

Palestine Chronology

2006

JANUARY

Jan. 4: Israeli PM Sharon has a massive stroke that incapacitates him; his Deputy Ehud Olmert is appointed Acting PM.

Jan. 15: The Israeli Cabinet decides to allow limited number of Palestinians to vote in East Jerusalem.

Jan. 25: PA legislative elections are held. Hamas' Change and Reform party wins a surprise majority, taking 74 seats. Fateh wins 45 seats, PFLP's Martyr Abu Ali Mustafa wins 3, Independent Palestine wins 2, Third Way wins 2, Alternative wins 2; and independent candidates allied with Hamas win 4 seats. Israel seals off Gaza by closing the Erez border crossing into Gaza in anticipation of security concerns leading up to Palestinian elections. Karni crossing is closed on January 15, 2006, and three other commercial crossings have been opened only intermittently.

FEBRUARY

Feb. 21: PA Pres. Abbas asks Hamas' Ismail Haniyeh to form a government.

MARCH

March 14: The Israeli army raids Jericho .

March 28: 2006 Israeli elections: Kadima wins 29 of the Knesset's 120 seats.

March 29: The Hamas-led PA Cabinet is sworn in by PA Pres. Abbas. Six prisoners, incl. the PFLP leader Ahmad Saadat, surrender after a 9 1/2-hour siege.

APRIL

April 7: The US and EU formally cut off all direct aid to the Hamas-led government, demanding that Hamas recognize Israel, honor previous PA agreements, and disarm its commandos. They say that they will redirect some aid to humanitarian projects that bypass the PA. The US decision affects \$411 million previously earmarked for the PA to maintain services in the impoverished Palestinian territories, and about \$100 million to be redirected to food and medicines delivered through international agencies.

April 9: Israel decides to prevent Hamas from becoming an established government.

April 13: Ehud Olmert officially assumes the post of PM of Israel.

MAY

May 9: Quartet principals agree on direct aid to Palestinians.

JUNE

June 5: Pres. Abbas announces a referendum for 26 July on a plan that would implicitly recognize Israel. Hamas opposes.

June 9: Following a blast in which seven members of one family and one other Palestinian are killed on a Gaza beach, Hamas' armed wing calls off its 16-month-old truce. Israel claims it was shelling 250m away from the family's location.

June 17: The Quartet endorses EU-proposed "Temporary International Mechanism" for direct aid to the Palestinian people.

June 25: Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit is captured by Palestinians who attack an army post at the southern

Gaza border into Israel via an underground tunnel. Two other soldiers are killed in the operation. Israel begins assault on the Gaza Strip.

June 27: Fateh and Hamas adopt the so-called Prisoners Document calls for the creation of a Palestinian state within pre-1967 borders, alongside Israel, and asserts the right of Palestinian refugees to return to lands within Israel proper.

JULY

July 7: Israel detains 27 Hamas-affiliated PA ministers.

July 12: The Israel-Lebanon conflict/war begins.

July 26: Israel launches an offensive to stop the firing of rockets into Israel from Gaza, killing 23 Palestinians and wounding over 75.

July 2: Under mounting pressure from UN and international aid agencies concerned about the humanitarian situation in Gaza, Israel temporarily opens the border crossings at Karni and Kerem Shalom to allow trucks carrying food, fuel, and medical supplies to enter.

AUGUST

Aug. 11: The UNSC unanimously adopts Res. 1701, which calls for the cessation of Israeli-Lebanese hostilities, the deployment of an armed international force to secure south Lebanon, and disarmament of Hizbullah.

SEPTEMBER

Sept. 11: Pres. Abbas and PM Haniyeh agree on formation of national unity government. The Quartet welcomes the move.

Sept. 26: Violence and rivalry erupts between Fateh and Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

- A UN study declares the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip "intolerable", with some 80% living below the poverty line.

OCTOBER

Oct. 11-14: In the midst of an increase of rocket attacks against Israel, the Israeli Air Force fires into Gaza over a three-day period, killing at least 21 Palestinians.

Oct. 20: Brokered by Egyptian mediators, a deal is reached to end fighting between Hamas and Fateh, both agreeing to refrain from acts that raise tensions and committing themselves to dialogue to resolve differences.

NOVEMBER

Nov. 8: Israel shells Beit Hanoun, killing 19 Palestinian civilians (seven children, four women) during ongoing Gaza operations. PM Olmert apologizes, saying it had been an accidental "technical failure" by the army. The US vetoes a UNSC resolution to condemn the Israeli actions.

Nov. 10: PM Haniyeh offers to step aside to help allow formation of a coalition government with Fateh.

Nov. 24: Israel has dismissed an offer by Palestinian resistance groups to stop firing rockets into Israel, if Israel ends attacks on Palestinians.