussion of the Goldstone report at the General Assembly, Israeli Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Danny Ayalon held a briefing for the diplomatic corps in Israel, urging countries to vote against it. Mr. Ayalon had accused the Palestinians of "manipulating international institutions in order to hurt and criticize Israel", the Ministry said. (*AFP*, *IMRA*)

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The Israeli military detained a Palestinian from the Qalandiya refugee camp and distributed a number of summonses from Israeli intelligence, in addition to seizing a resident of Burqin, according to Palestinian security officials. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli President Shimon Peres called PA President Abbas, reportedly asking him to agree to resume negotiations with Israel and to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu. Officials at the President's residence refused to comment on the report. In another development, Prime Minister Netanyahu told the Security Cabinet that Israel aimed to resume talks shortly, despite obstacles, such as the possibility of Palestinian elections in the

near future. (*Haaretz*)

The continued expansion of Israeli settlements could force Palestinians to abandon the notion of a State in the West Bank and Gaza, Saeb Erakat, head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO, told a news conference in Ramallah. Palestinians "should refocus their attention to the one-State solution, where Muslims, Jews and Christians can live as equals", he said. "We cannot have elections without Gaza because we cannot have a Palestinian State without Gaza", Mr. Erakat went on to say. He added that PA President Abbas would not seek re-election if there were no credible peace process with Israel. "A settlement freeze is a settlement freeze", he emphasized. "There are no half solutions", he continued. "We urged the Arab countries not to accept the US letters of assurances [which reaffirmed Washington's position that settlements were illegal and that East Jerusalem was occupied territory] as grounds to pressure us to return to negotiations", said Mr. Erakat. "Our problem is not with the US.

Our problem is with Israel. We cannot cash these letters anywhere". (*AFP, AP, DPA, Ma'an News Agency*)

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said, after meeting Egyptian President Mubarak: "There is no doubt that moving toward a State that reflects the aspirations and the rights of the Palestinian people must include all of the issues that have been discussed and mentioned by President Obama, and that includes Jerusalem". She added: "We want to assure you that our goal is a real State, with a real sovereignty", while speaking at a joint press conference with Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit. "Our policy on settlement activity has not changed. We do not accept the legitimacy", she said, adding that "[the offer] we have received from the Israelis... is unprecedented". Mr. Aboul Gheit said: "The Egyptian vision is that we have to concentrate on the end game and we must not waste time adhering to this issue or that as a start for the negotiations". He noted: "The United States did not change its position that it rejects the settlement building", but "the United States wanted the parties to start the talks".

(*AFP, AP*)

The Hamas official in charge of foreign relations, Ahmed Yousef, said that Hamas had contacted Swiss officials and clarified its position on the elections, unity and peace talks, which would then be passed on to United States and European Union officials. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

More than 100 Palestinians and human rights activists demonstrated in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah, in protest of a court-ordered eviction of a Palestinian family from a neighbourhood house. The protestors assembled in front of the disputed house and called for the family to be allowed to return to their home. (*Ynetnews*)

According to a [report](#) by the Israeli rights group B'Tselem, the Israeli military police was examining 21 cases where soldiers were suspected of inflicting harm on Palestinian civilians during "Operation Cast Lead". According to the report, not one of the investigations had developed enough that it would require an official indictment. Six cases involved soldiers who had fired at civilians who had waved a white flag, resulting in the killing of nine people, including two minors. Four cases involved soldiers using Palestinians as human shields. (*Haaretz, www.btselem.org*)

5

Israeli soldiers reportedly detained 16 Palestinians during overnight raids in the West Bank. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Israeli military seized 18 Palestinians in Nablus, Jenin, Qalqilya and Hebron. (*IMEMC*)

Israeli forces, accompanied by bulldozers, closed the main southern road to the village of Qaryout, south of Nablus. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Palestinian medical sources reported that four Palestinians had been wounded when the Israeli army fired artillery shells at a group near the Nahal Oz crossing, east of Gaza City. (*IMEMC*)

Egyptian security forces raided three tunnels and seized a large number of goods destined for the Gaza Strip. They also seized a car loaded with glass blocks near the tunnels in question. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In a televised speech, PA President Abbas said that he did not wish to run for re-election. "This decision is not a sort of bargaining, manoeuvring or bidding", he added. He said, "We appreciate the US stance regarding settlements and annexation of Jerusalem, but we were surprised that it is biased [towards] the Israeli stance. The problem which needs to be dealt with is the Israeli Government which refuses [halting settlement activities]. Israel also demands a resumption of negotiations without adhering to any [frame of] reference". Mr. Abbas' spokesperson, Nabil Abu Rudeineh, in explaining the announcement, said, "The peace process is heading towards a dead end and the American Administration failed to make Israel abide by international demands". (*Reuters, Wafa*)

The Secretary-General of the Executive Committee of the PLO, Yasser Abed Rabbo, told reporters at a news conference in Ramallah that PA President Abbas remained the preferred PLO candidate and that the PLO would reject his retirement from politics. (*Ma'an News Agency, AFP, DPA*)

The Palestinian Centre for Public Opinion released the results of a poll carried out during the previous month in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. It showed a drop in support for Hamas, with 52.1 per cent of the respondents saying that they would vote for PA President Abbas in the upcoming presidential elections and 14.5 per cent saying that they would support the leader of Hamas, Ismail Haniyeh. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The General Assembly, by a recorded vote of 114 in favour and 18 against, with 44 abstentions, [adopted](#) a [resolution](#) sponsored by Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen and Palestine, endorsing the Goldstone report and giving Israel and the Palestinians three months to undertake "independent, credible investigations" into serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law committed during the conflict in Gaza. The General Assembly requested Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to forward the Goldstone report to the Security Council. It further recommended that the Government of Switzerland, as depositary of the Fourth Geneva Convention, take steps to convene as soon as possible a conference of High Contracting Parties on measures to enforce that Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Finally, the Secretary-General was asked to report back within three months on the implementation of the resolution, with a view to considering further action by relevant United Nations bodies, including the Security Council. (*UN News Centre*)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel said in a [statement](#): "The results of the vote [on the Goldstone report] and the large number of Member States that voted against or abstained, demonstrate clearly that the resolution does not have the support of the 'moral majority' of UN members. Israel rejects the resolution of the UN General Assembly, which is completely detached from realities on the ground". (*www.mfa.gov.il*)

6

"Between now and the election date, we hope [PA President] Abbas will reconsider [his decision not to run]", said top Fatah official Mohammad Shtayyeh. "It's definitely an Israeli interest, as it is an American, Western, Palestinian one, that there be a moderate and pragmatic Palestinian leadership", said Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon. United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton reacted to Mr. Abbas' declaration by praising his leadership in working towards the creation of a Palestinian State next to Israel and said: "I look forward to working with President Abbas in any new capacity to help achieve this goal". The Foreign Minister of France, Bernard Kouchner, saw "a threat to the peace process" but "given there are no elections for the time being, one cannot say there will be any immediate impact." The Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, David Miliband, said: "President Abbas has played an absolutely critical role". Mr. Miliband added: "He has a lot of achievement

to his credit but he also has a major role in the future". The Foreign Minister of Turkey, Ahmed Davutoğlu, said that he hoped "the decision by Mr. Abbas is not his final decision". (AP, Reuters, The Jerusalem Post)

Norwegian prosecutors dismissed a complaint that had been filed by a group of Norwegian lawyers in April, accusing Israeli leaders of war crimes over the Gaza offensive. Chief Prosecutor Siri Frigaard said that there was "no good reason" to investigate alleged war crimes committed by individuals with no connection to Norway. Former Prime Minister of Israel, Ehud Olmert, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tzipi Livni and Defense Minister Ehud Barak were among the 10 Israelis that had been named in the complaint. (AP)

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that he would send the Goldstone report to the Security Council "as soon as possible". (Reuters)

General Assembly President Ali Treki said: "This vote [on the Goldstone report] was an important declaration against impunity; it was a call for justice and accountability ... while the General Assembly has fulfilled its responsibility and will remain seized over the matter, it is vital that all concerned now devote efforts to implement the resolution and ensure follow-up", he added. (UN News Centre)

The twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall was marked by mass demonstrations across the West Bank, calling for an immediate dismantling of Israel's wall and settlements. Israeli forces shot tear gas at the protesters who breached a section of the wall near Ramallah.

(Ma'an News Agency, Wafa)

7

A senior Fatah official told Ynetnews that, if serious progress was not made soon in the peace talks, the organization would consider reverting to violent resistance. "We are not talking about terror attacks and weapons, but we are talking about protests and [throwing] stones, like the anti-fence protests, and about strikes and protests by the people, so that the world understands that the next step will be unpleasant and we go back to the way things were before Oslo", he said. He added that "there are people who understand that clinging to the peace process damaged Fatah".

(Ynetnews)

Israeli President Shimon Peres, speaking at a public commemoration for assassinated Israeli Premier Yitzhak Rabin, called on PA President Abbas urging him to rescind his decision to step down. (AP)

PA Prime Minister Fayyad's plan for building a State in two years contains a "classified, unreleased portion" stipulating a unilateral State declaration, Israeli officials said. They told Haaretz that Mr. Fayyad had reached a secret understanding with the Obama Administration over United States recognition of an independent Palestinian State. PA spokesperson Ghassan Khatib said that he was not aware of any classified section of the Fayyad plan. He noted, "Haaretz is not reporting news of an [Obama-Fayyad] agreement; rather they are reporting worries and concerns".

(Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency)

Dozens of Israeli settlers attacked the villages of Burin and Iraq Burin, south of Nablus, throwing rocks at Palestinians, which resulted in clashes.

Israeli forces intervened, injuring a number of Palestinians, including journalists. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli sources reported that four Israeli settlers had mistakenly driven into Bethlehem and were transported by PA police to the Israeli Military Coordination Office. (IMEMC)

8

A rocket fired from the Gaza Strip exploded in an open field west of Sderot. No injuries or damage were reported. (Ynetnews)

According to a poll conducted by the Ramallah-based consulting firm Near East, 62 per cent of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank said they were against the decision of Mr. Abbas not to run. Meanwhile, supporters of Mr. Abbas demonstrated throughout the West Bank urging him to stay on. (Reuters, Xinhua)

Senior Kadima Party Leader Shaul Mofaz unveiled a peace plan that held out the possibility of negotiations with Hamas. While still saying that Hamas must accept the West's demands, Mr. Mofaz said that, if it won Palestinian elections in January, "I think that Israel must sit with a group that changes its agenda and the way it conducts business". He said that Israel should agree to Palestinian statehood on some 60 per cent of occupied West Bank land, and settlers living in these areas should be offered compensation for removal. "Any negotiation with the Zionist enemy regarding rights and legitimate recognition would only give it further excuse to commit crimes", responded Hamas spokesperson Fawzi Barhoum. (Haaretz, Reuters)

9

Israeli forces detained at least 10 civilians across the West Bank, Palestinian security sources said. Israeli sources put the number at 14. (Ma'an News Agency)

President Abbas should not "step down and the Palestinian arena already has enough problems", the Secretary General of the Arab League, Amre Moussa, said in a statement. (AP)

PA President Abbas was considering dissolving the PA and declaring the failure of the peace process with Israel, PA officials in Ramallah said.

He was now waiting to see if the United States and other parties would exert enough pressure on Israel to stop settlement construction and recognize the two-State solution before he made any decision, the officials said. (The Jerusalem Post)

Israeli municipality staff delivered a notice to demolish the Women's Society office in the Old City of Jerusalem, accusing the organization of unlicensed construction. (Ma'an News Agency)

United States President Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu met for two hours at the White House. A [statement](#) issued by the White House said: "The President reaffirmed our strong commitment to Israel's security, and discussed security cooperation on a range of issues. The President and Prime Minister also discussed [the Islamic Republic of] Iran and how to move forward on Middle East peace". United States officials said the delay in announcing the meeting had stemmed from last-minute discussions aimed at gaining from Mr. Netanyahu a more robust and public commitment to the peace track. (BBC, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, www.whitehouse.gov)

In an interview with Al-Hayat newspaper, King Abdullah II of Jordan warned that the lack of progress in peace talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority could plunge the region into an abyss. He said, "Jerusalem is a red line and Israelis must understand Jerusalem's standing among the Arabs, the Muslims and the Christians, and should not play with fire". (Ynetnews, UPI)

Speaking at An-Najah University in Nablus, Azzam el-Ahmad, a member of the Fatah Central Committee, said that Fatah was determined to hold elections all over the OPT, saying this was "the only solution to getting out of the current crisis and division among the Palestinians after the efforts of Egypt to reach a reconciliation deal had failed". He said that the party would not accept elections only in the West Bank, without Gaza Strip and Jerusalem. He said that PA President Abbas' decision not to seek re-election came "after he had been disappointed by the current division and feuds". (Xinhua)

Saeb Erakat, head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO, told The New York Times in an interview: "I think [President Abbas] is realizing that he came all this way with the peace process in order to create a Palestinian State, but he sees no State coming... So he really doesn't think there is a need to be President or to have an Authority. This is not about who is going to replace him. This is about our leaving our posts. You think anybody will stay after he leaves?" (The New York Times)

"Without repair, winter winds and rain will render damaged homes uninhabitable", said Maxwell Gaylard, UN Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, before touring a destroyed Jabalya neighbourhood in Gaza. "The winter will be particularly hard on the children of

Gaza, whose capacity to withstand the rigors of a cold wet winter has already been severely undermined by a marked deterioration of basic services”, he added. *(Reuters)*

The Israeli authorities allowed 330 cows to be brought into the Gaza Strip through a southern border crossing in a move that a spokesman for the Israeli military said was a “goodwill gesture”. About 3,000 cows were expected to be shipped into the Strip before Eid al-Adha in late November. *(BBC)*

Activists made a hole in Israel's separation wall for the second time near the Israeli checkpoint of Qalandiya. Israeli troops fired tear gas at the crowd, some of whom threw stones over the wall. Several demonstrators passed through the gap, hoisting a Palestinian flag and setting fires ablaze on the other side. *(Reuters)*

Senior Hamas official Mahmoud al-Zahhar said: “If Israel is interested in a swap deal to put an end to this affair, we are ready from now... .

The current Israeli Government is continuously occupying itself with a swap deal, in contrast with the previous Government, which would send an envoy and then disappear for months”. *(Ynetnews)*

Pete Seeger, American folk music legend, has been donating “several thousand dollars every year” to the Israeli Committee against House Demolitions (ICAHN), according to the committee's co-founder and coordinator, Jeff Halper. Mr. Seeger has been donating some song royalties to ICAHD for 10 years. *(Haaretz)*

As part of the international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, the Palestine Solidarity Campaign in the UK implemented a week-long boycott against several large supermarket chains in the UK that carry products from Israeli settlement. *(IMEMC)*

10

Israeli troops seized eight Palestinians during raids in the West Bank. *(IMEMC)*

Fatah Central Committee member Mohammad Dahlan said that the PA was looking into the possibility of turning to the Security Council and urging it to adopt a resolution recognizing the Palestinian State's borders. He also said that the PA would seek a State in line with the 1967 borders, including East Jerusalem, adding that all options were open at this time, including the possibility of a unilateral declaration of Palestinian independence. An American veto at the Security Council would prove that the White House was uninterested in the two-State solution, he said. *(Ynetnews)*

Speaking on France Inter radio, France's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bernard Kouchner, said that his country feared that Israel no longer desired a Middle East peace deal. He made clear he was not expecting any swift breakthrough in Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. Mr. Kouchner said that Paris remained deeply opposed to settlement building in the West Bank. *(Reuters)*

Danish news agency Ritzau quoted Danish Foreign Minister Per Stig Møller as saying that Israel must agree to “more concessions regarding the issue of settlements, the destruction of [Arab] houses in East Jerusalem and the free movement of Palestinians”. The *Berlingske Tidende* newspaper reported that Denmark would not back the strengthening of ties between the EU and Israel while it considered that Israel's actions were undermining a two-State solution. *(AFP)*

Quartet Representative Tony Blair and Israel's Regional Development Minister Silvan Shalom, along with Deputy Defense Minister Matan Vilnai and Minority Affairs Minister Avishay Braverman, attended a ceremony marking the reopening of the Jalame crossing, north of Jenin, to civilian vehicles.

The checkpoint had been closed since 2000. At the ceremony, Mr. Blair said that he believed that Prime Minister Netanyahu's Government was capable of conducting successful peace negotiations with the Palestinians. Mr. Shalom on his part said Israel was eager to resume negotiations but added that “it takes two to tango”. *(Ynetnews)*

IDF Chief of General Staff Gabi Ashkenazi said that the Israeli army had been carrying out numerous investigations into its operation in the Gaza Strip and was willing to look into any complaint of misconduct on the part of its soldiers. He said: “The [Goldstone] report and the claims that came out of it necessitate some sort of response”, adding that “the report accuses the Israeli Government of acting against the civilian population and of punishing activities. I have personally appointed five investigative committees and we have found mistakes”. *(Haaretz)*

Palestinian officials said that PA President Abbas was considering resigning from his positions on the PLO Executive and Fatah Central Committees.

They said that his announcement last week that he would not seek re-election was a serious decision and not a political manoeuvre as had been claimed by analysts. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

“Either we go forward decisively to a two-State solution in accordance with Security Council resolutions, or we risk sliding backwards”, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Robert Serry said after meeting PA President Abbas in Ramallah. “I conveyed to President Abbas the Secretary-General's strong support for his leadership. But it is clear that this precious asset is now in jeopardy. I believe President Abbas' announcement last week is a loud and clear wake-up call. I repeat the Secretary-General's call for a freeze on all settlement activity”. *(UN News Centre)*

11

Israeli forces seized six Palestinians overnight in Hebron and another in Nablus. *(IMEMC, Ma'an News Agency)*

PA President Abbas told thousands of Palestinians marking the fifth anniversary of Yasser Arafat's death in Ramallah that he would continue to refuse peace talks with Israel unless the Israeli leadership put a stop to settlement construction in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. He also said that “a [Palestinian] State with temporary boundaries exists as a choice within the Road Map plan, but we are declining to take that choice”.

(Ma'an News Agency)

The Speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council, Aziz Dweik, told the London-based *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* daily that Hamas would sign an Egyptian-mediated Palestinian reconciliation agreement by the end of November, after receiving guarantees from Egypt that its observations would be considered. *(DPA)*

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and French President Sarkozy met and announced in a joint statement that they had agreed to work towards “immediately reviving the peace process” in the Middle East. *(The New York Times)*

The European medical aid convoy “Miles of Smiles” arrived in Gaza after having spent 25 days waiting on the Egyptian side of the Rafah crossing.

The group brought in medical aid, wheelchairs, a number of ambulances and computers for schools damaged during the last war. The 60 individuals from 10 different European countries who accompanied the convoy were to meet with members of the Palestinian Legislative Council, the head of the Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, the families of prisoners being held in Israel and Gazan officials. *(Ma'an News Agency, IMEMC)*

Israeli settlers from “Tel Rumeida” attacked and injured two Palestinian boys in Hebron. *(IMEMC)*

A French labour union, the National Work Confederation (Confédération Nationale du Travail), announced that it had decided to join the international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navanethem Pillay, called on the Security Council to put more muscle into protecting civilians in armed conflict, citing Israel's war in Gaza and the situations in Darfur, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Afghanistan as examples of the need to end impunity. *(UN News Centre)*

The Palestinian Center for Development & Media Freedoms condemned the authorities in the Gaza Strip for shutting down a news conference organized by Ramattan News Agency to mark the fifth anniversary of the death of Yasser Arafat. *(Ma'an News Agency)*

12

Israeli forces reportedly detained seven Palestinians, including two minors, across the West Bank. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

King Abdullah II of Jordan and PA President Abbas, in a telephone conversation, discussed efforts to overcome obstacles to the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. King Abdullah assured Mr. Abbas of Jordan's full support of the PA in its efforts to kick start the peace talks towards setting up an independent Palestinian State on national Palestinian soil. (*Petra*)

Following a presidential decree on 23 October 2009, which called for presidential and legislative elections to be held on 24 January 2010, the Central Elections Commission-Palestine issued a [statement](#) saying that it could not hold the elections nationwide on the assigned date. Furthermore, it had confirmed its readiness to hold the elections "once the appropriate conditions ... in all Palestinian territories are met, in accordance with the law and in the service of the public interest." The Commission also indicated that Hamas had confirmed its objections to holding the elections in Gaza and had denied the request of its Chairman and Secretary-General to travel to Gaza to discuss this matter. (*Central Elections Commission-Palestine, Ma'an News Agency*)

The European Commission launched the second phase of its major programme, the "Seyada II" project, to support Palestinian judiciary. The Palestinian Chief Justice, Judge Issa Abu-Sharar, said that "we hope that the Seyada II Project will deliver assistance that responds to the judicial authority's needs and will build upon the experience gained from the successes and weaknesses of earlier efforts". (www.reliefweb.int)

The United Kingdom expressed its "deep concern" about the deteriorating humanitarian conditions in the Gaza Strip, especially with the advent of winter, as more than 30,000 persons remained homeless. A British Foreign Office spokesperson told *Asharq Al-Awsat* that "Britain is continuing to exert pressure on Israel to ease its restrictions on the entry of humanitarian aid and basic reconstruction materials". (*Asharq Al-Awsat*)

Israeli authorities opened the Kerem Shalom border crossing and would, according to a Palestinian border crossing official, allow through between 135 and 145 truckloads of commercial merchandise and humanitarian aid, with 15 of the trucks carrying 400 cows. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The International Conference on "Jerusalem: Religion and History" opened in Amman, with wide participation of Jordanian and other Arab intellectuals, clerics, thinkers and politicians. The two-day conference would discuss a number of issues, such as the role of scholars with regard to Jerusalem; Christians and Jerusalem and the effort of Hashemites in building the holy places in Jerusalem, among other topics. (*Petra*)

Israeli settlers cut down between 81 and 97 olive trees in the West Bank village of Burin, south of Nablus. PA official Ghassan Daghas, who holds the settlement portfolio for the northern West Bank, called the destruction "provocative and unacceptable". (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Israeli High Court of Justice decided to allow a Palestinian student to appeal her case after being deported from the West Bank to Gaza because her identification card had an address in Gaza, following a complaint filed on her behalf by the Israeli human rights group Gisha. (*AFP, Ma'an News Agency*)

Ibrahim Awad, the coordinator of the Popular Committee against the Wall in the Bethlehem area, said that Israeli forces raided his land and detained him, along with a member of the Village Council and nine international persons, near the settlement of "Efrata". The Deputy Director of Agriculture in Bethlehem, Ibrahim Masha'leh, said that IDF had detained dozens of international persons working on the rehabilitation of agricultural lands under the project "Green Palestine", near the village of Umm Salamoneh, south of the City. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The executive board of the University of Trondheim in Norway unanimously decided to reject the proposal for an academic boycott of Israel. (*Haaretz*)

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Palestinian sources said that Israeli troops killed one Palestinian and injured three others along the Gaza border, east of Bureij refugee camp. The Israeli military said that soldiers had opened fire at a group of five men who "appeared to be planting explosive devices" along the border. (*AP, Ma'an News Agency*)

According to Israeli sources, Palestinians fired a Qassam rocket into Israel, which landed in an open area in the Negev region, causing no casualties or damage. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

Jerusalem police detained a Palestinian youth in the Old City after he had pulled out a knife when stopped by a group of soldiers for a security check in the street. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

During a visit to a Be'er Sheva high school, IDF Chief of Staff Gabi Ashkenazi told students that, although the Hamas rulers had been lately "restraining themselves and others, ... if necessary, we will operate again in the Gaza Strip to stop the rocket fire". (*Haaretz*)

A survey of Israelis showed that the majority of the sample surveyed, 57 per cent, supported the Kadima Party's Shaul Mofaz' plan, which called for dialogue with Hamas under certain conditions. The idea had the support of about 72 per cent inside Kadima. Even 53 per cent of Likud Party supporters backed the idea. A great majority of those surveyed blamed PA President Abbas for the impasse in the peace process with the Palestinians. (*Haaretz*)

Israel accused Sweden of trying to alter the position of the European Union regarding the status of Jerusalem in a way that would define the city officially as the capital of both Israel and Palestine. Senior Israeli officials and European diplomats saw the initiative as putting pressure on Israel in the current political impasse in the peace process. A senior Israeli official said that, earlier in the week, Israel's Ministry for Foreign Affairs had relayed instructions to missions in EU countries asking them to take action against the Swedish initiative on Jerusalem. (*Haaretz*)

Save the Children UK warned that intolerable living conditions had been driving families living in areas of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, identified by the United Nations as high risk, to abandon their land and homes. Palestinians in such areas, which included most of the rural West Bank and the Gaza border area, or "buffer zone", faced daily shortages of food and water, high unemployment, insecurity, separation from families and lack of access to schooling. They were also poorer, less protected and more vulnerable than those living elsewhere. (*Wafa, www.savethechildren.org.uk*)

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Egyptian security forces shut down four smuggling tunnels on the border with the Gaza Strip. Large quantities of merchandise were seized in the operation, as well as a minibus which had allegedly been used for delivering goods to the tunnels. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

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A Palestinian farmer was wounded by Israeli fire east of Beit Hanoun in the Gaza Strip. In a separate incident, a bird hunter was injured in the back by Israeli forces east of the Erez border crossing with Israel. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

According to reports, Israeli border guards had detained and deported to the West Bank 252 Palestinians working in Israel without the required permits. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Israeli military arrested four Palestinians in Bethlehem and Ramallah and took them to Israeli investigation centres for interrogation, according to Palestinian sources. (*Petra*)

Israeli sources reported that French President Nicolas Sarkozy had offered to host an international summit in Paris to break the deadlock in the Middle East peace process. Mr. Sarkozy reportedly first raised the proposal in his meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu on 11 November, then with PA

President Abbas and Syrian President Al-Assad. Neither Mr. Netanyahu nor Mr. Abbas had rejected the offer, though the position of the US Administration remained unclear. (*Haaretz*)

In a written message commemorating Palestine Independence Day, PA President Abbas said that independence was already a reality embodied in the Palestinian people's lives, actions and accomplishments. Mr. Abbas also said that all countries and international forces "that support freedom, justice and peace" backed the Palestinian struggle and urged the people of the world to redouble their efforts to support the Palestinian people and help them achieve independence and get rid of occupation. He warned that, unless the Palestinian people were afforded their rights, the whole region would never enjoy stability and prosperity. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Saeb Erakat, head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization, said that Palestinians had decided to turn to the Security Council for recognition of a Palestinian State. "Now is our defining moment. We went into this peace process in order to achieve a two-State solution", he said. "The end game is to tell the Israelis that now the international community has recognized the two-State solution on the '67 borders." (*Haaretz*)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu told the [Saban Forum](#) in Jerusalem: "There is no substitute for negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority and any unilateral path will only unravel the framework of agreements between us and will only bring unilateral steps from Israel's side". He said that the negotiations must cover the security situation. (*Haaretz*)

Former US President Bill Clinton told the Saban Forum that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict could possibly be solved during President Obama's tenure and urged Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Obama to maintain a policy of honesty during their private talks with each other. Referring to Israel's willingness to curb settlement growth, he reiterated the praise that US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had expressed in the previous month when she described Israel's gestures as "unprecedented". (*Haaretz*)

Palestinian sources said that there were no plans for Egypt either to re-discuss the reconciliation proposal, or to make amendments. Quoting Egyptian officials, the sources added that the proposal was ready and efforts would be made to get all sides to sign it. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

PA Prime Minister Fayyad said that the PA had begun a two-year development plan meant to lay the groundwork for independence. According to Mr. Fayyad, this plan was separate from the independence plan announced over the weekend by the PLO. (*Haaretz*)

It was reported that Israeli forces had distributed demolition orders to nine Palestinian families from the Al-Hathalin area south of Hebron, near the "Carmel" settlement. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine released a statement saying that Greek Member of the Parliament Nikos Hountis, of the Coalition of the Radical Left, had asked on 12 November that the European Commission look into the case of Ahmad Saadat, its Secretary General who had been in jail since 2006, as well as those of others in Israeli jails. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights condemned the murder by the Israeli military of a child and the arrest of four civilians, all of whom were 17- and 18-year-olds, near the Gaza border with Israel, on 13 November. The children had been unarmed and had not posed any danger to the Israeli forces. (*Wafa*)

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Israeli forces arrested seven Palestinians in Ramallah, Hebron and Jenin. (*Wafa*)

The Palestinians have asked the European Union to support their plan to ask the United Nations to recognize an independent Palestinian State without Israeli consent. The State would be made up of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and have East Jerusalem as its capital. (*AFP*)

Hassan Abu Libdeh, PA Minister of [National] Economy, urged Japan to support PA efforts to secure statehood, stating at a news conference in Tokyo that he would discuss with Japanese officials the possibility of the Government lending support to "the Palestinian side in our efforts to bring together the basic foundation of the Palestinian State... I believe the Japanese Government can exercise some of its weight not only directly but also with other ... friends who have relationships with Israel", he added. (*Kyodo*)

"If the Palestinians take ... a unilateral line, Israel should also consider ... passing a law to annex some of the settlements", Minister of Environmental Protection Gilad Erdan, a close ally of Prime Minister Netanyahu, told Israel Radio. According to Israeli sources, Israel may even consider withdrawing from the Oslo Accords. (*Ma'an News Agency, Reuters*)

"Instead of threatening to unilaterally declare a Palestinian State to be established in the air, we should work on liberating the occupied territories and end the current internal [Palestinian] division", said Salah Al-Bardawil, a senior Hamas leader. (*DPA*)

Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman told the Knesset: "During Operation Cast Lead, the Palestinian Authority pressured us to crush Hamas. Then, a month later, they submitted a complaint against us to the International Criminal Court in The Hague". (*Haaretz*)

US State Department spokesperson Ian Kelly said that during a [daily press briefing](#): "Our position is clear. We support the creation of a Palestinian State that is contiguous and viable. But we think that the best way to achieve that is through negotiations by the two parties". (*Ma'an News Agency, www.state.gov*)

King Abdullah II and Queen Rania of Jordan met with a delegation from the American Israel Public Affairs Committee and discussed the importance of overcoming obstacles hindering the ending of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the basis of the two-State solution within a comprehensive regional context. (*Petra*)

As part of the 3,000 units scheduled to be constructed in the coming months in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, settlement construction has begun in Ras al-Amud, in the "Pisgat Ze'ev" settlement, and a number of other East Jerusalem settlements. (*IMEMC*)

The Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) released a [report](#) entitled "Israeli settler violence and the evacuation of outposts". ([www.ochaopt.org](#))

Israeli authorities opened the Kerem Shalom and Karni crossings with Gaza, while Nahal Oz remained closed. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

In an annual [report](#) to the General Assembly on human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that Israel should end the blockade of Gaza, cease evictions and the demolition of Palestinian homes and ensure that the rights of children were respected and that all allegations of torture and ill-treatment were promptly investigated and perpetrators prosecuted. "In particular, the Government of Israel should allow unimpeded access to Gaza for humanitarian aid and the non-humanitarian goods needed for the reconstruction of properties and infrastructure ... Israel should also address effectively and immediately the water, sanitation and environmental crisis in Gaza", he stressed, citing the devastating damage stemming from Israel's military action against Hamas last winter and its blockade of many materials other than foodstuffs, medical supplies, stationery and some industrial or electrical appliances. "Those heavy import restrictions, coupled with a near total prohibition on exports, have had a devastating effect on the Gaza economy. The blockade has also severely impaired the realization of a wide range of economic, social and cultural rights, as well as civil and political rights", Mr. Ban said. (*UN News Centre*)

Six Israeli bulldozers and four tanks entered the Zeitoun neighbourhood in the Gaza Strip, damaging land near the border, police in Gaza reported. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli troops fired at a Palestinian who had apparently been attempting to cross the Gaza border fence and moderately injured him. The Israeli army said that the man had refused to heed calls to stop. (*The Jerusalem Post*)

A Palestinian woman was arrested at a checkpoint in Hebron after she had refused to remove her clothes in front of Israeli soldiers, local sources said. Israeli soldiers pulled a Palestinian man from his car near Hebron and beat him, causing moderate injuries, the victim reported. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Palestinians were prevented from leaving the Azzun village south of Qalqilya after Israeli forces imposed a curfew on the area. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

PA President Abbas said that the impasse in the Middle East peace process had left him no choice but to seek international recognition. "We feel we are in a very difficult situation," he said in Cairo after talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. Mr. Abbas said that the move was not unilateral and enjoyed the backing of Arab countries. "The decision emanates from an Arab follow-up committee (of the Arab League) that was convened recently ... and which agreed to go to the Security Council for it to say that it supports an independent Palestinian State", he said. (*AFP*)

Saeb Erakat, head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO, said that the Palestinians would not unilaterally declare an independent State but rather seek a Security Council resolution endorsing a two-State solution along the pre-1967 lines. "What we are seeking is to preserve the two-State solution," he said. "One State is not an option". (*The Jerusalem Post*)

The Foreign Minister of Sweden, Carl Bildt, said that the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the European Union would discuss support for the Palestinians at a meeting later in the day but that it was premature to discuss recognizing a Palestinian State. "I would hope we would be in a position to recognize a Palestinian State but there has to be one first. So I think that is a bit premature. ... We would be ready to recognize a Palestinian State but conditions are not there as of yet", he told reporters. (*Reuters*)

French President Nicolas Sarkozy said in an interview with the Saudi *Al-Riyadh* daily, published on its web site before a visit to Saudi Arabia: "The absolute priority lies in re-launching the peace process as soon as possible. There is a pressing need for it. The current stalemate serves the interest of the extremists". He added: "Relaunching the [peace] talks will not be possible without strong initiatives, specifically on the settlements issue. ... The dead end we are faced with today causes great concern". (*Reuters*)

Senior PLO officials said that PA President Abbas' term would be extended by its Central Council at a meeting to be held on 15 December. "The Central Council has only one solution and it is to entrust the President, as head of the PLO, with continuing as President of the Palestinian Authority until it is able to hold presidential and legislative elections", said Azzam al-Ahmad, a senior Fatah official. His view was reflected by other members of the Central Council, including representatives of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Palestine Liberation Front. (*Reuters*)

The Swedish EU Presidency issued a statement expressing great concern about the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. Noting that the situation on the ground had not improved since January 2009, the statement said: "The continued policy of closure, which has been in place since 2007, has devastated the private sector economy and further damaged the natural environment. The poor water quality is particularly worrying. The essential reconstruction of homes, schools and health facilities to which the international community, including the European Union committed itself at the donors conference in Sharm el-Sheikh, is still prevented. While extremists stand to gain from the current situation, the plight becomes worse for the civilian population, half of which are children". (www.se2009.eu)

The Jerusalem municipal planning committee approved the construction of 900 new housing units in the "Gilo" settlement in Jerusalem. (*Haaretz*)

US President Obama told Fox News in an interview that additional settlement building did not make Israel safer. He said that such moves made it harder to achieve peace in the region and embittered the Palestinians in a way that he said could be very dangerous. "We are dismayed at the Jerusalem planning committee's decision to move forward on the approval process for the expansion of Gilo [settlement] in Jerusalem", said White House spokesperson Robert Gibbs. "At a time when we are working to re-launch negotiations, these actions make it more difficult for our efforts to succeed". He added: "The US also objects to other Israeli practices in Jerusalem related to housing, including the continuing pattern of evictions and demolitions of Palestinian homes". US Special Envoy George Mitchell called on Israel to stop construction in "Gilo", according to Israeli media. Responding to the White House statement, Nabil Abu Rudeineh, spokesperson for President Abbas, said: "There should be real American pressure on the Israelis to stop all these acts", he told AP. "The Foreign Secretary has been very clear that a credible deal involves Jerusalem as a shared capital", a British statement said. "Expanding settlements on occupied land in East Jerusalem makes that deal much harder.

So this decision on Gilo is wrong and we oppose it". The Swedish Presidency of the EU expressed dismay at the Israeli settlement decision. In a statement, the Office of Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu defended the plan: "This concerns a routine procedure of the district planning commission", the statement said. "The neighbourhood of Gilo is an integral part of Jerusalem". (*AFP, AP, Canadian Press Agency, Ma'an News Agency, The Jerusalem Post, www.whitehouse.gov, www.se2009.eu*)

Five Israeli settlers beat a Palestinian family on their way home through the south Hebron Hills and robbed two international persons accompanying them, members of the Christian Peacemaker Teams said in a statement. (*Ma'an News Agency, Wafa*)

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

The Secretary-General deplores the Government of Israel's decision today to expand Gilo settlement, built on Palestinian territory occupied by Israel in the 1967 war.

The Secretary-General reiterates his position that settlements are illegal and calls on Israel to respect its commitments under the Road Map to cease all settlement activity, including natural growth. He believes that such actions undermine efforts for peace and cast doubt on the viability of the two-State solution. (*UN press release SG/SM/12609*)

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Israeli security sources said that a rocket fired from northern Gaza Strip had landed in Western Negev causing no damage or injuries. (*Palestine Press Agency, Ynetnews*)

The IDF detonated an explosive device planted near an IDF patrol at the border with the central Gaza Strip. (www.idf.il)

Israeli forces detained 35-year-old Issam Ahmad Iteawi, in Tulkarm and 21-year-old Abdullah Ibrahim Thawabteh in Bethlehem; in addition they seized three Palestinians elsewhere in the West Bank. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

A Hamas-affiliated Gaza charity, Waad, offered \$1.4 million to any Arab citizen of Israel who abducts an Israeli soldier. (*AP*)

PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad said that the PA decision to bring up the issue of gaining recognition of a Palestinian independent State at the

Security Council was correct in light of the ongoing Israeli settlement activities. He said, "The decision of the Israeli Government to build 900 more housing units in 'Gilo' settlement in East Jerusalem is the best proof on the righteousness of our stance". (*Palestine Press Agency*)

Former PA Prime Minister and member of the PLO Executive Committee, Ahmed Qureia, said that Israel's decision to build 900 homes in the settlement of "Gilo" would make a two-State solution at any time in the future "hopeless" and bring the entire region to a place of instability. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said that the preliminary approval given to build 900 units in the settlement of "Gilo" while regrettable, would not stop the diplomatic process. Mr. Kouchner spoke in Jaffa after a ceremony bestowing a high French honor on former Minister and Knesset Member (MK) Yossi Beilin. Mr. Beilin said that, within the next few days, Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu would be declaring a 10-month moratorium on settlement construction, adding, "The Americans will say it's not enough, but it is enough to resume negotiations." He noted that the settlement freeze would not include Jerusalem and would allow building for "natural growth". He warned, though, that the Palestinians would reject the move, resulting in "a dangerous vacuum created in which there is a real danger that the Palestinian Authority will fall apart". (*The Jerusalem Post, Ynetnews*)

France's President Sarkozy and Saudi King Abdullah agreed in talks on the need "for rapid steps to re-launch the peace process", an official of the French Presidency told AFP. The official would not comment on reports that France was offering to host a new Middle East peace conference. (*AFP*)

Israel needs to move quickly to advance the peace process, visiting French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said as he began a round of meetings with Israeli officials. "The coming days are a test for the Israeli Government, since time is not on the side of both parties", Israeli media quoted Mr. Kouchner as saying, urging Israelis and Palestinians to resume peace talks from the point they had reached a year earlier. He arrived in Israel after having met PA President Abbas in Amman, where he called on Mr. Abbas to remain in office, saying his leadership of the Palestinian people was indispensable to the success of the peace process. (*Haaretz*)

Israeli bulldozers demolished a two-family Palestinian home in the area of Al-Issawiya in East Jerusalem. A local spokesperson said that the forces had been intent to carry out more demolitions and that the Jerusalem municipality had handed the owners of 24 homes demolition warrants. (*Ma'an News Agency, Palestine Press Agency*)

Israeli police have been investigating suspected document fraud involving the transfer of Palestinian-owned land committed by the chairman of the Knesset Constitution, Law and Justice Committee, MK David Rotem, according to Secretary-General of the "Amana" settlement housing group Ze'ev Hever, and prominent settlement leader, Yoel Tzur. The investigation centred on land in the outpost of "Pisgat Yaakov", which had been set up in 2001. (*Haaretz*)

German mediators were continuing to broker efforts to produce a prisoner swap deal with the release of captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, senior Hamas leader Usama Al-Muzeini said. Mr. Al-Muzeini, the Hamas official in charge of the talks, insisted that offering further details could jeopardize the success of the negotiations which were "overcoming obstacles". (*Ma'an News Agency*)

At the French Consulate in Jerusalem, France's Foreign Minister Kouchner signed a €2 million reconstruction project for the Al-Quds Hospital in Gaza which had been heavily damaged during Operation Cast Lead. The hospital was the Red Crescent's main centre in the Gaza Strip. (*AFP*)

Israeli forces razed two houses in the Al-Bustan neighbourhood of Silwan in East Jerusalem amid violent protests by Palestinian residents of the city.

Seven Palestinians were injured and dozens of others assaulted as Israeli troops fired tear gas canisters at the growing crowd while bulldozers wrecked the homes. The destroyed buildings had housed 18 people. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

The Russian Federation's Foreign Ministry expressed extreme concern over Israel's plan to build 900 new houses in "Gilo" in East Jerusalem. "We hope the Government of Israel will comprehensively weigh up the situation and that these plans will be revised", the Ministry said. (*www.mid.ru*)

Saudi Arabian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Osama Nugali said that Israel's decision to build 900 new homes in East Jerusalem constituted a "major obstacle" to efforts to restart Middle East peace talks. (*AFP*)

The PA Ministry of Communications and Information Technology announced that the Universal Postal Union had allocated a postal code for Palestine. The head of the Palestinian Mission to the Union, Mahmoud Diwan, said that the move would help guarantee the independence of the Palestinian postal system. Currently, mail destined for the Occupied Palestinian Territory must be posted in "care of" or "via" Israel. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

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Israeli aircraft struck an alleged weapons factory and two suspected smuggling tunnels in the Rafah border area in the Gaza Strip. Palestinian officials reported no casualties, but Reuters said that three people had been injured in the attack. (*BBC, www.idf.il*)

An Israeli stabbed a 42-year-old Palestinian in the Israeli settlement of "Ramat Eshkol", in East Jerusalem, Israeli police told *Eidiot Ahronot*. The victim told paramedics that he had been attacked while waiting for a bus. (*Ma'an News Agency*)

Israeli soldiers disguised as Palestinians arrested Muhammad Yassin, 19, at his home in the village of Bil'in. Residents said Mr. Yassin had been a regular participant in rallies against the wall. (*Ynetnews*)

The IDF arrested two Palestinian civilians during home searches in Hebron city. (*IMEMC*)

PA President Abbas said that Israel had been conducting secret negotiations with Hamas. In an interview in Arabic with BBC, Mr. Abbas reportedly said that the talks between Israel and Hamas had revolved around a Palestinian State with temporary borders. He reiterated his criticism of Israel, saying that it was not truly interested in peace, adding, "Washington isn't pushing Israel enough to advance the peace process". Hamas denied Mr. Abbas's assertion, insisting that no secret talks with Israel had been held. (*Haaretz, Ma'an News Agency*)

Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva received PA President Abbas for the first in a series of discussions on forging peace in the Middle East. President Lula was expected to reaffirm his support for an intervention by the international community that could eventually lead to a peace agreement. The two Presidents were also expected to sign a technical cooperation agreement. Prior to the meeting, the Brazilian Foreign Ministry, in a statement, had expressed its "profound concern" over the planned building of 900 settlement homes in East Jerusalem and asked Israel to improve "political conditions" to attain peace. (*DPA*)

France's Foreign Minister Kouchner told reporters, after meeting with PA President Abbas, that he hoped Mr. Abbas' decision not to stand for a second term would be reversible. He said that they had discussed the recent Palestinian proposal for the recognition of a Palestinian State and the idea of approaching the Security Council, of which France was a permanent member. He said that despite the impasse with the settlement activity, he sensed that "Abu Mazen [President Abbas] and Saeb Erakat [head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO] are keen to resume the talks as soon as possible". (*diplomatie.gouv.fr*)

In an interview with Reuters from his Israeli prison cell, Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti said that peace talks with Israel had failed and Palestinians must launch popular and diplomatic campaigns to achieve statehood. He added: "There is no excuse in the world that prevents national

reconciliation, especially in light of the latest developments and the blocked horizon for negotiations". He urged Hamas to sign the Egyptian reconciliation blueprint so that legislative and presidential elections could be held. (Reuters, Ynetnews)

Saeb Erakat, head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO, condemned Israeli plans to construct 900 more units in the settlement of "Gilo", as well as the ongoing home demolitions in occupied East Jerusalem, saying that they undermined the possibility of the two-State solution and restarting negotiations. He welcomed the statements made by the United Nations, the United States, the United Kingdom and others in response to Israel's plans in "Gilo". (www.nad-plo.org)

China voiced serious concern over Israel's plan to build housing units in East Jerusalem. China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Qin Gang, at a regular briefing, said: "We urge the Israeli side to take concrete measures to restore Palestine-Israel mutual trust and create favourable conditions for the early resumption of talks between them". (Haaretz, Xinhua)

At the meeting of the Advisory Commission of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) held at the Dead Sea, Jordan's Prime Minister Nader Dahabi called on donor countries to increase their contributions to UNRWA, especially its operations in Jordan. In his speech, read by Jordan's Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh, the Prime Minister pointed out that, while 42 per cent of UNRWA refugees were registered in Jordan, the allocations for the Agency's operations in the Kingdom stood only at 20 per cent of its total budget.

(The Jordan Times)

Israel's Jerusalem municipality publicized plans to build 5,000 housing units for Palestinians. The construction proposals, which had yet to be approved by any local or district community, were aimed at building houses for Palestinians, largely in Tel Edassa and As-Sawarha. Smaller plans were being considered for Deir Al-Amud and Al-Muntar in Beit Safafa, near the "Gilo" settlement, according to a news release circulated by the municipality. Between 50 and 72 houses were being planned for construction in Abu Tor and Tzur Bahker, both in East Jerusalem. None of the plans had been officially approved and no time frames were mentioned for the building works' completion. (Ma'an News Agency)

Austria condemned Israel's decision to allow the expansion of Jewish settlements in East Jerusalem, describing it as a deliberate attempt to block peace efforts. "Israel's ongoing settlement policy is increasingly becoming a targeted effort to undermine any peace process," the country's Foreign Minister, Michael Spindelegger, said in a statement. "The growing Israeli settlements on the West Bank and in East Jerusalem, and the blockade, are destroying any trust in a political process and thereby hindering economic and social developments in the Palestinian territories", he added. (AFP)

The World Council of Churches called for "resistance" to Israel's decision to allow the expansion of settlements in East Jerusalem, saying that the decision "may destroy any chance for peace". (AFP, www.oikoumene.org)

Dr. Ahmad Tibi, an Arab member of the Knesset, said that the Jerusalem municipality was planning to construct an additional 15,000 housing units for settlers in East Jerusalem. (IMEMC)

Despite being scheduled for opening, Gaza crossings were sealed following a last-minute announcement by the Israeli authorities dealing with the crossings. (Ma'an News Agency)

The East Jerusalem *Al-Manar* newspaper reported that according to sources, there had been serious progress in the talks to secure the release IDF soldier Gilad Shalit in exchange for Palestinian prisoners. The deal, however, was unlikely to take place before the Eid al-Adha on 27 November. (Ynetnews)

Hamas leader Mohammad Nasser said that Hamas would not sign a proposed unity agreement with Fatah as "the reconciliation proposal does not include any programme or political strategy that would guarantee national unity". (Ma'an News Agency, IMEMC)

In a news report, human rights groups called on the Government of Israel to cancel instructions preventing ambulances from entering Palestinian neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem without a police escort. According to Adalah, the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, Magen David Adom ambulances must wait in a Jewish neighbourhood adjacent to the Palestinian neighbourhood and may not enter it until a police escort arrives, even in life-threatening situations. (Ma'an News Agency, www.adalah.org/eng)

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IDF detained six Palestinians from Nablus and Salfit, including the commander and four officers of the PA Intelligence Services. High-level negotiations between Palestinian and Israeli officials were initiated in an effort to have the men released. American officials expressed "concern" over the Israeli actions, according to Palestinian security sources. (Ma'an News Agency, Ynet News)

Two Palestinians had been moderately injured by the IDF during a weekly rally against the separation fence in the West Bank village of Ni'lin, southwest of Ramallah. (Ynet News)

According to Israeli sources, Prime Minister Netanyahu was interested in aiming for a final-status agreement and not an interim one, as some of his Ministers had been proposing, if and when negotiations with the PA resumed. In various internal discussions, Mr. Netanyahu reportedly had said that were there "courageous leadership" on the Palestinian side, a resumption of negotiations could lead to a final peace agreement; and that this was preferable in his mind to an interim agreement, based on a Palestinian State within temporary borders. He had also said that PA President Abbas should not be "counted out". Sources in Mr. Netanyahu's Office said that he had made it clear in private discussions that he was prepared for a moratorium on the construction of housing in the settlements in an effort to lure the PA back to the negotiating table, as long as it did not include Jerusalem and did not preclude construction of public buildings needed for normal life in the settlements. (The Jerusalem Post)

Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa said at a news conference in Jakarta: "If [Palestinians] choose to declare independence unilaterally, we will support them, but at this moment, we like to prioritize the peace process". (Jakarta Globe)

A new settler-backed initiative was demanding resumption of an Israeli presence at the site believed to be the tomb of the biblical patriarch Joseph in Nablus. The group, called "Gar'in Shchem", wanted to build support for their campaign before organizing a march on Nablus. (The Jerusalem Post, Ma'an News Agency)

Following various reports of progress in efforts to secure the release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, IDF Brigadier General Avi Benayahu said: "We're reading a lot of things in the media. Some are true but others are disinformation". (The Jerusalem Post)

PA President Abbas said that presidential and legislative elections scheduled for January would be postponed, confirming that he had accepted advice not to hold the vote. (Reuters)

Sports and music events hosted by UNICEF and Right to Play will mark the twentieth anniversary of Palestine's adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Hundreds of children in Ramallah, Hebron, Jenin and Nablus will mark the occasion with concerts, road races, theatre performances, football matches and children's games. (Ma'an News Agency, www.unicef.org, www.righttoplay.com)

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Israeli forces arrested three members of the PA intelligence services and two other Palestinians in the northern West Bank, Palestinian security sources said. (AFP)

A rocket fired from the Gaza Strip exploded in Sderot without causing casualties or damage, the Israeli military said. (AFP)

Israeli aircraft attacked two suspected weapons-making factories and a smuggling tunnel in the Gaza Strip. The air strikes wounded at least seven people, one of them seriously. (AP)

Munzir Shiblak, a Gaza water official, said that water in Gaza was so salty that it was unfit for human consumption. "If this situation continues, [water] reserves could collapse in the next few years", Mr. Shiblak said. (AFP)

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A 47-year-old Palestinian bus driver from Jerusalem was severely beaten by three Israelis settlers in "Beitar Illit", south-west of Bethlehem. (Ma'an News Agency)

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Israeli troops seized a Palestinian from Bethlehem and another from Qalqilya. (IMEMC)

An Israeli military spokesman in Tel Aviv said that Israel was not behind an earlier explosion in eastern Gaza City. Two Hamas militants died in the blast. (DPA)

PA President Abbas told reporters during a visit to Argentina: "The Palestinian people are not thinking about launching a new intifada... The Palestinian people are only thinking about the road toward peace and negotiations and no other path. We will not go back to an intifada because we have suffered too much". (Haaretz)

Argentina's President Cristina Fernández urged the US to "do more" to restart Israeli-Palestinian negotiations as she held talks with PA President Abbas. "We cannot ignore the role the United States has, by virtue of their particular weight, in bringing Israel back to the negotiating table" and restarting talks on the basis of accords signed by previous Israeli Governments, President Fernández told a joint press conference with Mr. Abbas in Buenos Aires. (AFP)

German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle arrived in Israel and met with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu. During the meeting which he raised the issues of settlement construction and the approved housing units in "Gilo". Mr. Netanyahu, according to officials in his Office, said that Israel was not going to build any new settlements or expropriate any new land to expand existing settlements, and was willing to put restraints on new housing starts in the West Bank. Mr. Westerwelle also met Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman, and PA officials. PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, during a news conference alongside the German Foreign Minister, said that Israel's refusal to bring settlement construction and activity to a complete standstill had been the central reason for the stall in peace talks. For his part, Mr. Westerwelle applauded Mr. Fayyad's Government for its efforts in preparing viable institutions for the future Palestinian State. (Ma'an News Agency, The Jerusalem Post)

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva announced that he would visit Israel, Jordan and the Occupied Palestinian Territory in March 2010. (AFP)

Turkey's Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, called on Israel to lift its enforced isolation of the Palestinians and allow his country to help rebuild Gaza. His remarks came shortly after Israel's Industry, Trade and Labour Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer met with Turkish officials. Mr. Erdoğan complained that Israel had not lifted its blockade of the Gaza Strip despite international calls to do so. He criticized Israel for not allowing Turkey to help with reconstruction efforts. (AP)

US officials, including aides to that country's Special Envoy, George Mitchell, had been visiting Israeli settlements in the West Bank as a part of a fact-finding mission, the Ma'ariv news agency reported. In the first such visit, officials from the US Consulate in Jerusalem and Mr. Mitchell's team visited the settlement of "Efrata", near Bethlehem, where they compared the boundaries and the number of buildings in the settlement with earlier maps to verify whether settlements had been expanding. The officials also met with settler leaders. (Ma'an News Agency)

German Chancellor Angela Merkel's spokesperson, Ulrich Wilhelm, told reporters at a regular news conference: "We greatly regret the recent decision to allow the construction of new homes in East Jerusalem. ... Settlement building in East Jerusalem is a major stumbling block on the road towards sustainable progress in the Middle East peace process". He added that Chancellor Merkel would discuss the matter with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, who would be travelling to Berlin the following week. (Reuters)

A group of 20 settlers from "Havat Gilad" hurled stones at Palestinian vehicles near Nablus, damaging a number of cars, but causing no injuries. (IMEMC)

The Jerusalem Magistrate's Court charged two settlers suspected of beating two Palestinian shepherds with a pipe near their outpost south of Hebron. (Haaretz)

Hamas sources said that the prisoner exchange deal hinged on the name of one final Palestinian prisoner that Israel was not prepared to free, according to the group's official journal *A-Risala*. Hamas delegates were in Cairo to discuss the final prisoner list presented by Israel for an exchange. Officials close to the talks said that Israel had agreed to include in the exchange some 160 prisoners whose release it had previously vetoed. (Haaretz)

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Egyptian security forces seized a car in Rafah that was loaded with weapons bound for the Gaza Strip, an Egyptian security source said. They also found and destroyed four smuggling tunnels in the area. (Ma'an News Agency, The Jerusalem Post)

According to Palestinian sources, Israeli forces seized eight Palestinians in Ramallah, Hebron and Qalqilya. The Israeli Army Radio announced that all the men detained had been taken to military detention camps for questioning. (Ma'an News Agency)

Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero said that efforts to bring about peace in the Middle East must go on, despite the lack of tangible progress so far. "It is necessary to keep expectations high", Mr. Zapatero told reporters in Cairo after talks with his Egyptian counterpart. He said that, while there had been no progress, "there have been no steps backwards". (AFP)

South Africa's Department of International Relations and Cooperation, together with the Embassy of Palestine in South Africa and the Office of the United Nations in South Africa, will be hosting on 25 November an annual event to celebrate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The event would take the form of a seminar, with South African and Palestinian panellists. (www.dfa.gov.za)

A consignment of books and stationery will arrive in the Gaza Strip in the coming days, donated by the Qatar Foundation, in conjunction with the Jordan Hashemite Charity. (Ma'an News Agency)

The Permanent Representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the United Nations, Ambassador Abdurrahman Mohamed Shalgham, said that his country would ask the Security Council to demand an end to Israel's expansion of illegal settlements on land taken from Palestinians. "We are discussing it with the Palestinians and other members of the Security Council. We are going to do that, yes", Mr. Shalgham said. (AFP)

Israeli settlers threw stones at a bus, injuring a Palestinian man travelling from Ramallah to Tulkarm near the settlement of "Yizhar", the injured man reported. (Ma'an News Agency)

The International Conference on Palestinian Prisoners, which opened in Jericho, is being attended by delegations of local and international human rights organizations; it is sponsored by the PA. Addressing the conference was PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad. (Ma'an News Agency)

While visiting London, Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Silvan Shalom stated that Israel would not release Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti or Secretary General of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Ahmad Saadat, under a prisoner swap. (IMEMC)

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said: "There is no [prisoner exchange] deal yet and there might not be one." French Foreign Minister Kouchner told journalists: "I think that there have been positive developments in negotiations," but he added that he was not certain of a happy outcome because "we have been burned many times before". Israeli Industry, Trade and Labour Minister, Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, told Israeli Army Radio: "I think that we are very close to a deal on an exchange," (AFP, AP, Reuters)

A Palestinian source said that Israel had refused to release 40 Palestinians on the Hamas list of prisoners to be freed in the anticipated prisoner exchange deal brokered by German and Egyptian mediators. A senior Hamas official in the Gaza Strip, Khalil Al-Hayya, said that Israel had not met the demands of the groups holding IDF soldier Gilad Shalit. (Haaretz, Xinhua)

Fatah established an elections commissariat for the first time in the movement's history, according to Fatah Central Committee member Muhammad Al-Madani. The newly formed commissariat began a three-day tour of the West Bank, starting in Hebron, where the members would prepare Palestinians for the upcoming legislative and presidential elections, Mr. Al-Madani said. By preparing the population for elections, the official said, Fatah was showing its support for the democratic process. (Ma'an News Agency)

"[The Dead Sea] might be confined into a small pond. It is likely to happen and this is extremely serious. Nobody is doing anything now to save it", said Jordanian water expert Dureid Mahasneh, a former chief of the Jordan Valley Authority. Mr. Mahasneh stressed that Jordan alone was not capable of solving the Dead Sea's problems. (AFP)

Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Haile Menkerios briefed the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. He said that the decision of PA President Abbas not to seek a new term was "a loud and clear wake-up call", imperilling the two-State solution. Recalling warnings that violence and extremism would fill the vacuum left by the lack of political progress, Mr. Menkerios said:

"We now face a very real danger of such a vacuum, with no Israeli-Palestinian negotiations under way, no agreed terms of reference for such negotiations and no framework in place to ensure implementation of road map obligations." (UN press release SC/9796)

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Israeli military and police forces attacked the village of Towani in the southern West Bank and took down pylons which provide the village with electricity. (MEMC)

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu declared a 10-month halt in new construction in Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Mr. Netanyahu said that the step was designed to "encourage resumption of peace talks with our Palestinian neighbours". He made the televised statement after his Political-Security Cabinet approved the move. The moratorium does not affect East Jerusalem, construction projects already underway, or public buildings. (AP, DPA)

Nabil Abu Rudeineh, a spokesperson for PA President Abbas, announced that the Palestinians "reject returning to peace talks without the complete cessation of settlement activities in the West Bank and Jerusalem". Saeb Erakat, head of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO, dismissed Prime Minister Netanyahu's settlements offer as fraudulent and urged the US to pressure Israel to freeze all construction activity completely in order that peace talks may resume. "Netanyahu did not advance any formula for the re-launching of negotiations", he told AFP.

Fatah leader Mohammed Dahlan also stated that Mr. Netanyahu's offer "proves once again that Israel is interested not in peace, but in creating facts on the ground", and warned that "overlooking ongoing construction in Jerusalem will put the peace process in jeopardy". (AFP, Press TV)

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said: "Today's announcement by the Government of Israel helps move forward toward resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We believe that through good-faith negotiations, the parties can mutually agree on an outcome which ends the conflict and reconciles the Palestinian goal of an independent and viable State, based on the 1967 lines, with agreed swaps, and the Israeli goal of a Jewish State with secure and recognized borders that reflect subsequent developments and meet Israeli security requirements". US Special Envoy George Mitchell said: "It falls short of a full settlement freeze, but it is more than any Israeli Government has done before, and can help move toward agreement between the parties". (www.state.gov)

"A return to the negotiating table is a national crime that Palestinians will surly reject", Hamas leader Sami Abu Zuhri said. He also called Mr. Netanyahu's announcement of a settlement freeze, which excluded East Jerusalem, "meaningless". (Ma'an News Agency)

Staff of the US Consulate in Jerusalem visited the Holy Family Orphanage in Bethlehem to present children with gifts and food donated by consular staff for Thanksgiving and the Eid Al-Adha holiday. (Ma'an News Agency)

Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal was expected to make a decision about the proposed prisoner exchange with Israel. A delegation of senior Hamas leaders was already in Damascus to discuss with Mr. Mashaal whether to go forward with the deal. (Ma'an News Agency)

In an interview with *Corriere della Sera*, imprisoned Fatah leader, Marwan Barghouti, said that he intended to run in the next PA presidential election. (Haaretz)

Gaza health official, Munir Al-Barsh, warned of a shortage of medicines, saying that "among the medicines that have run out [are] the ones used for the artificial kidney unit, surgeries and other needed medicines... There are 10 kinds of medication that could only cover three months; another 26 kinds that could cover two months and 29 types that will only cover one month". (Ma'an News Agency)

An official for the Arab Doctors' Union, Mustafa Tayeh, said that Egyptian authorities had permitted the entry of humanitarian aid and stationery donated by French charities into the Gaza Strip via the Rafah border crossing. (Ma'an News Agency)

Lobbying the Knesset, taking to the streets and launching a broad-scale public relations campaign were the main items in the plan formulated by the settler leaders and rightist Knesset members at an emergency session, in the light of the Cabinet's decision to partially freeze West Bank settlement building for 10 months. (Ynetnews)

A campaign launched throughout the West Bank to end violence against women was organized by UNRWA's education and relief and social services programmes. (www.unrwa.org)

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IDF troops arrested two Palestinians in operations near Bethlehem. (The Jerusalem Post)

Two Israelis were stabbed outside of the settlement of "Kiryat Arba". The Palestinian attacker was shot and wounded. (Ma'an News Agency, UPI)

Israeli military sources reported that two mortar shells fired from Gaza landed inside the Strip. Five shells hit open areas in Israel. (Ma'an News Agency, Ynetnews)

The Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation said that the Israeli decision on settlements "could help to defuse the situation around the Palestinian-Israeli settlement, provided that it will be followed by further steps in line with the obligations set forth in the Road Map. The need is for a complete freeze on settlement activity, including 'natural growth', across the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem". (www.mid.ru)

"I welcome the decision to announce a 10-month moratorium on new building and new building permits on the West Bank", French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said in a statement. "This constitutes a step in the right direction and putting it into action would be a positive contribution towards peace". He warned, however, that "France and the entire international community consider that all settlement activity in Palestinian territories, including in East Jerusalem, is an obstacle to peace". (www.diplomatie.gouv.fr)

"The unilateral Israeli plan for partial cessation of settlement activity in the occupied West Bank is an insufficient step, which fails to meet the world community's requirements for the two-State vision", Jordan's Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh said. (DPA)

According to a news release issued by the IDF spokesperson, Israel had eased restrictions on Palestinians in the West Bank during the Eid Al-Adha holiday. Some of the policies included allowing Palestinians to enter Israel in order to visit immediate family, permanently removing more than 50 road blocks in the West Bank and temporarily removing road blocks near Hebron, Nablus, Jenin and Tulkarm. (IRIN, Jewish Telegraphic Agency)

The Government of South Africa issued a statement condemning Israel for approving 900 new housing units in the "Gilo" settlement and evicting Palestinians from their East Jerusalem homes, comparing Israel's actions to the "forced removals" of the apartheid era. "South Africa is deeply concerned that these activities by Israel will only serve to deepen the cycle of violence in the region," the statement added. (Haaretz, www.newsday.co.za)

Israel released Palestinian law professor Dr. Ghassan Khaled after holding him for 20 months without charges. (Ma'an News Agency)

An Israeli court rejected the claim that the PA, and its then-President, Yasser Arafat, were legally responsible for a 2001 shooting attack on a bus stop in the Israeli city of Afula. (Ynetnews)

27

Four Palestinians had been wounded in an Israeli air strike on the Gaza Strip, which the Israeli army said had targeted a group about to fire projectiles at Israel. Two of them were said to have died later. (Ma'an News Agency)

In commemorating the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, residents of Bil'in and Ni'lin, two villages near Ramallah, rallied against Israel's separation barrier. Dozens reportedly suffered tear gas inhalation in both areas. Activists said that Israeli forces had also fired stun grenades. (Ma'an News Agency)

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak confirmed reports that his Ministry had sent an aircraft to photograph West Bank settlement construction. At the same time, the Ministry announced that construction of 28 new public buildings in settlements had been approved. (AFP, Ynetnews)

A Shin Bet spokesperson said that Israel had lifted orders for the capture of a new batch of Fatah members provided they do not leave PA-administered areas. (AFP)

Venezuela planned to open an embassy in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and upgrade its ties to ambassadorial level, President Hugo Chavez said after meeting with PA President Abbas. (Reuters)

28

Two Israeli border guard officers and five protesters sustained light wounds in clashes in Ni'lin. (Ma'an News Agency, Ynetnews)

US Special Envoy George Mitchell would visit the Middle East in the coming few days in a renewed effort to restart the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, Israeli Radio reported, citing US sources. (Xinhua)

Palestinian sources said that 15 Israeli settlers from the "Yizhar" settlement, near Nablus, had attempted to set fire to a home in the village of Burin. (Ma'an News Agency)

If Hamas could appoint the head of the Central Elections Commission, it would allow elections in the Gaza Strip, said member of the Hamas Political Bureau Muhammad Nazzal. (Ma'an News Agency)

29

The Israeli navy fired several shells at a number of Palestinian fishing boats near the Al Shudaniyya shore, north-west of Gaza City. No injuries were reported. (IMEMC)

In an interview with CNN, Quartet Representative Tony Blair said: "The alternative to a two-State solution is a one-State solution and that will, I assure you, be a hell of a fight. ... I've just spent some time with the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and I think he is genuine and serious in wanting the negotiations to start. ... The majority of people, both Israelis and Palestinians, want to see a two-State solution". (CNN, Ma'an News Agency)

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Palestinians in Gaza said that Israeli F-16 fighter jets had dropped what they described as "heat bombs". (Ma'an News Agency)

Palestinian eyewitnesses said that Israeli forces had opened fire on agricultural lands near Beit Hanoun. No injuries were reported. An Israeli military spokesperson denied this report. (Ma'an News Agency)

The Jerusalem Magistrate Court charged two Israeli border police officers with grievously attacking an Arab youth as he passed them near the Old City of Jerusalem. (Haaretz)

The recipe for peace between Israel and the Palestinians included negotiations, honesty, immediate talks on the core issues and the establishment of a demilitarized Palestinian State, Costa Rican President Oscar Arias said in a special interview with Ynetnews. Mr. Arias said that his experience as a mediator had taught him that peace talks needed to raise all important issues for discussion early, rather than delaying them to the end of the process. (Ynetnews)

British MP George Galloway is planning a third charity convoy to the Gaza Strip, in cooperation with Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, following the success of his first two convoys. It would arrive in Gaza on 27 December through the Rafah border crossing, accompanied by a delegation led by Mr. Galloway, including several international politicians. (Ma'an News Agency)

About 70 demonstrators, residents of East Jerusalem and activists gathered in the centre of the city to protest a court order evicting Palestinians from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood. (Ynetnews)

According to Yediot Ahronot, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu authorized the construction of 25 new homes in the settlement of "Kedar", east of Jerusalem, despite the declared moratorium. (Ma'an News Agency)

Settler leaders announced that they would prevent inspectors from enforcing a moratorium on new construction in West Bank settlements, Army Radio reported. The statement by the "Yesha Council" of settlements came after officials had said that inspectors, armed with aerial maps and empowered to confiscate construction, had begun enforcing the policy. (Haaretz)

The Israeli Government will ask the Supreme Court this week for more time to evacuate West Bank outposts. The Court had asked the State to present a timetable for razing the homes. (Haaretz)

Al-Arabiya tv network reported that the German mediator involved in the prisoner exchange negotiations had arrived in Gaza to relay Israel's answer to Hamas' demands in the talks. (Haaretz)

The Israeli State Prosecutor's Office retracted its earlier statement about the planned release of 980 Palestinian prisoners in exchange for Gilad Shalit and advised the Supreme Court that the deal had not yet been finalized, and therefore it was impossible to report the exact numbers of prisoners who

would be freed from Israeli jails. *(The Jerusalem Post)*

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed at UN Headquarters in New York and at the UN Offices at Geneva and Vienna. At UN Headquarters, a special [meeting](#) of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was held. Statements were made, inter alia, by the Chairman of the Committee, the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, the President of the Security Council and the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the UN (on behalf of PA President Abbas). “It is time, after all these years of negotiations that have not yielded results, for the international community, particularly the Security Council, to shoulder its responsibilities and to take immediate and decisive action that reflects the positions the countries of the world, which have repeatedly called for the two-State solution and an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967,” he said. A keynote address was delivered by Walid Khalidi, General Secretary of the Institute for Palestine Studies. This year’s commemoration coincided with UNRWA’s sixtieth anniversary, which prompted an exhibit of sixty UNRWA photographs that highlighted the achievements of the Agency in its main fields of work. *(UN press release GA/PAL/1140)*

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, in his [message](#) for the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, said that “It is vital that a sovereign State of Palestine is achieved. This should be on the basis of the 1967 lines with agreed land swaps and a just and agreed solution to the refugee issue – a State that lives side-by-side in peace with Israel within secure and recognized borders.” Mr. Netanyahu's recent announcement of settlement restraint, while a step beyond earlier positions, fell short of Israeli obligations under the Road Map, Mr. Ban said. The Secretary-General added that he was also concerned about the recent evictions of Palestinians, house demolitions, as well as the closure of Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem, saying those actions “stoke tensions, cause suffering and further undermine trust.” *(UN News Centre, press release SG/SM/12635-OBV/836-PAL/2126)*
