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CHRONOLOGY

16 FEBRUARY–15 MAY 2006

COMPILED BY MICHELE K. ESPOSITO

This section is part eighty-four of a chronology begun in JPS 13, no. 3 (Spring 1984). Chronology dates reflect Eastern Standard Time (EST). For a more comprehensive overview of events related to the al-Aqsa intifada and of regional and international developments related to the peace process, see the Quarterly Update on Conflict and Diplomacy in this issue.

16 FEBRUARY

As the quarter opens, the **Israel Defense Forces (IDF)** continues **Operation Blue Skies** (launched 12/28/05) to prevent **Palestinians** fr. firing crude home-made rockets fr. Gaza into Israel, enforcing a 1.5-mi-deep no-go zone along the n. Gaza border using artillery fire fr. inside Israel, occasional air strikes, heavy surveillance fr. air and sea, and construction of a border fence along the n. Gaza border (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 139). The **IDF** also continues to restrict the flow of Palestinian goods and individuals into and out of Gaza: Rafah operates 8 hrs./day for entry and exit of individuals to and from Egypt; Erez is open as the sole entry of Palestinian workers to Israel (the IDF has issued 5,000 permits but only 2,500–3,500 workers can pass because of slow processing by the IDF); Qarni is open for the transit of goods (360 trucks/day entering Gaza, 75 trucks/day exiting with agricultural goods); Sufa, for the import of raw materials only, is closed since 2/14. In the West Bank, the **IDF** maintains 100s of checkpoints and roadblocks, effectively separating the northern and southern West Bank, cutting off access to the n. Jordan Valley, and restricting movement within those cantons. Work also continues on Israel's **separation wall**. The **IDF** conducts arrest raids in and around Balata refugee camp (r.c.), Nablus and nr. Bethlehem, Hebron (occupying 1 house as an observation post), Jenin. A **Palestinian woman** fr. Bethlehem attempts to stab an **Israeli police officer** outside the al-Aqsa Mosque compound, is arrested. (HA 2/16; OCHA 5/22; PCHR 2/23)

17 FEBRUARY

The **IDF** bars Palestinians under age 45 fr. attending Friday prayers at al-Aqsa Mosque;

raids al-Khadir nr. Bethlehem, arresting 6 youths (aged 14–17) for throwing stones at Israeli vehicles along nearby Route 60; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Qalqilya. (PCHR 2/23)

18 FEBRUARY

The **IDF** tightens restrictions on Palestinian movement around Ramallah in the morning, coinciding with the convening of the new **Palestinian Council (PC)** session (see below); sends troops back into al-Khadir (see 2/17), sets up roadblocks, conducts ID checks looking for youths who threw stones at Israeli cars on Route 60, arresting 2; raids, searches a Palestinian home in Hebron, severely beating but not arresting 1 resident; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Aida r.c., arresting 2 15-yr.-old Palestinian boys. A **Jewish settler** is stabbed, wounded apparently by a **Palestinian** nr. Ma'ale Adumim. (HA 2/20; PCHR 2/23)

The new **Palestinian Council** (the second elected since the PC was formed in 1995) is sworn in in Ramallah, with Gazan reps. participating by video link, since **Israel** barred their passage to the West Bank. **PA Pres. Mahmud Abbas** invites the **Hamas-affiliated Change and Reform party** to form a cabinet. (WT 2/18; NYT, WP, WT 2/19; *al-Hayat al-Jadida* 2/19 in WNC 2/20; MM 2/20) (see Quarterly Update for details)

19 FEBRUARY

The **IDF** sends troops into Balata r.c. in what it says is the beginning of an operation targeting the **al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (AMB)**, **Islamic Jihad**, **Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)** that will continue for several days, firing on

stone-throwing youths who confront the troops (killing **2 Palestinians**, wounding 16), occupying an UNRWA school and several homes as operational bases, demolishing a **Palestinian home**. The **IDF** also launches air strikes on **2 Popular Resistance Comm. (PRC) mbrs.** attempting to lay a roadside bomb or fire rocket nr. the n. Gaza border fence, killing both; fires across the Israeli border into Gaza towards Palestinian farmers working their fields nr. Abasan, causing no injuries; erects a gate at the entrance to Kafr Haris nr. Hebron, facing Ariel settlement; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Hebron and in Allar nr. Tulkarm, al-Azza r.c., Bethlehem, Qabatya nr. Jenin; patrols in Tulkarm. **Palestinians** fire **2 rockets** into Israel, causing no damage or injuries. (VOI, VOP, YA 2/19, VOP 2/20 in WNC 2/20; HA, IMEMC, NYT, WP 2/20; PCHR 2/23)

The **Israeli cabinet** approves steps to isolate and destabilize the **new Hamas-led Palestinian government**, including immediately halting transfers of VAT taxes collected on the PA's behalf, a source of some \$50 m./mo. in revenues for the cash-strapped PA. The **UN special envoy Alvaro de Soto** reprimands Israel, saying "these are monies that belong to the Palestinians and should not be withheld." (Israeli cabinet communiqué 2/19; VOI 2/19, VOP 2/20 in WNC 2/20; HA, MM, NYT, WP, WT 2/20; JP 2/20 in WNC 2/21; WP 2/21; PCHR 2/23) (see Quarterly Update)

Hamas nominates moderate **Ismail Haniyeh**, who led the Change and Reform slate in the 1/25/06 elections, as its candidate for PM to form a cabinet. (VOP 2/19 in WNC 2/20; WP 2/20) (see Quarterly Update)

20 FEBRUARY

The **IDF** expands its Balata arrest operation to the wider Nablus area, fatally shooting **Islamic Jihad's al-Quds Brigades leader Ahmad Abu Sharikh**, **AMB Nablus cmdr. Muhammad Shatawi** in apparent assassinations; firing on stone-throwing youths, wounding 12. The **IDF** also shells the n. Gaza no-go zone, damaging several homes in Um al-Nasser n. of Bayt Lahiya but causing no injuries; severely beats a Palestinian teenager in Hebron; demolishes a **Palestinian home** nr. Tulkarm; fires on residential areas of al-Fawwar r.c. nr. Hebron, wounding 2 Palestinians; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Azariyya nr. Jerusalem, Tulkarm, and nr. Bethlehem, Hebron, Jenin. **Palestinians** fire a **rocket** fr. n. Gaza into Israel, causing no

damage or injuries. (AP, IMEMC, MM, NYT, WT 2/20; VOI 2/20 in WNC 2/21; IMEMC, NYT 2/21; PCHR 2/23; YA 3/1)

21 FEBRUARY

The **IDF** closes the Qarni crossing after a **roadside bomb** explodes nearby inside Gaza, causing no damage or injuries; continues operations in and around Nablus for a 3d day, clashing with local Palestinians in Balata r.c., wounding 18; demolishes a **Palestinian home** in Hebron; conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Hebron, in Qabatya. **Armed gunmen** from the **Amr Abu Sitta Battalions** (a **Fatah** offshoot) raid the Khan Yunis municipal building and a municipal garage, ransacking the offices and stealing the keys for all municipal vehicles, after municipal officials refuse to loan the group a bulldozer to level land for a barracks. (IMEMC 2/21; NYT, PCHR 2/22; PCHR 2/23; NYT 3/4)

22 FEBRUARY

After the **AMB** fires **3 rockets** fr. Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries, the **IDF** fires at least 15 artillery shells at n. Gaza, 1 of which hits an apartment building in Bayt Lahiya, wounding a 2-yr.-old Palestinian boy. The **IDF** also reimposes 2 roadblocks outside Jericho that were removed under the 3/16/05 agmt. turning over security control of the city to the PA, citing the PA's 2/9 release of wanted **AMB**, **Islamic Jihad** mbrs. fr. the Jericho jail; continues arrest raids, house searches nr. Nablus; finds an empty **rocket** casing in a search in Qabatya; bulldozes a **USAID-funded** public park and playground in Azun nr. Qalqilya, saying it was built without permission (USAID donated \$80,000 of the \$120,000 cost); fires on residential areas of Bani Na'im nr. Hebron. **Israeli undercover units**, driving a car with Palestinian plates, raid Allar, search a home, arrest a wanted Palestinian. Some **20 armed gunmen** fr. the **al-Yasir Brigades** (an **AMB** offshoot) temporarily occupy the Rafah governorate offices to protest the appointment of a Khan Yunis resident as the new Rafah governor, demanding that the governor be a Rafah resident. (AFP, PCHR, XIN, YA 2/22; PCHR 2/23, 3/2)

23 FEBRUARY

On the 5th day of **IDF** operations in the Nablus area, **IDF** fire on stone-throwing

Palestinians in Balata r.c. escalates into heavy exchanges btwn. the IDF and local **AMB mbrs.**, leaving **3 wanted AMB gunmen**, **2 Palestinian bystanders** dead and 2 IDF soldiers, 22 Palestinian wounded (including 3 medical workers treating the injured). The **IDF** also fires on stone-throwing Palestinians nr. Hebron; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Dura nr. Hebron, Yabad nr. Jenin. (PCHR 2/23; DS, HA, MM, NYT, REU, WP, WT 2/24; PCHR 3/2)

24 FEBRUARY

The **IDF** officially ends operations in the Nablus area, but reenters Balata r.c. and Nablus late in the evening, patrolling streets and firing on residential areas; fatally shoots **2 Palestinians** laying roadside bombs along the Gaza border nr. Dayr al-Balah; makes an air strike on **3 AMB mbrs.** driving in Bayt Lahiya, missing the vehicle, injuring 2 bystanders in an apparent assassination attempt; shells uninhabited areas nr. Rafah, causing no damage or injuries; fires on 3 unarmed Palestinians attempting to sneak into Israel fr. Gaza nr. Dayr al-Balah to find jobs, killing **1 Palestinian**, wounding 2; conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Hebron (occupying 1 house as an observation post), in Silwad nr. Ramallah; patrols in Askar r.c. nr. Nablus; fires on stone-throwing Palestinians in Bayt Umar nr. Hebron. Elsewhere in Gaza, a **Hamas mbr.** dies in a mysterious explosion, possibly while preparing explosives. A **Jewish settler** fr. a settlement nr. Jericho shoots, wounds a Palestinian farmer working his nearby land. (REU, XIN 2/24; NYT 2/25; PCHR 3/2)

25 FEBRUARY

The **IDF** makes a rare raid into Jericho, turned over to PA security control on 3/16/05, to arrest a wanted **AMB mbr.** who is also a mbr. of the PA security forces; fires on residential areas of Bani Na'im (wounding 2 Palestinians); conducts arrest raids, house searches in Budrus nr. Ramallah, Hebron (firing on residential areas, wounding 2 Palestinians); patrols in, fires on residential areas of Jenin town and r.c.; raids the PA Customs Dept. in Hebron, confiscating fireworks; sends troops into al-Khadir to arrest 3 Palestinian youths for stone-throwing. After **IDF** warplanes strike the n. Gaza no-go zone, Palestinians fire **2 rockets** fr. Gaza into Israel; the IDF responds by shelling the no-go zone again; no damage or injuries

are reported on either side. A **Palestinian** wounded in the IDF shelling of Bayt Hanun on 2/9 dies. (AFP, JAZ 2/25; IMEMC 2/26; PCHR 3/2)

26 FEBRUARY

The **IDF** shells the n. Gaza no-go zone; shoots, wounds 2 Palestinian teenagers at Anata checkpoint n. of Jerusalem when they protest the physical search of a young woman; conducts arrest raids, house searches in al-Arub r.c., Balata r.c. and nr. Bethlehem, Jenin, Nablus. All **4 flour mills** in Gaza close, saying there is no wheat to process due to the IDF closure of the Qarni crossing; flour stocks in Gaza stores are estimated to last another few wks. (IMEMC 2/27; HA 2/28; NYT 3/1; PCHR 3/2)

27 FEBRUARY

The **IDF** sends troops into Bani Na'im, surrounds a house in search of a wanted Palestinian who is not home, fires on stone-throwing Palestinians who confront the troops, sparking several hrs. of clashes that leave 35 Palestinians wounded; conducts overnight arrest raids in and around Jenin and in Askar r.c., Balata r.c., Bethlehem, Hebron, Nablus's old city, Ramallah; uproots 10s of olive trees and bulldozes 2 animal pens for construction of the **separation wall** nr. Jenin; erects a metal gate, places barbed wire at the southern entrance to Jamayn nr. Nablus, which faces a settler bypass road; installs metal gates at entrances to Marda, facing Ariel settlement. The **IDF** also requests that the PA dig a trench 20 m long by 4 m deep near the Qarni crossing in a search for smugglers tunnels; the PA complies but no tunnels are found. (XIN 2/27; PCHR 3/2; OCHA 3/23)

28 FEBRUARY

The **IDF** conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Nablus. Several **Jewish settlers** severely beat a Palestinian woman nr. Hebron. (PCHR 3/2)

1 MARCH

Islamic Jihad senior military cmdr. Khalid Dadu, 9 times the target of failed IDF assassination attempts, is killed in Gaza City when he opens the door of his bomb-rigged car; **Israel**, which has evacuated its troops fr. Gaza in 9/05, denies responsibility;

Palestinian collaborators are suspected; **Islamic Jihad** vows retaliation. **IDF undercover units**, driving a car with Palestinian plates, enter Anza nr. Jenin, raid a store, arrest a wanted Palestinian. The **IDF** also conducts arrest raids, searches in Bani Na'im and in and around Jenin, Nablus. **Israeli police** arrest **2 Change and Reform PC mbrs.**, a **3d Hamas mbr.** touring al-Makassid hospital in East Jerusalem for "conducting illegal political activities." **AMB gunmen** fatally shoot **1 Jewish settler**, wound a 2d at a West Bank gas station nr. Migdalim settlement nr. Nablus. (HA, IMEMC 3/1; AFP, NYT, PCHR, WP, WT 3/2; PCHR 3/9)

The **UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)** warns that stocks of basic goods (including flour, sugar, cooking oil) in Gaza could run out within days unless Israel reopens the Qarni crossing (closed from 1/15-2/5, then closed again on 2/21); says shortages are so severe that aid programs are being affected (e.g., the World Food Program, which delivers flour to around 146,000 Gazans, has used up its 2 mo. supply buffer and is currently on hold). Meanwhile, costs of basic goods in Gaza are up by 25% due to shortages. **Israel** claims the closing is in response to an "enhanced terrorist threat" and concerns over avian flu, is not punishment for Hamas's 1/06 election victory. (REU 3/1; AFP 3/2; NYT 3/6; WP 3/16)

2 MARCH

Mofaz orders Qarni crossing to remain closed despite warnings by international agencies (see 3/1) that some food supplies are dwindling in Gaza. The **IDF** conducts 4 air strikes on the n. Gaza no-go zone, damaging several roads, cutting electricity to parts of Bayt Hanun; begins construction of a new 20-mi segment of the **separation wall** s. of Hebron that will isolate 3,000 Palestinians and 80,000 dunams (d.; 4 d. = 1 acre) of Palestinian land; tightens restrictions on Palestinian travel around Tulkarm; demolishes a **Palestinian home** nr. East Jerusalem; conducts arrest raids, house searches in 'Ayn Bayt al-Ma' r.c., Balata r.c., Tulkarm (firing on residential areas). In retaliation for the 3/1 assassination of **Islamic Jihad** mbr. Dadu, the **AMB**, **PRCs** fire 10 **rockets** fr. Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries. **Palestinian gunmen** occupy the PC building in Gaza, fire weapons, demand to speak to the newly elected Hamas leadership to demand the

reinstatement of some PA employees who were laid off 2 wks. ago. A **Palestinian** stabs, wounds an Israeli truck driver at the Atarot industrial zone in n. Jerusalem. (AFP, HA, IMEMC 3/2; NYT 3/3; NYT 3/4; PCHR 3/9)

The **PA** says it will be 2 wks. late in paying civil servants their 2/06 salaries because of Israel's decision to cut off VAT transfers and the time it will take to secure additional funds. (REU 3/2) (see Quarterly Update)

3 MARCH

The **IDF** fires a missile fr. an F-16 at a car carrying **Islamic Jihad** mbrs. in Bayt Lahiya, missing them in an apparent failed assassination attempt; conducts 2 more air strikes on the n. Gaza no-go zone, damaging a road; fatally shoots a **15-yr-old Palestinian** during a raid on 'Ayn Bayt al-Ma' r.c.; patrols in, fires on residential areas of Tubas nr. Jenin; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Tulkarm (targeting the **AMB**, **Islamic Jihad**). **Palestinians** fire 4 **rockets** into Israel, and the **IDF** responds with artillery fire on the n. Gaza no-go zone, causing no damage or injuries in either case. **Jewish settlers** severely beat 2 Palestinians nr. Tubas. (AFP, IMEMC 3/3; NYT 3/4; PCHR 3/9)

In Nazareth, **3 Israeli Jews** (a father, mother, and daughter), distraught after social workers took custody of their other children, set off firecrackers and small gas canisters inside the **Church of the Annunciation** during mass, sparking panic inside the church but no injuries. Worshipers restrain and beat the Israelis, take them outside, where other residents hearing of the incident converge and riot, leaving 13 injured, before police finally are able to intervene and control the situation. (HA 3/3; HA, NYT, WP, YA 3/4; HA 3/5)

4 MARCH

The **IDF** conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Nablus; sends troops into Hebron to conduct ID checks. **10s of Jewish settlers** march through Hebron under **IDF** escort, calling for the killing or expulsion of Palestinians, vandalizing some homes, beating up several reporters trying to film the incident. Several **Jewish settlers** fr. Tal Rumayda in Hebron severely beat an 11-yr-old Palestinian boy; the **IDF** observes but does not intervene. (PCHR 3/9, 3/16)

5 MARCH

The **IDF** sends troops into al-Fara'a r.c. nr. Nablus, fires on stone-throwing Palestinian youths who confront them, wounding 2; conducts arrest raids, house searches in al-Azza r.c. and nr. Jenin, Ramallah. Some **30 armed AMB mbrs.** who have been absorbed into the PA security forces briefly occupy a PA government building in Gaza, demanding that their salaries be paid (see 3/2). (REU 3/5; PCHR 3/9)

6 MARCH

The **IDF** fires missiles at a car driving in Gaza's Bureij r.c., assassinating **Islamic Jihad mbrs. Ashraf Shalluf and Munir Sukkar**, also killing **3 bystanders** (ages 11, 14, and 17), wounding 12 bystanders; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Bethlehem, Hebron, Jenin, Nablus, Qalqilya, Tulkarm and in 'Aqqaba, nearby Tubas (firing on residential areas and stone-throwing Palestinians who confront the troops), Nablus (firing on stone-throwing youths, wounding 1 bystander). In central Gaza, **2 Palestinians** are killed when explosives they are handling detonate prematurely. Outside the Gaza PC building, where the new PC is holding its 1st session, **15 Fatah gunmen** fire in the air, demanding Fatah PC mbrs. not take part in a **Hamis-led** government, threatening to kill any Fatah PC mbr. who agrees to join. (AFP, AP 3/6; HA, IMEMC, MM, NYT, PCHR, WP, WT 3/7; PCHR 3/9)

7 MARCH

The **IDF** shells the n. Gaza no-go zone, causing no injuries; arrests **Change and Reform PC mbr. Ahmad Atwan** on his way to attend a mtg. with several PC mbrs., PA officials in East Jerusalem; demolishes a **Palestinian home** nr. East Jerusalem; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Bethlehem, Hebron; sends troops into Jenin to conduct ID checks. (JP 3/8; PCHR 3/9)

8 MARCH

The **IDF** conducts arrest raids, house searches in Askar r.c., nr. Hebron, and in and around Tulkarm. **Jewish settlers** severely beat 2 Palestinians in Hebron. (IMEMC, PCHR 3/9, 3/16)

9 MARCH

Under international pressure (see 3/1), **Israel** partially reopens the Qarni crossing for the import of medicine, sugar, flour, cooking oil, other staples into Gaza. The **IDF** shells the n. Gaza no-go zone, hitting an apartment building in Bayt Hanun, injuring 3 Palestinians; tightens restrictions on Palestinian movement around Tulkarm; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Bethlehem and in Balata r.c., Qalqilya. **AMB, Islamic Jihad** fire **4 rockets** fr. Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries. **Jewish settlers** fr. Suissa uproot 50 Palestinian olive trees in Hebron. (IMEMC, XIN 3/9; XIN 3/10; OCHA 3/15; PCHR, WP 3/16)

10 MARCH

The **IDF** conducts patrols in Tulkarm town and r.c.; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Bethlehem, Nablus, Qalandia, Ramallah; issues military orders confiscating 210 d. of Palestinian land nr. Bethlehem for construction of the **separation wall**. (XIN 3/10; PCHR 3/16)

11 MARCH

The **IDF** seals crossings into the West Bank and Gaza through 3/15 for the Purim holidays; tightens restrictions on Palestinian movement btwn. Hebron and Bethlehem; shells the n. Gaza no-go zone in response to **Palestinians** firing a **rocket** fr. Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries; bars **PC secy. Mahmud al-Ramahi (Change and Reform)** fr. traveling to Jordan to attend a conference on the role of parliament mbrs. in democratic government; raids al-Shayukh nr. Hebron, searching homes, forcing 10s of stores to close, firing on stone-throwing Palestinians who confront the troops (injuring 6); conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Tulkarm and in Hebron (severely beating 2 Palestinians) and nearby Yatta (occupying 4 homes as observation posts); bans the call to prayer fr. the Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron. **Jewish settlers** fr. Beit Ein nr. Hebron uproot 10s of grape vines, demolish fences surrounding Palestinian agricultural land (IMEMC 3/11; YA 3/12; PCHR 3/16)

12 MARCH

The **IDF** reopens the **Qarni crossing** (closed 3/11); further tightens restrictions on Palestinian movement around Tulkarm

(see 3/9); conducts arrest raids, house searches in 'Aida r.c., Jenin, Qabatya. **Palestinians** fire 3 **rockets** fr. Gaza into Israel, damaging 2 greenhouses but causing no injuries. **Jewish settlers** fr. Beit Ein uproot 200 d. of Palestinian olive trees nr. Hebron. (YA 3/12; PCHR 3/16)

13 MARCH

Israel acknowledges that it has begun work on a new police headquarters, road network, and "other facilities" in **Jerusalem's** E-1 development area, marking the 1st step in the largest settlement construction project since 1967 to create "Jewish demographic continuity between Jerusalem and Ma'ale Adumim" settlement; the project will include 3,550 housing units, 6 hotels, a park. **Israel's Internal Security M Gideon Ezra** says the U.S. did not object to beginning construction. **IDF undercover units**, traveling in a car with Palestinian license plates, enter Jenin, call in 10 IDF vehicles for backup, raid and occupy several homes, arresting 2 wanted Palestinians. The **IDF** also conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Ramallah, in and around Hebron, and in Jenin town and r.c., al-Khadir, Nablus; begins construction of a new settler bypass road on Palestinian land in Hebron to link Abraham Avino and Ramat Yishai settlements. **Jewish settlers** fr. Suissa attack Palestinians, their farm animals and vandalize Palestinian homes in nearby Yatta. (IMEMC, JAZ, YA 3/14; MM, PCHR 3/16)

14 MARCH

Early in the morning, the **British and U.S. monitors** guarding 6 **political prisoners** in the PA's Jericho jail pull out of the city, citing security concerns. Within 20 minutes, the **IDF** encircles and imposes a curfew on Jericho, sends 80 tanks and armored vehicles, backed by helicopters, into the city, launching **Operation Bring the Goods Home** to take custody of the 6 prisoners (including **PFLP head Ahmad Saadat**). IDF troops surround the jail, order the 280 prisoners and PA guards to surrender, begin demolishing the jail and attached PA barracks, clashing with some prisoners, guards, and local Palestinians. (Although the U.S., **Britain** deny coordinating with Israel, **Israeli DM Shaul Mofaz** says Israel knew of the monitors pending departure and had been plotting the attack for 1 wk.). After 12 hrs., the remaining prisoners, in-

cluding the 6 targeted men, surrender. At least 1 **PA prison guard** and 1 **Palestinian prisoner** are killed, more than 50 guards and prisoners are wounded, 10s of local Palestinians are injured. In response to the raid, **Palestinian gunmen** across Gaza and the West Bank (reportedly **PFLP** and **AMB** mbrs.) raid hotels, news outlets, and foreign offices, kidnapping at least 9 **foreigners**, vandalizing foreign-owned offices. Most foreigners kidnapped are quickly released. **PA police** fire on **PFLP** mbrs. breaking into the French Cultural Center in Gaza, killing 1 **PFLP mbr.**, wounding 9. Some 15,000 **Palestinians** demonstrate in Gaza City. As a result of the violence, the UN suspends operations in Gaza; the EU withdraws observers from the Rafah crossing, forcing it to close. Meanwhile, the **IDF** also closes the Qarni crossing; bars a pregnant Palestinian woman fr. crossing a checkpoint to reach a Ramallah hospital, forcing her to give birth at the checkpoint; conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Bethlehem, nr. Hebron and Qalqilya, and in 'Aida r.c., Jenin town and r.c., Qabatya; begins work on a new segment of the **separation wall** nr. Dahiyat al-Barid n. of Jerusalem. **Israel** releases **jailed Change and Reform PC mbr. Omar 'Abd al-Raziq** on bail; he was detained 3 mos. ago on charges of belonging to and handling money for Hamas. **Jewish settlers** fr. Kiryat Arba hold Purim parades through Palestinian areas of Hebron under **IDF** escort, vandalizing Palestinian property and beating 2 Palestinian children (ages 11, 13). (AP, BBC, HA, IMEMC, JAZ, MM, PCHR, REU, XIN 3/14; HA, IMEMC, JAZ, MM, NYT, WP, WT, YA 3/15; DS, MM, NYT, PCHR 3/16; MA, Middle East News Agency, MM, VOP 3/18 in WNC 3/19; AP 3/20; MM 3/21, 3/23; HA 4/26; NYT 4/27)

15 MARCH

An **IDF** drone fires on 4 **PRC** mbrs. launching rockets nr. Rafah towards the Kerem Shalom crossing into Israel; all 4 are wounded; the rockets cause no damage or injuries. The **IDF** extends the seal on the West Bank and Gaza (imposed on 3/11) through 3/19; fatally shoots 1 **Palestinian**, wounds 3 who stray close to the **separation wall** west of Ramallah; patrols in Tulkarm; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Balata r.c., in and around Hebron, and nr. Bethlehem (also raiding the offices of the Women's Purity Association, destroying furniture, computers),

Qalqilya. **Jewish settlers** fire on, toss hand grenades at a group of Palestinians in Awarta nr. Nablus, wounding 3. **Palestinians** across the West Bank, Gaza observe a general strike to protest the IDF's 3/14 raid on Jericho; those protesting in Ramallah clash with **IDF** soldiers who fatally shoot **1 Palestinian**. **Palestinian gunmen** release the last **4 foreigners** kidnapped on 3/14. **Palestinians** fire rockets fr. n. Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries. (AFP, JAZ, MM 3/15; IMEMC, NYT, PCHR, WP, WT 3/16; PCHR 3/23)

16 MARCH

An **IDF soldier** is killed during an arrest raid in Jenin targeting **Islamic Jihad** and the **Fatah *tanzim***. The **IDF** imposes a curfew on Hawara nr. Nablus; conducts arrest raids in al-Arub r.c., Jenin town and r.c. (occupying several homes as observation posts), al-Til nr. Tulkarm (destroying 3 cars). **Israeli police** break up a Palestinian conference in Jerusalem on the elections and the future of the city, seal the venue, arrest several speakers and participants, including **PC mbrs.**, on charges of conducting illegal political activity. **Palestinians in Gaza** report that due to **Israel's** ongoing closure of the Qarni commercial crossing, all bakeries in the Strip have closed for lack of flour. **Jewish settlers** fr. Ramat Yishai nr. Hebron bar Palestinian farmers fr. working their land nearby, cut down several grape vines. (AFP, IMEMC, MM 3/16; PCHR 3/23)

17 MARCH

IDF undercover units raid Yamun nr. Jenin (driving 2 cars with Palestinian license plates, followed by 2 bulldozers, and with an **IDF** helicopter escort) and besiege a Palestinian home; fire on a bystander's car driving nr. the area, killing an **8-yr.-old Palestinian girl**, wounding her uncle with a bullet to the head; fire on stone-throwing Palestinians who confront the troops, wounding 2 (including an 11-yr.-old boy); finally raid the home, arrest 5 Palestinians, bulldoze part of the house and an entire neighboring **house**. The **IDF** also sends troops into Tubas, fires on stone-throwing youths who confront them, causing no injuries; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Hebron, Qalqilya. (DS, IMEMC, WT 3/18; HA, NYT 3/19; PCHR 3/23)

18 MARCH

The **IDF** arrests **3 Change and Reform PC mbrs.** outside Jerusalem on their way to visit al-Quds University in Azariyya; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Nablus (occupying 1 Palestinian home as an observation post); patrols in Tulkarm. Late in the evening, in response to Palestinian **rocket** and **mortar** fire fr. Gaza into Israel that causes no damage or injuries, the **IDF** makes air strikes on a water network in Khan Yunis (cutting off water to 6,500 Palestinians), open areas nr. Abasan, a water and an electrical network n. of Rafah, 2 roads leading to the n. Gaza no-go zone nr. Bayt Lahiya. (IMEMC 3/18; VOP 3/18 in WNC 3/19; XIN 3/19; PCHR 3/23)

19 MARCH

Israel extends the seal on the West Bank and Gaza (imposed on 3/11) until after the 3/28 Israeli elections. The **IDF** arrests 3 unarmed Palestinians attempting to sneak into Israel fr. n. Gaza to find work; patrols in Nablus; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Bethlehem, Hebron, Jenin, Nablus; seizes 766 d. of Palestinian land in Bethlehem for construction of the **separation wall**. (AFP, IMEMC 3/19; PCHR 3/23)

The **UN** warns that **Gaza** is dangerously short of basic foodstuffs and faces a major humanitarian crisis as a result of **Israel's** continued closure of the Qarni trade crossing. The **UNRWA** Gaza dir. reports that the agency has run out of food to distribute to impoverished families. In a bid to avert a crisis, **U.S. Amb. to Israel Richard Jones** calls an emergency mtg. with **Israeli, PA delegations** (with the participation of reps of the **EU, Egypt**) in Tel Aviv to discuss declining humanitarian conditions in Gaza; says shortages of food, medicine are beginning to threaten Palestinians' basic welfare. The sides agree to open Israel's Kerem Shalom crossing in s. Gaza on 3/20 for the transport of humanitarian goods fr. Egypt. (AFP, AP 3/19; MM, NYT, WP, WT 3/20)

Having failed in its negotiations with **Fatah** and other parties to form a national unity government or agree on a national unity program, **Hamas** presents its cabinet slate to **Abbas** for approval and issues the draft national unity program as its platform. (AP, NYT, WT 3/19; AP, MM, NYT, WP, WT 3/20; HA 3/21; MM 3/22; MM, *Washington Jewish Week* 3/23) (see Quarterly

Update, Hroub article in this issue for details)

20 MARCH

The **IDF** reopens the Qarni crossing (closed 3/14) to allow import of flour and sugar, but closes it again 30 minutes later, citing unspecified security concerns. The **IDF** also demolishes a **Palestinian home** nr. Qalqilya; patrols in Qalandia r.c. nr. Ramallah, firing on stone-throwing Palestinians who confront the troops, wounding 2 conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Bethlehem, in and around Nablus. The **PA security forces** clash with armed **AMB mbrs.** demanding jobs who take over several public buildings in Gaza (including a hospital and power plant), block a main highway **Abbas** planned to use to leave Gaza after an official visit; at least 23 Palestinians (including at least 6 AMB mbrs.) are wounded. **Unidentified gunmen** fire on, seriously damage the car of **Birzeit Mayor Yusuf Nasr**, parked outside his home. (AFP, MM, YA 3/20; MM, NYT, WP, WT 3/21; NYT 3/22; PCHR 3/23)

21 MARCH

Israeli police detain a car carrying **10 Palestinian laborers** and explosives btwn. Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, stopping what the **Israeli DMin.** says is a major bombing attempt meant to disrupt Israel's 3/28 elections; 1 of the laborers from Yamun, where the IDF killed a 8-yr-old girl during an arrest raid on 3/17, reportedly has ties to **Islamic Jihad**. **Israel** allows the **Qarni crossing** to reopen for the importation of basic goods (see 3/20); **Jordan** sends 200 truckloads of food aid. The **IDF** patrols in Askar r.c., firing on stone-throwing Palestinians who confront the troops, wounding 1; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Qalqilya and nr. Bethlehem, Hebron. In the 2d such incident in 2 days, **unidentified gunmen** fire on, seriously damage the car of **Qalqilya Mayor Hashim al-Masri**, parked outside his home. (AFP, IMEMC, REU 3/21; MM, NYT, WP, WT 3/22; JP, *Jordan Times* 3/22 in WNC 3/23; OCHA, PCHR 3/23)

22 MARCH

The **IDF** raids Aqabat Jabir r.c. nr. Jericho, fatally shoots wanted **Islamic Jihad mbr. Ramadan Mutayr** in an apparent assassination; 2 other Islamic Jihad mbrs. are

arrested. The **IDF** also demolishes 2 **Palestinian homes** in Walaja nr. Bethlehem; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Ramallah, in and around Nablus and Tulkarm, and nr. Bethlehem, Hebron. (IMEMC 3/22; VOP 3/22 in WNC 3/23; NYT, PCHR 3/23; PCHR 3/30)

23 MARCH

The **IDF** allows wheat, flour, rice, sugar into Gaza through the Kerem Shalom crossing; fatally shoots 2 **Palestinians** planting a bomb on the Gaza border nr. Kerem Shalom; conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Tulkarm. **Unidentified gunmen** raid the broadcast studio of the leftist, anti-PA al-Ru'ah TV nr. Bethlehem, destroying its equipment. (OCHA 3/23; NYT 3/24; *al-Quds* 3/25; PCHR 3/30)

24 MARCH

The **IDF** conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Hebron (occupying several homes as observation posts; violently interrogating 30 Palestinians in the al-Harayiq section of the city), in Qalqilya, nr. Jenin. **Jewish settlers** fr. Suissa and Ma'on, under **IDF** escort, uproot at least 400 Palestinian olive trees in Yatta. (PCHR 3/30)

25 MARCH

The **IDF** fatally shoots an unarmed **Palestinian** attempting to sneak across the central Gaza border into Israel to find work; fires a missile fr. an F-16 at a road nr. Nussayrat r.c. in central Gaza; conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Hebron, Qalqilya. In Tubas, 2 **Palestinians** are injured when they accidentally trigger unexploded IDF ordnance. Around 10 **masked Jewish settlers** fr. Suissa attack 3 Palestinians tending their olive trees nearby. In a separate incident in Hebron, some 20 **Jewish settlers** attack, seriously beat an American peace activist assisting Palestinians; he escapes his attackers and runs to a nearby **IDF** post, which refuses to assist him. Also in Hebron, **Jewish settlers** fr. Kiryat Arba attack a Palestinian home, injuring 2 children. (IMEMC 3/25; VOP 3/26 in WNC 3/26; AFP 3/26; HA 3/27; MM 3/28; PCHR 3/30)

26 MARCH

Israel allows Gaza's **Qarni crossing** to open for export of goods to Israel, **Sufa**

crossing (closed since 2/14) for the import of construction materials; shells the n. Gaza no-go zone, causing no damage or injuries; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Hebron, also firing on residential areas, wounding a Palestinian standing on his balcony; issues a military order confiscating 80 d. of Palestinian land for construction of the **separation wall** around Gilo settlement nr. Bethlehem. The **IDF** says that its liaison offices in the West Bank will continue to operate after a Hamas-led government is sworn in, but will no longer deal with any PA officials; they will deal only with international organizations, Palestinian hospitals, individual Palestinians. **Israeli border police** report that in the previous wk. they arrested 550 Palestinians working in Jerusalem without permits and another 130 elsewhere in Israel. (HA, IMEMC 3/26; OCHA 3/29; PCHR 3/30)

27 MARCH

The **IDF** begins imposing new regulations (announced 3/25) on Palestinians entering Jerusalem through Qalandia crossing nr. Ramallah: only Palestinians holding a permit to enter Israel may cross, even to enter the West Bank village of al-Ram (between Qalandia and the Green Line), effectively making the crossing an international checkpoint into Israel and annexing al-Ram. **IDF drones** fire on the car of **AMB cmdr. Muhammad Hijazi** as he drives in Gaza City in an apparent assassination attempt; Hijazi survives unharmed but his aide in the car, 2 Palestinian Security Forces officers nearby are wounded. The **IDF** also fires artillery shells at a group of Islamic Jihad mbrs. attempting to fire a rocket in the n. Gaza no-go zone, killing 1 **Islamic Jihad mbr.**, wounding 3; fatally shoots an **Islamic Jihad al-Quds Brigade mbr. Samir Furayhat** in disputed circumstances during an arrest raid on Yamun (Islamic Jihad does not claim it was an assassination); conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Bethlehem and Tulkarm, in Nablus, nr. Qalqilya. (IMEMC, Jewish Telegraphic Agency, XIN 3/27; PCHR 3/30, 4/6)

28 MARCH

Israel closes all Gaza crossing into Israel, reimposing the full seal on the territories (set on 3/11) for parliamentary elections; sends troops into al-Fawwar r.c. to conduct arrest raids and house searches, fires on

stone-throwing youths who confront the troops, wounding 6; also conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Hebron and in Bethlehem, Nablus, Tubas. **Israeli security contractors** guarding the **separation wall** nr. Jerusalem shoot, wound a Palestinian who strays too close to the wall. **Islamic Jihad** fires a **Grad missile** (an Eastern European rocket with a range greater than a Qassam but less than a Katyusha) fr. Gaza towards Ashkelon, which lands unexploded causing no damage or injuries. **Jewish settlers** fr. Kiryat Arba attack Palestinians, vandalize property in Hebron. Separately, **Jewish settlers** fr. Hebron attack Palestinian children on their way to school by a Palestinian road that passes near a settler-only bypass road. Inside Israel, 2 **bedouin** are killed in the Negev when they accidentally detonate an unexploded Palestinian rocket. (IMEMC, YA 3/28; VOP 3/28 in WNC 3/29; HA, MM, NYT, OCHA 3/29; PCHR 3/30; MM 4/7, 4/13, 4/21)

Israel holds parliamentary elections, with voter turnout at a relatively low 63%. The **Kadima** party, founded by Ariel Sharon and led by Ehud Olmert, wins 29 of the 120 Knesset seats (less than expected) compared to **Labor** with 19 seats, **Likud** (the biggest loser compared with its 38 seats last election) with 12, **Shas** with 12, **Yisrael Beiteinu** with 11, **National Union–National Religious Party** with 9, **Pensioners' Party** with 7, **United Torah Judaism** with 6, **Meretz** with 5, and 3 Arab parties with a total of 10. (MM 3/28; HA, JP, MM, NYT, WP, WT 3/29; NYT, WT 3/30; WP 3/31; XIN, YA 4/3)

The **PC** approves (71–36, with 2 abstentions) the **Hamas-led cabinet**. (NYT 3/29; XIN 3/28 in WNC 3/29)

29 MARCH

Israel lifts the seal on the West Bank; partially reopens Qarni crossing for import and export of goods; continues to shell the n. Gaza no-go zone fr. land and sea, damaging several buildings but causing no injuries; conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Hebron, nr. Tulkarm, and in Jalazun r.c. nr. Ramallah, Jenin town and r.c., Nablus, Tulkarm r.c. In Silwan and al-Tur (Mount of Olives), East Jerusalem, 3 **Palestinian families** are evicted fr. their homes (30 Palestinians in 3 apartment buildings in Silwan; 2 apartment buildings in al-Tur), which they have lived in for at least 40 yrs., after an **Israeli court** rules that the

buildings were legally acquired by the **Jewish National Fund** in 1923. **Jewish settlers** fr. Kefar Etzion uproot Palestinian olive trees nr. Bethlehem. **Jewish settlers** fr. Kiryat Arba, escorted by the **IDF**, vandalize an empty car belonging to the PA Education Min. (OCHA 3/29; DS, PCHR 3/30; IMEMC 3/31; HA 4/3; PCHR 4/6; HA 4/23)

Abbas swears in the new **Palestinian cabinet**. PM **Haniyeh** says his government will allow **Abbas** to pursue peace negotiations with **Israel**, will continue reform efforts. The **U.S.** orders its diplomats, contractors not to have any further contacts with PA ministries, though contacts with **Abbas**, his office would be allowed; presses the international community to do the same. (AP, Canada TV, REU 3/29; AFP, HA, MM, NYT, REU, WP 3/30; VOP 3/30 in WNC 3/31; HA 3/31) (see Quarterly Update)

30 MARCH

A **Palestinian hitchhiker** dressed as an observant Jew detonates a bomb inside an Israeli car that picks him up outside Keddu-mim settlement, killing 4 **Jewish settlers** and himself; **AMB-Nablus faction** claims responsibility. **PA FM Mahmud Zahhar (Change and Reform)** defends the bombing as legitimate resistance, whereas **Abbas** denounces it; **Israel** accuses the **PA** of encouraging terror. **Palestinians** fire a **rocket** fr. Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries. The **IDF** responds by shelling n. Gaza fr. land and sea, causing no damage or injuries; makes 6 F-16 air strikes outside Bayt Hanun and Bayt Lahiya, damaging an electricity network, several roads; warns the **PA** that it will increase pressure on Palestinians firing rockets fr. Gaza, will fire on any place fr. which fire is directed at Israel, even if **PA security forces** are operating in the area. The **IDF** also closes the only checkpoints allowing Palestinian access to the n. Jordan Valley (at least through 4/5); closes all but 1 road leading into Tulkarm; erects a permanent observation post and tower on the Bethlehem-Hebron road into Hebron; issues military orders seizing part of a Palestinian home in Hebron nr. the Ibrahimi Mosque/Tomb of the Patriarchs, 200 sq. m. of Palestinian land in al-Arub r.c. nr. Hebron to expand an **IDF** outpost; searches the offices of the Cultural Forum in Sur al-Bahir outside Jerusalem, confiscating files, damaging furniture; breaks up a Land Day rally in East Jerusalem, arresting 4 Palestinians, including 2 journalists; conducts arrest raids, house searches in

Nablus, Tulkarm. **Jewish settlers**, escorted by **IDF** troops, attack Palestinian farmers, international peace activists planting trees on Palestinian land in Hebron. (IMEMC 3/30; MM, NYT, WP 3/31; NYT 4/1; PCHR 4/6)

31 MARCH

Senior PRC cmdr. Abu Yusuf Abu Quka (allied with **Hamas**) is killed in a car bombing in Gaza City; the **PRCs** blame **PA security forces** linked to **Fatah** (specifically to Gaza strongman and **PC mbr. Muhammad Dahlan**) in collaboration with **Israel**; the **IDF** denies involvement. Clashes erupt btwn. **PRC** mbrs., **PA security forces** allied with **Dahlan** at **Abu Quka's** funeral later in the day, leaving 3 **Palestinians** dead, 35 wounded. In light of the 3/30 bombing, the **IDF** tightens restrictions on Palestinian movement in the n. West Bank, barring Palestinians ages 15–32 fr. crossing checkpoints in the Nablus area; carries out early morning air strikes, fires 10s of shells fr. naval vessels at the n. Gaza no-go zone, a soccer stadium in Gaza City, causing damage to a number of homes but no injuries; makes late-night F-16 air strikes on a hotel under construction nr. Bayt Lahiya, partially destroying it; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Hebron (violently beating a 78-yr-old Palestinian woman), nr. Nablus. Some 40 **Jewish settlers** fr. Elon Moreh nr. Nablus (including 2 **off-duty IDF soldiers**) beat, fire on Palestinian farmers working their fields nr. Salim. (AFP, REU 3/31; HA, JAZ, NYT, WP, WT 4/1; XIN 4/2 in WNC 4/3; MM 4/5; MM, PCHR 4/6; HA 4/16)

1 APRIL

In response to **Palestinians** firing 3 **rockets** fr. Gaza into Israel overnight (causing no damage or injuries), the **IDF** shells the n. Gaza no-go zone fr. land and sea, severely damaging the Bayt Lahiya electricity grid, a number of houses, 3 cars. The **IDF** also closes the Nablus-Tulkarm road into Tulkarm, sealing the city (other access roads were closed on 3/30); conducts arrest raids, house searches in Hebron, nr. Nablus. **Armed Jewish settlers** fr. Kiryat Arba uproot and take back to the settlement 60 olive tree saplings fr. nearby Palestinian land. Other **Jewish settlers** fr. Kiryat Arba vandalize a Palestinian home; the **IDF** observes but does not intervene. Also in Hebron, **Jewish settlers** fr. Beit Hadasah throw bottles and stones at Palestinian school children,

escorted by international peace activists, injuring 1 activist; the **IDF** observes but does not intervene. Separately, **Jewish settlers** in Hebron throw bottles and stones at Palestinians to prevent them fr. using Shuhada Street. **Jewish settlers** fr. Mehola attack a Palestinian shepherd grazing his sheep nr. Bayt Furik outside Nablus, violently beating him, stabbing his sheep, killing 15 and wounding 5. PM **Haniyeh** orders all Palestinian gunmen off Gaza City streets to reduce tensions after clashes on 3/31; the **PRCs** say they will observe the call, but in a show of defiance, **300 armed Fatah mbrs.** march through the streets, firing in the air, demanding that the PA arrest **PRC mbrs.** involved in the 3/31 violence. (HA, JAZ 4/1; WT 4/2; PCHR 4/6)

2 APRIL

The **IDF** shells Gaza's Jabaliya r.c., seriously wounding a 7-yr-old Palestinian boy and his father harvesting vegetables in their field; sends undercover units in a car with Palestinian license plates into Qalqilya to arrest a wanted Palestinian; later sends troops into Qalqilya to arrest another Palestinian, firing on stone-throwing youths who confront them, wounding 6; conducts other arrest raids, house searches in and around Nablus, in Qalqilya (also firing on residential areas), nr. Hebron and Jenin; seriously beats a Palestinian in Hebron for no apparent reason. In retaliation for the 3/31 Abu Quqa assassination, the **PRCs** fire 3 **rockets** fr. Gaza towards an IDF post at Kissufim crossing causing no damage or injuries. The **IDF** responds by shelling n. Gaza, targeting and hitting a truck hauling vegetables in Bayt Lahiya (apparently thinking it belonged to militants who fired the rockets), injuring 2 farmers. A **Palestinian** dies, a 2d is injured when heavy rain run-off obstructed by the **separation wall**, which effectively creates a dam nr. Bil'in, causes flash flooding that washes the men into the razor wire cordoning off the wall, trapping them. (MEMC, JAZ, PRC communiqué, XIN 4/2; VOP 4/2 in WNC 4/3; PCHR 4/6)

3 APRIL

IDF undercover units raid an apartment building in Bethlehem and assassinate **AMB West Bank cmdr. Ra'id Ubayyat**, wounding and detaining his roommate. The **IDF** also sends troops into Qalandia r.c., fires on residential areas, killing a **5-yr-old**

Palestinian boy; patrols in Jenin; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Tulkarm and in and around Bethlehem, Hebron, Nablus. The **AMB** fires a **rocket** fr. Gaza into Israel in response, causing no damage or injuries. The **IDF** also fatally shoots a stone-throwing **13-yr.-old Palestinian** nr. Qalandia r.c.; arrests 5 unarmed Palestinians attempting to sneak into Israel fr. Gaza to find work; conducts arrest raids in Qalqilya. (MEMC, XIN 4/3; VOP 4/3 in WNC 4/4; PCHR 4/6)

4 APRIL

After **Palestinians** fire **rockets** fr. Gaza into Israel (causing no damage or injuries), the **IDF** launches **Operation Southern Arrow** (as warned on 3/30), making air strikes on a **PA** security compound (wounding 2 Palestinians; see 3/30) and Abbas's helicopter pad in Gaza City, firing at least 30 shells at residential areas nr. the n. Gaza no-go zone (hitting 2 houses, killing 1 **Palestinian** and wounding at least 5), flying mock air raids over Gaza (repeatedly breaking the sound barrier), reducing the distance that artillery fire may be targeted nr. Palestinian homes fr. 300 m to 100 m. The **IDF** also recloses the **Qarni** commercial crossing; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Bethlehem, Dura, Nablus. (WP 4/5; VOP 4/5 in WNC 4/6; PCHR 4/6; HA 5/14)

According to the biography of **fmr. Mossad chief Efraim Halevy**, released today in Britain, just before Israel's 1997 attempted assassination of **Hamas political leader Khalid Mishal** in Amman, **King Hussein** transmitted a message offering a 30-yr. cease-fire fr. Hamas to **then Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu** via a local **Mossad** rep. The message did not reach Netanyahu until after the hit was made. (JAZ 4/4)

5 APRIL

The **IDF** shells the Gaza coastal road nr. Bayt Lahiya; sends undercover units into Tulkarm to arrest the local **Islamic Jihad** spokesman; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Bethlehem and in and around Hebron, Nablus, Tulkarm. (Voice of al-Aqsa, VOP 4/5 in WNC 4/6; PCHR 4/6, 4/13)

6 APRIL

As **Operation Southern Arrow** on Gaza continues, the **IDF** conducts air strikes on 2 **AMB** targets in Bayt Lahiya where **AMB mbrs.** allegedly are meeting to plan rocket launches

against Israel; makes air strikes on the presidential landing strip in Gaza City for a 2d time (see 4/5), on a Muslim youth association building in Gaza City (causing damage but no injuries); fires some 300 artillery shells into Gaza (injuring 2 Palestinians nr. their homes in Bayt Hanun and Bayt Lahiya) in response to Palestinians firing some 12 **rockets** towards Israel in recent days; also drops 1,000s of leaflet on n. Gaza warning Palestinians against approaching areas fr. which rockets are launched. The **IDF** also arrests, questions, releases **PA Jerusalem Affairs M Khalid Abu 'Arafa**, a Jerusalem resident, as he leaves Jerusalem for the West Bank, saying he is on a list of individuals barred fr. entering the West Bank for security reasons; continues arrest raids, house searches in Nablus (see 4/5), firing on residential areas, occupying a Palestinian home as an observation post, firing on stone-throwing youths who confront the troops, wounding 8 plus an American journalist covering the demonstration; bars Palestinian vehicular traffic into or out of Tulkarm; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Bethlehem, in and around Jenin. In separate raids on Nablus late in the evening, an **IDF undercover unit** shoots, wounds a **PA police officer** who mistakes their raid on an apartment for a burglary (the officer is uninformed and identifies himself before being shot); fires on a Palestinian vehicle that enters an area in which an arrest raid is underway, wounding 4 bystanders, fatally shooting a **5th bystander** who attempts to leave the scene to get medical help. (HA, MM 4/6; Voice of al-Aqsa 4/6 in WNC 4/9; NYT, WT 4/7; *Guardian* 4/8; HA 5/7; PCHR 4/13)

7 APRIL

The **IDF** sets up another artillery battery nr. Kerem Shalom outside the s. Gaza Strip; conducts air strikes on a car nr. Rafah assassinating **wanted senior PRC military cmdr. Iyad Abu al-'Aynayn** and **3 other PRC mbrs.**, also killing **'Aynayn's 5-yr.-old son, a young bystander**, and wounding at least 14 bystanders, including **'Aynayn's 7-yr.-old daughter**; steps up shelling across Gaza, particularly around Gaza City, including nr. Abbas's presidential compound where he is currently staying (no injuries reported); blows up a **Palestinian home** in Hebron allegedly used for manufacturing explosives; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Balata r.c. (firing on stone-throwing youths who confront the troops, wounding 2), nr.

Jenin. After **Palestinians** fire a **rocket** fr. n. Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries; the **IDF** shells n. Gaza, injuring 4 Palestinians nr. Bayt Hanun, Bayt Lahiya. **Jewish settlers** fr. Avraham Avino occupy a Palestinian house in Hebron, evicting the Palestinian residents (the **IDF** observes but does not intervene); the settlers claim to have purchased the building, but the Palestinian owners deny this; the **Israeli Civil Administration** says it is reviewing the claim. **Jewish settlers** fr. Elon Moreh beat a 73-yr.-old Palestinian farmer working on his land in nearby Salim. (AFP, HA, YA 4/7; *Guardian*, HA, NYT, WP 4/8; VOP 4/8 in WNC 4/9; PCHR 4/9; PCHR 4/13)

8 APRIL

On the 5th day of **Operation Southern Arrow**, the **IDF** conducts an air strike on a car driving in Gaza City, killing **AMB mbrs. Muhammad Abu Shari'a and Mahmud Ajjur** and seriously injuring a 3d who had just fired a **rocket** into Israel (causing no damage or injuries), and an air strike on a car nr. Khan Yunis, assassinating at least **6 mbrs. of the Abu Rish Brigades (ARB; a Fatah offshoot)** and wounding 4 other ARB mbrs. and at least 11 bystanders; 3 Palestinian children in Jabaliya r.c. and a family of 5 in Bayt Lahiya are wounded by shrapnel in continued shelling of n. Gaza. The **IDF** also bars Palestinians under age 30 fr. crossing checkpoints into or out of the Jordan Valley; sends troops back into Nablus, firing on stone-throwing youths who confront them, wounding 12; conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Hebron, nr. Jenin (targeting **Islamic Jihad**, firing on stone-throwing youths who confront the troops); patrols in Anabta nr. Tulkarm, firing on Palestinian youths who confront the troops. **Jewish settlers** fr. Suissa set fire to a Palestinian home, attack Palestinian farmers, shepherds in nearby Yatta. A smugglers tunnel on the Rafah border collapses, killing **2 Palestinians**. (MEMC 4/8; Palestine Satellite Channel Television, VOI, VOP 4/8 in WNC 4/9; IMEMC, NYT, PCHR, WP, WT 4/9; PCHR 4/13)

9 APRIL

The **Israeli security cabinet** formally severs all direct contacts with the **PA**, which it calls a "hostile entity," and vows to "work toward preventing any entrenchment of the **Hamas** government's rule"; says Israel will

not rule out "personal" contacts with **Abbas** but views the PA as a single entity, meaning that opening a separate negotiating channel with him to bypass the Hamas-led government is not an option; Israel will also refuse to meet with foreign officials who meet with Hamas mbrs. during their regional visits. After Palestinians fire **5 rockets** towards Israel (causing no damage or injuries; 2 land inside Gaza), the **IDF** heavily shells the n. Gaza no-go zone and populated areas in Bayt Hanun, Bayt Lahiya, and Jabaliya r.c., killing a **PA security officer** evacuating Palestinians fr. the area, wounding at least 16 Palestinians (including 3 PA security officers), hitting a taxi, and heavily damaging the PA Customs Bureau, a factory, and 1 house. **IDF undercover units** raid Bayt Ta'mar nr. Bethlehem, assassinate **PRCs Salah al-Din Brigadeshead Jabir Akhras**; the IDF has attempted to assassinate Akhras several times, most recently 3 mos. ago. The **IDF** also sends troops into Nablus, firing on areas of al-Najah University campus (hitting a female Palestinian student in the face with a rubber bullet, causing her to lose an eye), fatally shooting a **Palestinian** for no apparent reason, conducting arrest raids, house searches; also conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Tulkarm, nr. Hebron, in villages surrounding Nablus; occupies a Palestinian building in Bayt Jala nr. Bethlehem as an observation post. **Palestinians in Qalqilya** report that for several days, the **IDF** has been harassing, delaying the entry of non-Qalqilya residents (primarily shoppers fr. surrounding villages) into the city, barring them fr. driving cars across the checkpoint. A **Palestinian family** evicted fr. its home in al-Tur on 3/29 reoccupies its home, but is quickly evicted by the **IDF** for "squatting." (HA, IMEMC, PNN 4/9; AP, JP, PCHR 4/9; HA, JP, NYT, WP, WT 4/10; PCHR 4/13; Islamic Republic News Agency 4/16; HA 4/23)

10 APRIL

The **IDF** continues heavy shelling of Gaza, including populated areas, hitting a house in Bayt Lahiya, killing an **8-yr.-old Palestinian girl**, wounding 12; damaging several commercial greenhouses in Bayt Lahiya. **Palestinians** fire **rockets** fr. Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries. The **IDF** also sends troops back into Nablus and Balata r.c. to conduct arrest raids, house searches (beating a foreign journalists and medic in Nablus, occupying several Palestinian homes as observation posts in Balata);

also conducts arrest raids, house searches in Qalqilya and nr. Bethlehem, Hebron, Jenin. **Jewish settlers** fr. Rotem nr. Tubas fence off, place a trailer on nearby Palestinian land to expand the settlement. Some **100 Palestinian youths** demonstrate outside, throw eggs at the UN headquarters in Gaza City, where the EU's Gaza staff is based, to protest the EU's 4/7 decision to cut off aid to the PA (see Quarterly Update). (*Deutsche Welle*, HA, IMEMC, JP 4/10; NYT, WP 4/11; MM, NYT 4/12; PCHR 4/13)

11 APRIL

IDF makes an air strike demolishing an **AMB** building in Gaza City; blows up a **Palestinian home** in Jenin that allegedly stored explosives; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Jenin and in Bethlehem, Hebron, Tulkarm. **Palestinians** fire a **rocket** fr. Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries. **Abbas** dispatches mbrs. of **Force 17**, the presidential guard, to take control of PA operations at the Rafah crossing, relieving **PA security forces** controlled by the **Interior Min.** (see Quarterly Update). (MM 4/11; MM, NYT 4/12; PCHR 4/13)

Israel's acting FM Tzipi Livni says that any Palestinian "fighting against Israeli soldiers is an enemy and we will fight back, but I believe that this is not under the definition of terrorism," only those "who take the lives of civilians are terrorists." Says that the international community should "stop calling terrorists those who are freedom fighters." (AFP, IFM 4/11)

12 APRIL

The **IDF** opens the Qarni crossing (closed since 4/4); fatally shoots **2 armed AMB mbrs.** attempting to sneak into Israel fr. s. Gaza; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Qalqilya. (OCHA 4/12; PCHR 4/13, 4/20; OCHA 4/23)

13 APRIL

The **IDF** sends armored bulldozers several dozen yards into Gaza to look for buried explosives; shells the n. Gaza no-go zone and the border area nr. Khan Yunis, causing no injuries; closes the Kerem Shalom crossing for the day, the Sufa crossing indefinitely; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Jenin, Ramallah, Tulkarm. Some **20 AMB gunmen** temporarily shut down the **PA Transportation Min.**, seize the **PA**

parliament building in Ramallah, protesting the refusal of the new government to meet their demands to give them taxi licenses as perks (worth thousands of dollars), promotions for mbrs. in the PA security services. (AP, HA, MM 4/13; WP, WT 4/14; NYT 4/15; PCHR 4/20)

In interviews with the Israeli dailies *Ma'ariv* and *Yedi'ot Abaronot*, **Israeli Military Intelligence cmdr. Maj. Gen. Amos Yadlin** says that Israelis "should not frighten ourselves" about **Hamas**, "Gaza is not acquiring the kind of terror capabilities that should keep us awake at night," adding, "[W]e certainly must not regard them as an existential threat or the end of the world. One must look at Hamas through a complex lens and not one-dimensionally. . . . Hamas is an organization with a realistic and pragmatic outlook, which requires it to compromise, at least in the short run, to achieve its long-term goals. The fact that Hamas can reach a cease-fire or very practical arrangements in the short run is based on the Qur'an, which says that those who have patience will have Allah on their side." (MA, MM, YA 4/13)

14 APRIL

The **IDF** continues to shell n. Gaza (wounding a Palestinian in Jabaliya r.c.), sends armored bulldozers several dozen yards inside Gaza for a 2d day to search for buried explosives, as **IDF Dep. Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. Moshe Kaplinsky** warns that the IDF could launch ground operations into Gaza if rocket fire fr. Gaza into Israel keeps up. The **IDF** also opens the Kerem Shalom (closed 4/13) to allow in basic food-stuffs and gas (most trucks entering are for the UN); raids a girls elementary school in Far'un in the West Bank; patrols in, fire on residential areas of Aida r.c.; conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Nablus, nr. Hebron. In Jabaliya r.c., **1,000s of Palestinians** rally to denounce the cut off in some international aid, continued Israeli shelling and overflights of Gaza. (HA, NYT, WT 4/15; PCHR 4/20)

15 APRIL

The **IDF** closes Qarni crossing for 2 days; closes the Kerem Shalom crossing for the day; shells Bayt Lahiya (wounding a Palestinian outside his home, damaging several homes); raids a PA police station in Tamun, confiscating a guard's gun; conducts arrest

raids, house searches in Madama nr. Nablus, ordering all of the village residents to gather the local school for ID checks. At the request of **Jewish settlers** fr. Suissa, the **IDF** beats and forcibly removes a Palestinian farmer and his 6-yr.-old son fr. their nearby farm land. Some **50 masked PA policemen (AMB mbrs.)**, firing in the air, block a main Gaza road in Khan Yunis, briefly seize a government building to protest a 2-wk. delay in their 3/06 salaries. A **Palestinian** bystander wounded in the 4/7 **IDF** assassination of PRC cmdr. Abu al-Aynayn dies of his injuries. (HA, IMEMC, XIN 4/15; WP, WT 4/16; PCHR 4/20; OCHA 4/23)

16 APRIL

The **IDF** fires artillery shells at the Bayt Hanun industrial zone, hitting a nearby cattle farm, killing 46 cows; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Bethlehem, Hebron, and in and around Jenin town and r.c. (firing on stone-throwing youths who confront the troops, wounding 4), Nablus. **Israeli police arrest Change and Reform PC mbr. Muhammad Abu Tir** in East Jerusalem, where he is a resident, arrest 7 Palestinians thought to be planning a Hamas rally in the city. **Jewish settlers in Hebron** attack a Palestinian boy, attempt to break into a Palestinian home nr. Beit Hadasah settlement. (HA, IMEMC 4/16; PCHR 4/20; OCHA 4/23)

17 APRIL

An **Islamic Jihad suicide bomber** detonates a device in a Tel Aviv deli, killing **9 Israelis**, wounding 59. **Abbas** condemns the attack, the deadliest since an 8/31/04 bombing killed 16 Israelis in Beersheba and since the 2/05 cease-fire was declared, whereas a **Hamas** spokesman in Gaza calls the bombing "a natural result of the continued Israeli crimes against our people"; the U.S. says that "the burden of responsibility for preventing terrorist attacks such as this one rests with the Palestinian Authority." The **IDF** continues to shell the n. Gaza no-go zone (killing **1 Palestinian**, wounding 2) and the s. Gaza coast from land and sea; makes an air strike on a building in Gaza City allegedly used as a factory to make rockets, causing no injuries; reopens the Sufa and Qarni crossings (closed on 4/13 and 4/15); sends troops into Nablus, where they fire on Palestinian stone throwers and on residential areas, wounding at least 16 Palestinians

and damaging a clearly marked AP press vehicle; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Jenin town and r.c. (arresting the father of the 4/17 suicide bomber), in Tulkarm town and r.c., and nr. Hebron, Qalqilya. **Jewish settlers** fr. Elon Moreh fire on Palestinian shepherds, steal some sheep nr. Nablus. (HA, NYT, YA 4/17; MM, NYT, WP, WT 4/18; HA, MM 4/19; PCHR 4/20; OCHA 4/23)

18 APRIL

Israel says that the **Hamas-led PA** is responsible for the 4/17 suicide bombing but that it will not launch a large-scale military operation in retaliation so as to "avoid escalation"; instead it will increase "diplomatic pressure" on the government, including revoking the Israeli residency rights of **3 Change and Reform PC mbrs.** (including Jerusalem Affairs M **Abu 'Arafa**) from East Jerusalem, meaning they would have to leave the city. The **AMB, ARB, PRCs** issue a joint statement demanding that **Abbas** "apologize to the entire Palestinian people for the offense he committed" by condemning the 4/17 suicide bombing. Meanwhile, the **IDF** steps up **Operation Southern Arrow**, shelling areas of n. Gaza, hitting a sewage treatment facility, seriously injuring 3 Palestinian children, and wounding a farmer working his field, a shepherd grazing his sheep, a Palestinian outside his home in Bayt Lahiya, a Palestinian walking in a residential area of Bayt Hanun, a truck driver nr. the customs bureau in Jabaliya; detains, severely beats a 16-yr.-old Palestinian boy at a Bethlehem checkpoint for allegedly carrying a knife; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Jenin, in Nablus (confiscating the camera of an AP journalist covering the raid). **Israeli police** detain PA Jerusalem Affairs M **Abu 'Arafa** at a checkpoint on the outskirts of East Jerusalem as he is en route to a PA cabinet mtg., delaying him 2 hrs. (AFP, AP, IMEMC, JP, NYT, PNN, REU, WP 4/18; MM, NYT, WP, WT 4/19; MM, PCHR 4/20; HA 4/24)

19 APRIL

The **IDF** shells n. Gaza in response to a Palestinian **rocket** fired fr. Gaza into Israel that causes no damage or injuries; closes Gaza's Sufa and Kerem Shalom commercial crossings for the day; shells n. Gaza, wounding a Palestinian child; sends troops back into Nablus, who fire on residential areas

and on stone-throwing youths who confront them, wounding 5 youths and 2 bystanders; patrols in al-Araqa nr. Jenin; fires on residential areas of Azun; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Hebron. (MM 4/19; PCHR 4/20; OCHA 4/26; PCHR 4/27)

20 APRIL

The **IDF** sends undercover units into Bethlehem to conduct arrest raids, house searches; conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Nablus and nr. Bethlehem, Jenin, Jericho, Qalqilya; sends troops into Dura, fires on stone-throwing youths who confront them, wounding 4; patrols in al-Aqaba nr. Jenin. Some **15 Jewish settlers** in Hebron attack 2 international peace activists, lightly injuring them. (PCHR 4/27)

With **PA security forces** (predominantly **Fatah** mbrs.) refusing to deploy on his orders, new **PA Interior M Said Siyam** appoints **PRC head Jamal Abu Samhadana** (formerly a Fatah member and senior PA security officer) as inspector gen. of the Interior Min. to set up a new volunteer security force, the **Executive Support Force (ESF)**, to help restore law and order to the streets. The ESF ideally would include mbrs. of "all the resistance branches." **Israel**, the **U.S.** accuse PM **Haniyeh** of forming his own militia to counter **Abbas**. (MM, NYT, WP, WT 4/21; MM, WT 4/25; XIN 4/30; NYT 5/20) (see Quarterly Update)

21 APRIL

The **IDF** closes the Zatar checkpoint linking the n. and s. West Bank (closed almost continually through the end of the quarter); patrols in, fires on residential areas of Bethlehem (seriously wounding 1 Palestinian stone-thrower), Nablus (wounding 3 Palestinians); conducts arrest raids, house searches in Jenin (targeting the **AMB**) and nr. Hebron, Qalqilya. **Islamic Jihad** claims to fire a 2d **Grad rocket** fr. Gaza towards Ashkelon (see 3/28), but the **IDF** reports no rocket fire. A **Palestinian** stabs, lightly wounds an **Israeli border policeman** at al-Ram checkpoint into Jerusalem, is arrested. Some **15 Jewish settlers** fr. Tal Rumayda attack a group of Palestinian girls on their way to school and 5 international peace activists escorting them, causing minor injuries. (HA 4/23; PCHR 4/27)

Abbas vetoes **Siyam's** 4/20 appointment of **Abu Samhadana** as Interior Min.

inspector gen. and vows to block his plan to set up a new security force (the ESF). In Damascus, **Hamas head Khalid Mishal** accuses Abbas and **Fatah** of seeking to form a parallel government, conspiring against **Haniyeh's** new government, committing treason, surrendering to Israel. Haniyeh denounces Mishal's statements. (NYT, WP, WT 4/22; HA 4/23; MM 4/24-26; HA 4/30) (see Quarterly Update)

22 APRIL

The **IDF** tightens restrictions on Palestinians traveling btwn. the n. and s. West Bank; bars 100s of Armenian worshipers from processing to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem to celebrate Orthodox Easter; sends troops back into Nablus, where they fire on stone-throwing youths who confront them, wounding 3 stone-throwers and a journalist covering the clashes; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Hebron. **Dozens of Jewish settlers** attempting to break into a Palestinian store in Hebron attack, beat 2 female international peace activists blocking their way; the **IDF** intervenes to halt the attack. **Jewish settlers** fr. Ma'on ambush and stone an **IDF** jeep escorting Palestinian school children to school along a road that passes by the settlement, detaining the jeep and children for an hour until **IDF** reinforcements arrive. **Jewish settlers** fr. Yitzhar set fire to 2 new trucks and a generator at a private Palestinian quarry nr. Nablus. In Gaza City, **al-Azhar University students** backing **Fatah** and rallying in support of **Abbas's** 4/21 veto of **Siyam's** security decisions occupy a campus building, unfurl a **Fatah** banner, stone **students at neighboring Islamic University**, largely supportive of **Hamas**, who throw stones back; **Fatah**, **Hamas** cadres join the clashes, exchanging gunfire, leaving 20 Palestinians wounded. In the West Bank, some **4,000 Fatah supporters** take part in several rallies supporting **Abbas** and denouncing **Mishal** (see 4/21). **Hamas, Fatah leaders** meet late in the evening to restore calm. (HA, PCHR, WP 4/23; MM, WT 4/24; PCHR 4/27; HA 4/30)

23 APRIL

IDF undercover units raid Bethlehem, open fire on a car, assassinating **wanted AMB mbrs. Daniel Abu Hammami and Ahmad Muslih**, wounding a 3d. The **IDF** also closes Kerem Shalom crossing for the day; raids al-Amal Hospital in Nablus, search-

ing wards for wanted Palestinians; raids a PA police station in Azariyya in East Jerusalem, detaining 2 officers; conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Hebron and nr. Bethlehem, Tulkarm. In Gaza City, **armed Fatah mbrs.** protest outside the PA Health Min. offices in Gaza City, demanding assistance for relatives in need of medical treatment abroad, and begin to riot when they are told that budget constraints have forced the government to slash funding for medical transports abroad; when **PA police** are unable to quell the demonstration, the Health M calls in **Izzeddin al-Qassam Brigades mbrs.** to support the police, sparking an exchange of gunfire with the **Fatah mbrs.**, leaving 3 **Fatah mbrs.** wounded. In Nablus, **AMB gunmen (mbrs. of the PA security forces)** fire on the historic Nablus municipal building, forcing employees to evacuate, demanding that the **Hamas** mayor close his offices, that the PA pay their salaries. To calm tensions, **Abbas** orders the **PA security forces** to cancel plans for a massive pro-**Fatah** rally in Ramallah against **Mishal's** 4/21 statements. (IMEMC, PNN, YA 4/23; MM, WP, WT 4/24; OCHA 4/26; PCHR 4/27)

24 APRIL

The **IDF** shells n. Gaza, hitting a poultry farm in Bayt Lahiya (wounding 1 Palestinian), damaging 2 Palestinian homes (injuring 2 Palestinians), hitting a farm in Bayt Hanun (killing 2 cows); conducts arrest raids in and around Nablus and nr. Bethlehem, Hebron, Jenin, Ramallah. (PCHR 4/27)

25 APRIL

The **IDF** arrests without charge **Hamas's chief West Bank spokesman Farhad Asad**; raids an elementary school in Hebron, arresting a 12-yr.-old Palestinian for throwing stones; conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Nablus (firing on stone-throwing youths who confront the troops, wounding 6), in Jenin r.c., nr. Hebron. In a rare move, **Israel's Jerusalem Municipality** approves 17 proposals for Arab construction in the East Jerusalem neighborhoods of Bayt Hanina, Shu'fat on approximately 1,000 d. of land; **Jerusalem Mayor Uri Lupolianski** calls the decision a "revolutionary step" that constitutes a "breakthrough" for Palestinian residents of the city. (JP 4/25; IMEMC, WP 4/26; PCHR 4/27)

26 APRIL

The **IDF** closes the Qarni crossing; conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Nablus and nr. Bethlehem, Hebron, Jenin (fatally shooting a **Palestinian** gunman), Ramallah (searching the home of **Change and Reform PC mbr. Ahmad 'Abd al-'Aziz Malik**). **PA security forces** at Gaza's Qarni crossing prevent 2 Palestinian vehicles of **PRC mbrs.** carrying explosives that attempt to crash through the PA security barrier to attack the main transit building; 3 PA policemen, 2 gunmen are wounded in the exchange, and 3 gunmen are arrested; **Israel** claims that the PRCs were acting under the direction of **Hamas**, which denies the charge; PA Interior M **Siyam** says that attacking border crossings is against the national interest and should not be done. Meanwhile, mbrs. of the **Yasir Arafat Brigades** (considered an offshoot of the **AMB**) say that in response to Siyam's plans to create the ESF they are planning to form a new militia "to protect Fatah men against the Israeli enemy and against any attempt by any party inside the homeland to target them." (IMEMC, REU 4/26; NYT, PCHR, WP 4/27; IFM, XIN 5/1; OCHA 5/3; PCHR 5/4)

27 APRIL

The **IDF** closes Gaza's Kerem Shalom crossing for 2 days; makes air strikes on 2 cars driving in central Gaza, missing 1 car carrying **5 Islamic Jihad mbrs.** but hitting the 2d, assassinating **Islamic Jihad mbrs. Ahmad Abu Nijim and Wa'il al-Qaran**, wounding a 3d mbr. and 3 bystanders; arrests **Change and Reform PC mbr. Ahmad Mubarak** in his home in Jalazun r.c., giving no reason; sends troops back into Nablus and Askar r.c., conducting arrest raids, house searches and firing on stone-throwing Palestinians who confront them; also conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Jenin. (AFP, IMEMC, MM 4/27; NYT, WP 4/28; OCHA 5/3; PCHR 5/4)

28 APRIL

The **IDF** conducts arrest raids, house searches in Qabatya and nr. Bethlehem, Qalqilya. **Palestinians** fire 4 **rockets** fr. Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries. **Jewish settlers** fr. Kiryat Arba seize and fence off 7 d. of nearby Palestinian agricultural land to expand the settlement. (HA 4/30; PCHR 5/4)

29 APRIL

Overnight and throughout the day, the **IDF** shells n. Gaza, hitting a house and a populated street in Bayt Hanun (injuring 7 Palestinians), hitting a house in Bayt Hanun (wounding 3 Palestinians), wounding 3 farmers in fields nr. Bayt Hanun and Bayt Lahiya. Meanwhile, the **IDF** notes a sharp decline in Palestinian rocket fire over the previous wk. The **IDF** also unintentionally kills a **3-yr.-old Palestinian girl** nr. Ramallah by shutting a crossing gate on her head; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Bethlehem, nr. Qalqilya. **Jewish settlers** fr. Kiryat Arba vandalize Palestinian homes in Hebron. **Jewish settlers** ambush, attack several Palestinian cars in the Jordan Valley. (IMEMC 4/29; HA 4/30; PCHR 5/4)

30 APRIL

The **IDF** reopens the Qarni crossing (closed on 4/26); conducts arrest raids, house searches in Bethlehem, Hebron, Jenin, Nablus. **Palestinians** fire a **rocket** fr. Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries; the **IDF** responds by shelling n. Gaza, causing no injuries. **Jewish settlers** fr. Kiryat Arba vandalize Palestinian homes in Hebron for a 2d day. (HA, IMEMC 4/30; B'Tselem press release 5/1; OCHA 5/3; PCHR 5/4)

1 MAY

IDF soldiers manning a checkpoint outside the Ibrahimi Mosque/Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron severely beat a 65-yr.-old Palestinian woman, delay an ambulance fr. treating her for 20 mins. The **IDF** also conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Hebron, Tulkarm (targeting **Islamic Jihad**; fatally shooting a 44-yr.-old **Palestinian woman** and wounding her 3 daughters, occupying a Palestinian home as an observation post) and in Azun, Balata r.c., Bethlehem, Jericho, Nablus (firing on residential areas). (IMEMC 5/1; PCHR 5/4)

2 MAY

The **IDF** captures a Palestinian boat smuggling explosives fr. Egypt to Gaza; beats up a mute 12-yr.-old Palestinian boy who fails to understand their questions at a checkpoint nr. Jenin; raids, searches, vandalizes the Greek Catholic Medical Center in Bayt Sahur nr. Bethlehem; conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Jenin, nr.

Bethlehem, in al-Til. In Bayt Lahiya, **2 PA security officers** are killed, 1 is wounded when they try to disarm an unexploded IDF shell. **Haniyeh** calls on militants not to launch attacks against border crossings, saying that hindering the import of supplies to Gaza violates national interests. (HA, IMEMC 5/2; PCHR 5/4; HA 5/15)

3 MAY

The **IDF** closes all Gaza crossings for the day; imposes a curfew on Hawara nr. Nablus, occupies a Palestinian building as an observation post; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Bethlehem. **Managing director of Gaza's al-Shifa hospital**, Ibrahim al-Habash, says that **4 patients** have died in recent days from treatable conditions due to the lack of medicine coming into the Strip and the PA's inability to pay suppliers, warns that hospital conditions across Gaza are growing critical. (PCHR, WT 5/4; NYT 5/8; MM 5/9; OCHA 5/10; PCHR 5/11)

4 MAY

The **IDF** fatally shoots a **Palestinian taxi driver** who stops to wait for a passenger nr. a sand barrier set up by the IDF nr. a checkpoint outside Nablus; sends undercover units in cars with Palestinian license plates into Azun and Hebron to arrest wanted Palestinians; also conducts arrest raids in Balata r.c. (exchanging fire with Palestinian gunmen, leaving 3 wounded), Bayt Jala, Nablus, Yatta. **Palestinians** fire **6 rockets** fr. s. Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries. A **Jewish settler** fr. Kiryat Arba injures a 3-yr-old Palestinian in a deliberate hit and run in Hebron. **Jewish settlers** fr. Ramat Yishai throw bottles, stones at Palestinian children (ages 7-12) playing nearby. (WP 5/6; PCHR 5/11)

The **Knesset** approves, swears in **PM Ehud Olmert's** new cabinet, including **Vice PM and FM Tzipi Livni (Kadima)**, **DM Amir Peretz (Labor)**. The new coalition controls 67 of 120 parliamentary seats, with **Kadima** holding 29 seats, **Labor** 19, the ultra-Orthodox **Shas** 12, the **Pensioners Party** 7. (MM 5/4; MM, WP, WT 5/5)

5 MAY

In the 1st attacks authorized by new Israeli **DM Peretz**, the **IDF** makes 3 air strikes on a **PRC** camp in Gaza in retaliation for 5/4 rocket fire, killing **5 PRC mbrs.** (Hamada

Daghmash, Juma' Daghmash, Mahmud Daghmash, Wahid Daghmash, Khalid Wakid), wounding 2 in an apparent attempt to assassinate **PRC cmdr. Mumtaz Daghmash**, who lives nearby. The **IDF** also closes Gaza's Sufa crossing for 2 days and Kerem Shalom crossing indefinitely; prevents Palestinians fr. Jenin, Nablus, Tulkarm in the n. West Bank fr. crossing checkpoints into the s. West Bank; shells a rocket launch site in n. Gaza, causing no injuries; fires on stone-throwing youths who confront troops during an arrest raid by an undercover unit in Nablus, killing **1 Palestinian**, wounding 1, also occupying part of an apartment building as an observation post; patrols in Jenin, Yatta (firing on residential areas); conducts arrest raids, house searches in Balata r.c. In Gaza, **1,000s of Hamas mbrs.** rally in support of the PA government. (IMEMC 5/5; NYT, WP, WT 5/6; HA 5/7; OCHA 5/10; PCHR 5/11)

In a formal protest to **Israel**, **UNRWA** notes that the IDF has barred access to Jerusalem fr. the West Bank for 4 days, which the agency says is unprecedented, hindering the movement of its personnel, undermining humanitarian operations. Israel has not formally announced a closure. (Prensa Latina 5/5)

6 MAY

The **IDF** closes Gaza's **Qarni** commercial crossing for the day; shells n. Gaza, killing a **65-yr-old Palestinian farmer**, wounding 4 working a field nr. Bayt Lahiya and wounding a Palestinian outside his home in Bayt Hanun; sends troops back into Nablus and nearby refugee camps to patrol, search several stores and homes, occupy an UNRWA school as a staging post; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Jenin, Tulkarm. **Jewish settlers** fr. Tal Rumayda in Hebron beat 2 international and 1 Israeli peace activist, set fire to 3 Palestinian cars; the IDF intervenes to disperse the settlers. Also in Hebron, **Jewish settlers** vandalize a Palestinian home. **Jewish settlers** fr. Ma'on attack a group of Palestinian children returning from school, escorted by Israeli peace activists, injuring 5 children. **Palestinian teachers** at 5 schools in Hebron cancel classes and some **1,000 PA officials** in Nablus protest the PA's failure to pay salaries for a 2d mo. In Rafah, some **150 Palestinian women, children** rally to criticize the government's failure to ease growing economic hardships. (AFP, REU 5/6; HA, WT 5/7; OCHA 5/10; PCHR 5/11)

7 MAY

In the 2d such incident in 2 days, the **IDF** shells n. Gaza, killing a **57-yr-old Palestinian farmer** working his field nr. Bayt Lahiya, wounding a 59-yr-old Palestinian woman outside her Bayt Hanun home. The **IDF** also shuts all crossings into Gaza, citing unspecified security threats; conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Nablus (exchanging fire with armed Palestinians in Balata r.c., causing no injuries) and nr. Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Qalqilya, Ramallah, Tulkarm. **Palestinians** fire 4 **rockets** fr. Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries. In Hebron, **700 Israeli police** supported by **1,000 IDF troops** evacuate some **3 Jewish settler families** who occupied a Palestinian home on 4/7 and **40–50 settler youths** supporting them, sparking scuffles btwn. troops and settlers that leave 19 officers, 7 settlers injured; an Israeli court ruled the families' alleged purchase of the property fraudulent on 5/5 and ordered them to leave immediately. (HA, IMEMC, WT, XIN 5/7; MM, NYT, WP, WT 5/8; PCHR 5/11; see also HA 4/30)

8 MAY

The **IDF** shells n. Gaza, wounding 2 Palestinians outside the Bayt Lahiya hospital; raids several shops, homes, and the General Union of Palestinian Workers and the Union of Ex-Combatants offices in Hebron; fires on residential areas of nearby Halhul; conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Jenin, Nablus (exchanging gunfire with Palestinian gunmen in Askar r.c., wounding 1), in Jericho, and nr. Bethlehem, Ramallah. In a predawn incident in Abasan nr. Khan Yunis, **AMB mbrs.** kidnap 3 **Hamas mbrs.**, and Hamas mbrs. kidnap 4 **AMB mbrs.** (it is unclear who kidnapped whom first), sparking a heavy exchange of fire, with Hamas mbrs. firing an antitank rocket killing 2 **AMB mbrs.** and Fatah shooting dead 1 **Hamas mbr.**; some 10 Palestinians, mostly bystanders, are wounded; those kidnapped are released after negotiations. (BBC, MM, NYT, WP, WT 5/8; MM 5/9; PCHR 5/11)

9 MAY

The **IDF** continues to shell n. Gaza, wounding 2 Palestinian children in Bayt Lahiya; conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Hebron and nr. Bethlehem,

Nablus, Ramallah, Tulkarm; detains a British aid worker for Islamic Relief charity at a checkpoint btwn. Jerusalem and Ramallah, holds him in military detention without charge (still in custody as of 5/15). Despite appeals for calm by their leaderships, **Fatah**, **Hamas** gunmen clash for a 2d day, this time in Gaza City, leaving 9 Palestinians (including 5 school children) injured. Later, **Hamas mbrs.** attack the funeral procession of 1 of the Fatah mbrs. killed on 5/8, detonating 2 explosive devices and exchanging gunfire with **Fatah mbrs.**, leaving 3 Palestinians wounded. (NYT, WP, WT 5/10; PCHR 5/11; *Guardian* 5/19; IFM 5/29)

10 MAY

The **IDF** continues to shell n. Gaza, wounding 2 Palestinian women nr. a hotel in Bayt Lahiya; conducts air strikes on 2 **ARB** training sites outside Khan Yunis, causing damage but no injuries; conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Nablus, in Jenin (firing on stone-throwing youths who confront the troops, wounding 5), and nr. Bethlehem, Hebron. **Palestinians** fire 3 **rockets** fr. Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries. **Haniyeh** meets with **Fatah**, **Hamas** leaders in Gaza, who afterward publicly pledge to take steps to ease tensions. (PCHR 5/11, 5/18)

11 MAY

The **IDF** sends troops into Gaza to level 20 d. of land along the s. border nr. al-Qarara; sends undercover units into Bala'a and Thinnaba nr. Tulkarm to arrest 5 wanted Palestinians; conducts additional arrest raids in and around Nablus, nr. Hebron; patrols in al-Fara'a r.c., firing on stone-throwing youths who confront the troops, wounding 1; raids a girls' high school in 'Anata, East Jerusalem, firing tear gas to disperse students and parents attending graduation ceremonies. **Jewish settlers** fr. the unauthorized outpost of Brakha Bet nr. Nablus break into a Palestinian quarry in nearby Hawara, set fire to several trailers, including 1 in which they know a Palestinian guard is inside; they beat the guard when he escapes the fire; settlers attacked the same quarry on 4/22. **Fatah**, **Hamas** mbrs. clash in n. Gaza, leaving 4 mbrs. fr. each side wounded; no reason for the violence is reported. (MM 5/12; HA, IMEMC 5/13; HA 5/14; PCHR 5/18)

12 MAY

The **IDF** makes a predawn raid into Nablus, searching houses and the al-Najah University women's dorms, arresting 1 Palestinian, clashing with **AMB** gunmen, leaving **1 AMB mbr.** dead; also conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Jenin. Palestinians in Salfit accuse the **IDF** of recently rounding up dangerous wild pigs inside Israel and releasing them in the area; the pigs have been devastating agricultural property and threatening Palestinians nr. Salfit since. The **IDF** critically wounds an **Australian** activist during the weekly nonviolent protests against the **separation wall** in Bil'in, shooting him in the head with a rubber bullet, causing a brain hemorrhage. In Nablus, some **5,000 Palestinians** (including armed **AMB** mbrs.) gather to donate money, jewelry to the cash-strapped **PA**; at the same time, **Hamas** sponsors a telethon that brings pledges fr. as far as Qatar, Saudi Arabia; officials do not say how much they raise. (AP, IMEMC, World News Australia 5/12; PCHR 5/18)

13 MAY

The **IDF** closes the Qarni crossing for the day; intercepts a Palestinian fishing boat off the s. Gaza coast, arresting 2 fishermen on suspicion of smuggling; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Nablus, nr. Hebron. An **Israeli** wounded in the 4/17 Tel Aviv suicide bombing dies of his injuries, bring that toll to 10. In n. Gaza, an explosive device detonates outside the home of a **senior Fatah mbr.**, causing no injuries; no group claims responsibility. **Hamas**, **Fatah/AMB** leaders in n. Gaza hold another urgent mtg. to reduce tensions and prevent violence. The sides agree to end the public display of weapons, remove roadblocks installed by mbrs. of both factions on roads in various areas, form an investigative comm. to look into the causes of local tensions and to peacefully resolve them. (MM, NYT 5/15; PCHR 5/18; IMEMC 5/23)

14 MAY

The **IDF** raids Qabatya, surrounds the home of senior **Islamic Jihad military leader Elias al-Ashkar**, killing Ashkar and **4 Islamic Jihad mbrs.** in an exchange of fire, sparking massive protests in Qabatya in which soldiers kill a **6th Palestinian**,

wound 16 (including a journalist); sends undercover units into Jenin in car with Palestinian license plates, willfully shooting and killing a **PA General Intelligence Service (GIS) officer** guarding the GIS headquarters in Jenin, besieging a house nearby, arresting 1 wanted Palestinian; shoots, wounds **senior Islamic Jihad political leader Shaykh Mahmud al-Sadi** outside Jenin in an apparent assassination attempt; conducts additional arrest raids, house searches in and around Nablus, in Tulkarm, nr. Hebron; raids Aida r.c., chasing and firing on Palestinian children who allegedly threw stones at IDF soldiers, wounding an 11- and a 12-yr.-old with live ammunition; confiscates goods from, demolishes 13 shops in a farmers market in the Jordan Valley; captures a Palestinian boat smuggling explosives fr. Egypt to Gaza. A small **bomb** explodes at a hitchhiking post outside Shiloh settlement nr. Ramallah, lightly wounding 1 **Jewish settler**; no group takes responsibility. **Unidentified gunmen** shoot, wound a bodyguard outside the home of **PA GIS Gaza chief Maj. Gen. Tariq Abu Rajab**; no group claims responsibility. An **American** wounded in the 4/17 Tel Aviv bombing dies of his injuries, bringing that toll to 11. (AFP, REU, XIN, YA 5/14; HA, MM, NYT, WP, WT 5/15; PCHR 5/18)

The **Israeli High Court** upholds (6-5) a 2002 law that sharply restricts family reunification for **West Bank and Gaza Palestinians** married to **Israeli Palestinians** living in Israel to women over age 25 and men over age 35. (AP, B'Tselem press release, HA 5/14; HA, MM, NYT, WP, WT 5/15)

15 MAY

The **IDF** fires missiles fr. a drone at a car driving in Abasan, wounding **3 AMB mbrs.**, 1 bystander in an attempted assassination, also damaging several stores; shells n. Gaza, injuring a 50-yr.-old farmer working his field nr. Bayt Lahiya; sends 2 tanks and a bulldozer into Gaza to level land along the border nr. Bayt Hanun for construction of the border fence; sends troops into Hawara, imposes a curfew; patrols in Nablus, firing on residential areas; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Hebron, Jenin. A leaflet signed by the **AMB** warns that "we won't remain idle in the face of the siege imposed on the Palestinian people by **Israel**, the **U.S.**, and other countries. . . . We will strike at the economic and civilian interests

of these countries, here and abroad." **ARB spokesman Abu Harun** also threatens that the ARB would launch "a merciless intifada

that will destroy everything" if international funding is not restored soon. (MEMC 5/15; JP 5/16; PCHR 5/18)

CHRONOLOGY SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

AFP	(Agence France-Presse, Paris)
AP	(Associated Press [Internet])
BBC	(British Broadcasting Corporation World Service [Internet])
DS	(<i>Daily Star</i> , Beirut)
HA	(<i>Ha'Aretz</i> [Internet], Tel Aviv)
IFM	(Israeli Foreign Ministry, Jerusalem)
IMEMC	(International Middle East Media Center, Bayt Sahur)
JAZ	(al-Jazeera Satellite Channel Television, Doha)
JP	(<i>Jerusalem Post</i> [Internet], Jerusalem)
MA	(<i>Ma'ariv</i> , Tel Aviv)
MM	(<i>Mideast Mirror</i> , London)
NYT	(<i>New York Times</i> , New York)
OCHA	(United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Weekly Briefing Notes, Jerusalem)
PCHR	(Palestinian Center for Human Rights, Gaza)
PNN	(Palestine News Network, Ramallah)
REU	(Reuters [Internet])
VOI	(Voice of Israel, Jerusalem)
VOP	(Voice of Palestine, Jericho)
WNC	(World News Connection [Internet], Washington)
WP	(<i>Washington Post</i> , Washington)
WT	(<i>Washington Times</i> , Washington)
XIN	(Xinhua–New China News Agency, Beijing)
YA	(<i>Yedi'ot Abaronot</i> , Tel Aviv)



Palestinians, some holding Hamas and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine flags, rally in Ramallah to protest Israel's raid on the Jericho jail a day earlier, 15 March 2006. (Abbas Momani/AFP/Getty Images)