

# Palestine Chronology

## 1998

**Jan. 1:** Israeli Min. of Defense Yitzhak Mordechai lays the foundation stone for 130 housing units at Bet El settlement northeast of Ramallah.

- The Israeli Govt. prepares a document listing allegedly unfulfilled Palestinian obligations, upon whose implementation the second stage of Israeli withdrawal is conditional.

- Near Khan Yunis, Israeli soldiers open fire on a Palestinian police patrol that comes 'too close'. In retaliation, Palestinian police open fire at three Israeli checkpoints in the area.

- Thousands of Palestinians gather in Gaza to celebrate the 33rd anniversary of the creation of Fatah.

- Israel announces its plans to open two new bypass roads, Road No. 45 and Road No. 70, both of which will pass through land belonging to a number of Palestinian villages.

**Jan. 2:** A Palestinian is shot at an Israeli checkpoint near Ornit while trying to enter Israel and allegedly not stopping when asked to do so.

- Israeli forces confiscate tents that serve as a school for Bedouin children near the WB settlement of Kedar.

- Administrative detainee Wisam Rafidi, 39, arrested in Aug. 1994 by Israel and held since then without charge or trial, is released.

- Israeli Min. of Defense Yitzhak Mordechai says that Israel accepts UN Res. 425 of 1978, calling on Israel to withdraw from South Lebanon, but insists that a pullout be accompanied by security guarantees.

- Haredi (Orthodox Jewish) scholars decide to enter 'definite Jews' in a 'special genealogy book' to prevent marriages with non-Jews from the former Soviet Union and mixed marriages between Haredi and secular Jews.

**Jan. 3:** In Amman, Crown Prince Hassan and Pres. Arafat's adviser Abu Abbas, following two days of talks, reject Israeli Min. of Infrastructure Ariel Sharon's redeployment plan.

**Jan. 4:** Israeli FM David Levy resigns from the govt., claiming PM Netanyahu did not fulfill his commitments to include social issues in the 1998 budget.

**Jan. 5:** The 30 settlers who took over three houses in the center of Hebron the day before are evacuated.

- Rahavam Zeevi, leader of the extreme right-wing party Moledet, which advocates the expulsion of all Arabs, says that if the govt. decides on any withdrawal measures, Moledet will withdraw its support.

- The Knesset passes (58-52) PM Netanyahu's budget, which includes a 20% increase relative to the fiscal year 1997 in the allotment for land and real estate purchases in East Jerusalem.

- Officers from Turkey and the US arrive in Israel to plan joint naval maneuvers. Jordan alone accepts Turkey's invitation to send an observer.

- The 22 Arab League FMs end a two-day meeting in Tunis after approving a preliminary draft agreement, calling on foreign states to cooperate with Arab security services and legal bodies to prevent 'terrorism'.

**Jan. 6:** Pres. Arafat promises the PLC to make changes in his cabinet without setting a date for such changes.

- US Special Envoy Dennis Ross meets separately with Pres. Arafat and PM Netanyahu to prepare for individual meetings. Each will meet with Pres. Clinton in Washington later this month.

- Administrative detainee Aitaf Alian is released before schedule, along with 22 other administrative detainees in what is considered an Israeli 'goodwill gesture' on the occasion of Ramadan.

**Jan. 7:** The Israeli High Council for Planning in the occupied WB approves the changing of a detailed plan for increasing the building on the Olive Hill near the settlement of Efrat. Some 570 new housing units are planned.

- US Special Envoy Dennis Ross meets with PM Netanyahu. In Amman, King Hussein meets with Labor Chairman Ehud Barak.

- Iranian Pres. Chatami in a CNN interview urges the US to break down the "wall of mistrust" between the two countries.

**Jan. 8:** Min. of Defense Yitzhak Mordechai informs PM Netanyahu that he will resign if the Israeli Govt. abandons the peace process.

- An Israeli court sentences Tatiana Suskin, an ultra-nationalist Jewish woman who drew and distributed in Hebron a poster portraying a pig with the name Mohammed next to it, to two years in prison for committing racist acts, attempting to insult religious feeling, and supporting an outlawed terrorist organization (Kach).

- Israel gives green light for 300 new units in the WB settlement of Efrat.

- Pres. Arafat confers with the visiting Norwegian FM Knut Vollebaek, who calls on the Israeli Govt. to honor its commitments towards peace.

- The PA turns down proposals to override the third phase of redeployment.

- The PLC denounces Israeli breaches of the Hebron Agreement.

- The Israeli Govt. steps up the confiscation of Palestinian land for the expansion of Jewish settlements.

- US Special Envoy Dennis Ross spends third day shuttling between Israel and the PA. PM Netanyahu says that any further redeployment will only be implemented after the PA comes up with 'more effective' security measures.

**Jan. 9:** The High Planning Committee under the supervision of the Min. of Defense approves a plan to build within 60 days 94 new housing units in the Elkana settlement.

- Ha'aretz reports that the Israeli Min. of Housing plans to build 30,000 new housing units in the settlements.

**Jan. 10:** Five Palestinians are wounded with rubber bullets in confrontations with Israeli soldiers in Hebron.

- Ha'aretz reports details of a new plan, endorsed by the Min. of Housing and the Min. of Defense, Yitzhak Mordechai, to build 15,000 housing units in settlements during 1998.

Jan. 11: There is international criticism of the Israeli Govt.'s decision to build 30,000 new housing units in the WB . The US Special Envoy Dennis Ross says the plans are "not helpful for the peace process," while the British refer to the plan as "worrying." MK Ahmad Saad from the Khadash Party says the plans are a declaration of war on the Palestinian people.

- Israeli and Palestinian top security officials reestablish contacts, in an attempt to renew security cooperation.

- In an hearing with a nine-judge panel, the Israeli High Court again postpones its decision to ban the use of torture by GSS (General Security Service) interrogators against Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons.

**Jan. 12:** Pres. Arafat briefs EU special envoy Moratinos on the state of the peace process and urges the EU to put more pressure on Israel.

- In Nablus, Israeli, PA security teams raid alleged Hamas bomb factory and seize 300 kg of explosives.

- At a meeting of Labor MKs, Shimon Peres warns that "in a little while there will not be any land to return [to the Palestinians], and even if we want to solve the problem we will not be able to."

**Jan. 13:** Jordanian-Palestinian summit takes place in Amman between Pres. Arafat and King Hussein to discuss the latest developments in the peace process.

- In preparation for PM Netanyahu's meeting with Pres. Clinton (Jan. 20), the Israeli Cabinet agrees not to carry out any further redeployment until the PA meets 12-page list of conditions, including extraditing PA prisoners. Cabinet also sets up inter-Min.ial committee to monitor PA compliance with these demands.

- On the fourth anniversary of the Hebron massacre, Israel intensifies its military presence in the old city of Hebron and closes the Shaheen Quarter under the pretext of protecting the settlers.

**Jan. 14:** Arab Parliamentary Union ends session in Luxor, Egypt; issues statement condemning 'terrorism' in all its forms, affirms a people's right to national struggle to liberate occupied territory and regain national rights.

- In Amman, Jordanian-Palestinian Transportation Committee agrees on procedures for moving goods across the border.

- Some 30,000 right-wing Israelis hold a demonstration at Rabin Square in Tel Aviv, calling upon the govt. to refrain from implementing further withdrawals from the OPT.

- Israel objects to the EU's proposal to establish a permanent security committee, consisting of members from the EU, Israel, the Palestinian territories and the US.

- Israeli Gen. Uzi Dayan says the PA cooperated in exposing the Hamas group responsible for the 'bomb factory' in Nablus, but adds that it acted according to Israeli, rather than Palestinian, intelligence.

- The Israeli Cabinet issues a document calling for the to adhere to numerous conditions in order to move the peace process forward.

**Jan. 15:** The TAKAM (United Kibbutz Movement) announces its support of a policy of preserving territorial continuity under Israeli jurisdiction in the Jordan Valley and support for the creation of a Palestinian state if Israeli settlements are kept in large blocks.

- Israeli soldiers and Palestinian policemen exchange gunfire in a two-hour standoff in Gush Katif during a protest by about 300 Palestinians against the Israeli Govt.'s expansion of Jewish settlements on occupied land and its hard-line stand in the peace negotiations.

- PNA Min. of Planning and International Cooperation Nabil Sha'ath submits the three-year development plan (1998-2000) for debate in the PLC.

- The PA rejects Israel's 12-page list of preconditions, saying it is full of "allegations, distortions, and half-truths."

**Jan. 16:** The US State Dept. says that it does not recognize Israel's list of conditions for further redeployment as binding.

- EU Commissioner Manuel Maris issues a 23-page report, adopted unanimously by the EU members, calling on the EU, as the biggest donor to the PA, to take a more active role in the peace process, and blaming Israel for strangling the Palestinian economy.

**Jan. 17:** The EU issues a statement in Brussels calling for a more effective and serious role in the peace process, which reflects the European financial aid to the peace process.

- The settler group Amana inaugurates a new settlement near Talmond northeast of Ramallah, named Horosh Yaron.

**Jan. 18:** Pres. Arafat calls on the US to pressure the Israeli Govt. to implement all the signed agreements.

- Pres. Arafat cancels a scheduled visit to the Holocaust Museum in Washington DC after the management declares that he will not receive the formal welcome extended to visiting heads of state. Dennis Ross convinces Arafat of the importance of such a visit as a step towards reconciliation with Israel.

- Jibril Rajoub, head of the Preventative Security in the WB, denies allegations that he resigned from his post under pressure.

- Israeli Cabinet delays WB redeployment decision until after 20th January summit in Washington between Netanyahu and Clinton.

**Jan. 19:** Prior to his meeting with Clinton (Jan. 22), Pres. Arafat arrives in Cairo for two days of talks with Pres. Mubarak.

- Before the visit of PM Netanyahu and Pres. Arafat, the Clinton administration prepares three proposals for the peace process. The first suggests that Pres. Clinton should withdraw from the process until the two sides reach an agreement, the second, that the gradual withdrawal stages are replaced with a more ambitious scheme, and the third, which the White House favors, that the second withdrawal stage should be divided into three steps, which would be connected to progress towards final settlement. According to

this proposal, Israel must immediately withdraw from parts of Area C and commit itself to a third withdrawal stage, unrelated to the final settlement.

- The Palestinian State Security Court in Jericho sentences Nasser Abu Arrous and Yasser Salaami' of Nablus to 15 years of hard labor following a closed 30-minute hearing. Neither of the defendants was notified of the charges or allowed to appoint a lawyer before the hearing. Both were arrested four days previously in connection to the bombings in West Jerusalem in July/Sept. 1997.

- The PA orders Qusai Al-Abadleh, Palestinian Chief Justice and Pres. of the Palestinian High Court, to retire, reportedly in connection to Abadleh's criticism of the performance of Min. of Justice, Freih Abu Meddein and the whole judicial system in Ar-Risala newspaper on 15 January 1998.

**Jan. 20:** WB settlers' complaint "about the noise heard from mosques" in nearby Arab villages has been included in the 'Naveh Document', which lists Palestinians' alleged non-compliance with the Oslo Accords. (In one case settlers went into a mosque and replaced the cassette with one containing Israel songs.)

- A telephone survey among 400 Israeli youth conducted by the Israeli Education Committee of the Local Govt. Center reveals that 44% believe some of the rights of Israeli Arabs should be withdrawn, 19% claimed that the Arabs are a risk to Israel's security and should be forced to leave the country, 18% believe that since Arabs do not serve in the army they should not have full rights, 7% claim Arabs do not deserve equal rights in a Jewish state, 32% believe that Arabs should enjoy equal rights, and 24% condition rights for Arabs on service in the army.

- Reversing its Jan. 16 decision in the face of public criticism, the Holocaust Museum in Washington says it will re-invite Pres. Arafat for an official visit. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the museum's directorate say they will personally escort Arafat throughout the museum as is customary for all heads of state. Arafat says he will visit the museum if time permits.

- Pres. Arafat, Shimon Peres, and the Pres. of the World Bank sign a memorandum of understanding regarding the channeling to the PA of over \$200m. in the form of investments, mainly in business initiatives based on advanced technology. The 'Peace Technology Fund' was initiated by the Peres Center for Peace, which works to recruit private investors to establish ventures in the Palestinian territories.

- PM Netanyahu and Pres. Clinton meet in Washington. Clinton presents US proposal for a three-stage second further redeployment from some 12% of Area C in four months. Netanyahu also meets Sec. of State Albright but does not agree to anything.

- Yossi Sarid of Meretz calls on Pres. Clinton to recognize the Palestinians' right to their own state now if he hopes to rescue the peace process.

Jan. 21: Pres. Arafat arrives in Washington, meets with Sec. of State Albright, calls on US to pressure Israel to fulfill further redeployment agreements as outlined in Oslo Accords.

- Palestinian negotiator Hassan Asfour rejects the concept of a 15% withdrawal, calling it a violation of prior agreements signed with Israel.

- Israeli forces bulldoze Palestinian land in Khan Yunis and open fire on Palestinians.

- The World Bank secures financing for the first export-oriented industrial estate at Al-Muntar, Gaza.

- The Israeli army begins bulldozing Palestinian land near Neve Dakim in Gaza to expand the settlement.

**Jan. 22:** The Wall Street Journal reports that Sa'eb Erekat is firmly allied with security head Jibril Rajoub and names him as one of several possible successors to Pres. Arafat.

- In Washington, Pres. Clinton encourages Pres. Arafat to accept US further redeployment proposal; Arafat refuses, gives Clinton two letters: one, requested by the US, spelling out which of the 33 articles of the 1968 PLO Charter were annulled in 1996; the other saying that a 'time-out' on Israeli settlement construction should extend to all WB areas further than 50 meters from an existing settlement structure.

- CIA Dir. George Tenet meets with Arafat at his Washington hotel to discuss security issues.

- Israeli soldiers open fire with rubber bullets, live ammunition, tear gas, percussion grenades on Palestinians protesting bulldozing of land near Neve Dakim settlement, injuring four.

**Jan. 23:** Confrontations between Palestinians and Israeli soldiers continue in Khan Yunis for the third day after settlers prevent Khan Yunis Municipality from emptying its sewage. Among the eight injured Palestinians are five children.

- Israeli authorities begin laying Road 45, which links the Israeli coast with the Jordan Valley and Ben Gurion Airport with the Jerusalem Airport at Qalandia. Some 2,200 dunums have been seized from 15 Palestinian villages.

- Pres. Clinton ends a series of meetings with Palestinian and Israeli officials, having urged them to trade gradual Israeli withdrawal from the WB for tougher Palestinian security actions. Clinton reportedly said he wants Israel to withdraw from at least 10% of the WB.

**Jan. 24:** Pres. Arafat promises US Pres. Clinton in Washington that the PLO Executive Committee will convene within 20 days to ratify changes in the Palestinian Covenant. He asks Pres. Clinton to recognize an independent Palestistate, but Clinton's answer is not known.

- The Clinton administration insists on an Israeli withdrawal of at least 13%, to be carried out in three even stages.

**Jan. 25:** Pres. Arafat holds talks with Pres. Lamin Zerwal of Algeria and Pres. Zein Al-Abedein Ibn Ali of Tunisia and calls for an urgent Arab summit to discuss the Middle East Peace Process, following the collapse of the Washington talks.

- PA Cabinet Sec. Gen. Ahmed Abdul Rahman declares the independent Palestinian state will be announced by the end of the transitional period.

**Jan. 26:** After meeting with British PM Tony Blair in London, Pres. Arafat calls for an Arab summit to discuss the peace process.

- Palestinian Min. of Labor Samir Ghosheh submits his resignation saying that he is not satisfied with the performance of the PA, the absence of laws and Pres. Arafat's failure to take decisions regarding the ratification of laws.

**Jan. 27:** British PM Tony Blair says that Jewish settlements are 'illegal'; redeployments should be substantial, credible, "implemented without preconditions.;" Israel should withdraw unconditionally from Lebanon; peace process will be UK's priority during its current presidency of the EU.

- New Israeli textbook to commemorate the country's 50th anniversary makes almost no mention of Palestinians.

**Jan. 28:** The 61st day of the hunger strike of PA prisoners Aziz Ash-Shami and Omar Shallah passes without reaction to their demand for a release or new trial after entering their third year of incarceration.

- Sec. of State Albright leaves for tour of Europe and the Middle East to build support for US military attack on Iraq if it does not comply with demands of UN inspectors.

**Jan. 29:** Israel, US inaugurate first hotline linking Israeli Min. of Defense, the US Sec. of Defense in case of security emergency.

- Iraq's Dep. PM Tareq Al-Aziz departs on tour of Russia, France, Syria, Egypt as part of a diplomatic campaign to counteract US mobilization of support for a strike on Iraq.

**Jan. 31:** Sec. of State Albright arrives in Israel for dinner meeting with PM Netanyahu to follow up on Jan. 20 meeting with Pres. Clinton; expresses her frustration at both sides' failure to make decisions, and says the US is likely to abandon mediation if Israel "continues to display a stubborn and uncompromising attitude toward the Palestinians."

- PLO Exec. Committee approves by voice vote the list of PLO Charter clauses that have been rescinded, as given to Pres. Clinton (Jan. 22), British PM Blair (Jan. 26). Israel says voice vote is not 'sufficient.'

**Jan. 1998:** The Israeli Govt. unilaterally declares the recent confiscation of over 260 dunums of Palestinian land for the construction or expansion of some 15 Jewish settlements throughout the OPT. In addition, six new bypass roads were opened.

**Feb. 1:** An EU report holds Israel fully responsible for the collapse of the Palestinian economy. Meanwhile, Palestinian Min. of Planning and International Cooperation Dr. Nabil Sha'ath calls for the founding of an Arab fund to support the Palestinian economy.

- The Director of the Dept. for the Investigation of Policemen in Israel, attorney Eran Shender, claims that some 100 incidents occur annually in which Israeli policemen (mostly border police) act violently towards Palestinians, especially those caught without permits.

- Pres. Arafat and US Sec. of State Madeleine Albright hold talks in Ramallah, with Arafat insisting that the three phases of withdrawal from the WB as stipulated by the Hebron Agreement be implemented. Albright urges him to consider the US further redeployment proposal. Arafat agrees to send an envoy to Washington to try to break impasse.

- The Arab League, the PA, France, Jordan, Russia, and Turkey send envoys to Iraq to persuade Saddam Hussein to abandon opposition to UNSCOM inspection of palaces. Egypt, Iran, Qatar, Syria warn attack would increase regional tensions.

- In Bethlehem, six Palestinians are injured in the third day of clashes with Israeli soldiers.

**Feb. 2:** A new US proposal contains lower percentage withdrawal, subject to Israeli conditions.

- The Israeli Land Administration proposes the construction of 62,000 new housing units along the 'Green Line' between Jerusalem and Beersheba.

**Feb. 3:** Palestinian police announce the death of detainee Nassir Al-Huroub, 25, in the jail in Dura, where he was imprisoned the day before. His death brings to 16 the number of Palestinians who have died in PA prisons, 12 of whom were confirmed as dying from injuries arising from torture.

- Palestinians and Israelis clash for fourth day in Bethlehem following the death of a Palestinian youth in Israeli police custody.

- The Palestinian envoy to Iraq, Min. of Public Works Azzam Al-Ahmad, says on his departure to Baghdad that Pres. Arafat asked him to convey an urgent message to Pres. Saddam Hussein that calls for preserving the safety of Iraq and its people and averting a further catastrophe.

- To mark the end of Ramadan, the PA grants pardons or early releases to 31 Palestinian prisoners. Israel releases 23 Palestinian prisoners.

- In the WB, Palestinians protest Israel's plans to confiscate land for expansion of the Modi'in settlement.

**Feb. 4:** Pres. Arafat starts a visit to Spain and Holland.

- EU special envoy Moratinos discusses peace process with Palestinian Min. of Local Govt., Sa'eb Erakat.

- In Cairo, Egypt and the PA sign a customs exemption agreement.

- Palestinians protest Israeli plans to confiscate their land near the Efrat settlement for a new road for settlers.

**Feb. 5:** It is confirmed that the Israeli Govt. is formulating a plan according to which dozens of settlements will be declared confrontation-line towns, making them eligible for special economic and tax benefits. Settlements in the Jordan Valley may be taken off the list, since Israel has signed a peace agreement with Jordan.

- Saying that it "retains its right to self-defense and will operate according to its security interests," Israel rebuffs US request to not retaliate against Iraq should it target Israel as a result of US air strikes.

**Feb. 6:** On his first official visit since assuming his position three years ago, EU Pres. Jacques Santer arrives in Egypt on first leg of seven-day tour that will also take him to Israel, the Palestinian self-rule areas, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. The trip is meant to underline the EU Jan. 26 decision to play a more forceful political role in the Middle East.

**Feb. 7:** In Bethlehem, 300 Palestinians march in support of Iraq. Israeli soldiers fire rubber bullets, tear gas at marchers, injuring three Palestinian policemen and several reporters and demonstrators.

**Feb. 8:** Min. of Higher Education Hanan Ashrawi resigns from her post as Sec. Gen. of the Bethlehem 2000 Steering Committee due to the poor progress in the projects. Dr. Nabil Qassis later succeeds her.

**Feb. 9:** Contrary to the right to peaceful assembly and the right to free expression, PA Civilian Chief Police Officer, Ghazi Jabali, issues an order preventing all demonstrations in support of Iraq. Nevertheless, 2,000 Palestinians in Jenin and 150 in Ramallah participate in demonstrations organized by Fatah, Hamas, the PFLP and the DFLP, which soon turn into rallies against Israel, the US and the UK.

**Feb. 10:** The Physicians for Human Rights organization appeals to Israel's High Court to force the Min. of Defense to supply gas masks to Palestinians living in Area C and to all foreign workers and their dependents in Israel.

**Feb. 11:** Israeli forces destroy two Palestinian homes in the Dahariyyeh area near Hebron (Area C) to make way for the expansion of Israeli quarries.



- In Washington, separate Israeli and Palestinian follow-up talks on the peace process with State Dept. Special Coordinator for Arab-Israeli Negotiations Aaron Miller and Special Envoy Dennis Ross end with no progress. New round of talks is set for coming week.

**Feb. 12:** An analysis of Israel's 1996 budget handed by local municipalities to Israel's Min. of the Interior shows that the settlements in the WBGS receive the highest budget, compared to all other cities, development towns and Arab villages or towns.

- A mass parade due to take place in Nablus in support of Saddam Hussein is canceled at the last minute following the PA's promise to ban such demonstrations. Pres. Arafat's decision came after demonstrations were held in which Israeli, British and American flags were burnt. Razi Jabali, Chief of the Palestinian Police, banned demonstrations or parades that lead to the burning of flags and to violence. Arafat also ordered The Voice of Palestine radio station not to cover the demonstrations or support Saddam Hussein. A Palestinian human rights organization releases a communiqué claiming these decisions are in violation of international human rights, as well as of Jordanian and Mandatory British law.

- According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, the number of immigrants to Israel in 1997 was 66,000 (83% of whom were from the former Soviet Union), 7% less than in 1996.

- Coinciding with the opening of Israel's 50th anniversary celebrations, Pres. Arafat threatens to 'cross out' the peace agreements, declare a Palestinian state next year if the deadlock in negotiations continues.

- In Gaza, Palestinian police try to tear down a fence erected by Jewish settlers on disputed land outside Neve Dakim settlement. Israeli troops intervene, scuffle with Palestinian police.

**Feb. 14:** The PA asks the US to protect Palestinians from the threat of Israeli chemical, biological and nuclear weapons.

**Feb. 16:** The Palestinian Min. of Information orders closed three radio and five TV stations in connection with a decision to forbid the broadcast of commentary or analysis on the Iraq crisis (Qaser An-Nil TV, Nablus; New Dawn, Tulkarem; Hebron Radio; Watani Atalas TV, Nablus; Tulkarem Central Television; Al-Bilad Radio, Tulkarem; Al-Awael TV, Jenin; and Naghem Radio, Qalqilya).

- King Hassan of Morocco meets Israeli Sephardi Chief Rabbi, Eliahu Baskshi-Doron, in an interfaith conference sponsored by UNESCO in Rabat.

- MK Yossi Beilin (Labor) says, after meeting with Pres. Arafat in Jericho, that the PA is open to the new US scheme aimed at solving the negotiations crisis between itself and Israel, which foresees a 13.1% Israeli withdrawal within three months from Area C (then to become part of Area B and A). At the end of this stage, A and B together will comprise 42% of the WB.

**Feb. 17:** Palestinian police confront a demonstration of hundreds of Palestinian protestors near Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem and stop them from approaching Israeli soldiers. The demonstration was organized by students and 'The Popular Committee for the Victory of Iraq', partly in order to protest the closure by the PA of the Palestinian TV and radio stations.

- The two Palestinian envoys to Baghdad conclude their mission.

**Feb. 18:** According to Israeli governmental data, some 5,000 housing units were built during 1997 in Israeli settlements, of which 80% have been sold.

**Feb. 19:** The Palestinian Police orders all private radio and TV stations operating in the WB to close down unless they obtain within one week a permit from the Palestinian Min. of the Interior.

- Israel's Supreme Court orders the govt. to explain why Palestinians and children of foreign workers have not received gas masks handed out free of charge to Israelis.

- The Israeli army destroys five homes in the Bethlehem district, three in Hossan village and two in Zatarra village

- In last effort to achieve a 'diplomatic solution' preventing a US airstrike against Iraq, UN Sec.-Gen. Annan leaves for Baghdad.

**Feb. 20:** Prof. Edward Said says during a visit to Palestine that Palestinians must be able to understand the Holocaust and convince the Jews that they are aware of their suffering. Jews too must recognize Palestinian suffering.

- The Israeli Min. of Labor says that ten thousand permits to hire Palestinians have not been used by Israeli employers. Moreover, only half of the permits allowing Palestinian workers to stay in Israel overnight have been used.

**Feb. 21:** Pres. Arafat announces first priority of promoting the Palestinian judicial system.

- The Israeli Govt. expropriates 1,500 dunums in Al-Khader, south of Bethlehem, for a new settlement road.

- Despite the PA ban on demonstrations in support of Iraq and Saddam Hussein, thousands of Palestinians, led by Fatah, demonstrate in the WBGS.

- In Kufr Kaddoum some 300 Palestinians and Israelis protest against the illegal seizure of privately owned land, Jabal Mohammed, by the settlement of Kadumim. Last March the settlers began bulldozing the land; the Min. of Defense publicly declared last August that the settlement was illegal and would be removed within two weeks, but the govt. reversed the statement and changed maps for the land. What it recognized in court as private land it now claims is state-owned land.

**Feb. 22:** Since the establishment of the PA, about 500 mukhtars have been appointed (as compared to 120 before), which is seen as reflecting the weakness of the Palestinian judicial system (mukhtars solve conflicts outside the courts), which has only 60 judges.

- UN Sec.-Gen. Annan reaches an agreement with Iraq (signed Feb. 23) on resuming unrestricted UNSCOM inspections.

**Feb. 23:** In spite of US suggestions, the Israeli Govt. insists on holding on to 64% of the Palestinian territories in the interim phase in order to have a 'bargaining card' for final status talks. Thus, Israel offers a total maximum withdrawal of only 9% of the land in the first three withdrawal stages.

- The PA welcomes the Baghdad accord signed between UN Gen. Sec. Kofi Annan and Iraq's Tareq Aziz(???), ending the current Iraqi crisis.

- According to a Peace Now survey, over 25% of settler housing units in Gaza are empty.

- PM Netanyahu proposes Israel, the PA hold Camp David-style summit under US auspices to discuss core issues in the stalled peace process.

Feb. 24: Pres. Mubarak of Egypt calls on the Clinton administration to abandon its double standard policy to avoid bad feeling amongst the Arab and Moslem nations.

- The PA announces that the first Palestinian educational curriculum will be implemented later in the year.

- Erekat and Israeli Cab. Sec. Dan Naveh discuss in Jericho the resumption of Palestinian-Israeli talks.

- The Arab League urges the US to learn from the Iraq crisis, reexamine its policies towards the deadlocked Arab-Israeli peace process and put pressure on Israel to make it implement UN resolutions.

- Pres. Arafat and King Hussein reject Netanyahu's proposal for Camp David-style talks.

- Mossad chief Yatom resigns under heavy pressure from within the agency to accept responsibility for failed assassination attempt on Khaled Masha'al.

Feb. 25: Hundreds of Palestinians clash with Israeli security forces in Qalandia Refugee Camp after the army blocks the entrance to the camp, imposes a curfew and arrests overnight six Arabs suspected of 'violent actions'.

- Jordan' State Security Court sentences 10 Jordanians with trying to smuggle weapons to the West Bank.

- In Bogota, four former IDF officers are among six persons indicted on charges of training Colombian paramilitary units of the Medellin drug cartel in terror tactics.

Feb. 26: The Israeli army destroys the home of Jamil Ahmed Al-Qawasmi with all its contents.

- The Egyptian Govt. asks Israel to implement its obligations towards the interim agreements.

- Pres. Arafat calls for dealing with the Middle East issue according to the same criteria applied to the Iraqi crisis.

- Fierce clashes continue in Qalandia Refugee Camp.

- The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics announces the results of the Palestinian National Census: the total population including in Jerusalem is 2.89 million people (1,896,818 in the WB, 1,020,812 in Gaza). Data about Palestinians living in East Jerusalem is partially estimated, since Israel did not allow the Palestinians to conduct the survey in most areas of Jerusalem.

- Swiss officials formally announce arrest of Mossad agent of Feb. 19.

Feb. 27: Israel apologizes to Switzerland for spying in its country.

March 1: Israeli forces arrest 125 Palestinian workers on the pretext that they are working in Israel without permits.

- Israeli forces violate the Oslo Accords by declaring the city of Jenin a closed area, bringing the work of the joint patrols to a halt.

- Dr. Sa'eb Erekat, Head of the Palestinian Steering Committee calls on the Israeli Govt. to implement the articles of the signed agreements, including the scheduled three-phase Israeli withdrawal from 92% of the Palestinian territories.

March 2: Israel's Min. of the Interior says the Jewish settler population in the WBGS has reached 161,157 in 1997 (5,888 in Gaza) – an increase of 9% compared to the previous year. A Min. official indicates the growth rate had remained constant for the last five years and was mainly due to natural growth. In March 1996, Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics put the Jewish settlement figure at 134,000.

- Israeli soldiers detain dozens of Palestinians during a dawn sweep through the WB refugee camp of Al-Fawar, near Hebron.

March 3: Israeli forces destroy the home of Yousef Mohammed and Zuhur Al-Attrash, from Qalqis near Hebron, without warning.

March 4: A UN report states that Israel's repeated closures of the Palestinian territories and the stalled peace negotiations are the major factors stunting Palestinian economic growth.

- The Israeli authorities destroy four homes in Yatta, south of Hebron.

March 5: The Israeli authorities extend the administrative detention of 123 Palestinian prisoners.

- In an interview with Israel TV, Labor leader Ehud Barak condemns Palestinian terrorism but says that were he a Palestinian, he would have joined a 'terrorist' group at one point in his life.

March 6: Yerushalim reports that an electrified fence has been erected around the settlement of Psagot near Al-Bireh. Other nearby settlements are said to be planning to erect similar fences.

- A delegation of 40 women heads to Baghdad to demonstrate solidarity with Iraqi women on International Women's Day and to deliver food and medicine.

March 8: Pres. Arafat calls on the Arab leaders to hold an urgent Arab summit to forge a unified position in the face of the challenges resulting from the stalemate in the peace process.

March 9: Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan meets with Pres. Arafat in Ramallah to discuss the Arab position towards the peace process.

March 10: Israeli soldiers open fire at a van carrying Palestinian workers at Tarqumiya checkpoint near Hebron, killing three and wounding four. Following the shooting clashes between hundreds of angry Palestinians and Israeli troops firing rubber-coated metal bullets erupt in the heart of Hebron.

- Pres. Arafat and Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan hold official talks in Ramallah and call for a combined Arab and international effort to counteract the effects of Israel's hard-line position.

- Palestinian prisoners at Ashkelon threaten to protest against their maltreatment by the Israeli Prison Authority.

- The World Bank allocates \$25m. for the 'Bethlehem 2000' project.

- The Israeli cabinet approves the continuation of the 'Stars' plan for constructing new Israeli towns along the 'Green Line' border between Jerusalem and Beersheba.

March 11: The donor nations agree to appropriate \$38m. to the PA.

- The PA and Egypt hold economic talks in Gaza.

- Fierce clashes erupt in Hebron between Palestinian demonstrators and Israeli soldiers after a 13 year-old Palestinian child, Samer Karama is declared clinically dead after being shot in the head by an Israeli soldier.

- During a meeting with the visiting Dutch Minister of Cooperation and Development, John Bronk, Pres. Arafat refers to the distinguished and important European role in rescuing the peace talks from imminent collapse.

March 12: France starts a peace initiative to rescue the stalled Middle East talks.

- To mark the fourth anniversary of the Hebron massacre, Jewish militants distribute pamphlets glorifying Baruch Goldstein, the Jewish settler who killed 29 Palestinians in the Ibrahimi Mosque.

March 13: Sa'eb Erekat proposes the formation of a tripartite Palestinian-Israeli-American committee to investigate the Tarqumiya massacre.

- Nine Palestinian journalists are shot and wounded by Israeli soldiers while covering clashes between the soldiers and local Palestinians in the Old City of Hebron following the burial of three Palestinians (see March 10).

March 14: The EU approves the British plan to rescue the peace process.

- As the confrontations in Hebron continue, 32 Palestinians are injured.

March 16: Israeli settlers damage 20 Palestinian cars in Hebron.

- Israel and Britain agree that British Foreign Sec. Robin Cook will visit a controversial Jewish settlement project in Arab East Jerusalem accompanied by an Israeli, not Palestinian, delegation.

March 17: An emergency special session of the General Assembly is to reconvene with Arab states seeking to enforce a convention barring settlement on occupied land and apply it to territories occupied by Israel.

- British Foreign Sec. Robin Cook begins his visit to Israel and the Palestinian areas. After meeting Pres. Arafat in Gaza, Cook announces that the EU and PA will create a committee in order "to cooperate and exchange information to improve security," offering the Palestinians a \$8.3m. security package to improve the fight against terrorism as part of a European initiative.

- The UN Gen. Assembly votes 120 to 3 (Israel, Micronesia, US) in favor of convening a conference on measures to enforce the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 in the Palestinian territories.

March 19: When British Foreign Sec. Robin Cook visits Jabal Abu Ghneim, Netanyahu reacts by canceling dinner, photo session and joint press conference.

- The Palestinian High Court decides that the PA's closure of Ar-Risala newspaper, run by the Salvation Party, is illegal. The paper was ordered closed in early February after publishing an article critical of the PA's handling of the dismissal of High Court judge Qusay Al-Abadleh.

- Israel says the US has offered ideas for breaking a year-old deadlock in Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking.

March 21: Sheikh 'Assad Bayyoud Tamimi, 86, dies in Amman. Tamimi, originally from Hebron, was deported by Israel after the War of 1967 and was repeatedly refused permission to return to Palestine. He led the Jihad Al-Islami Beit Al-Maqdis (Jerusalem Islamic Jihad) movement in Jordan.

March 22: Israeli troops beat and arrest the family of Yousef Al-Atrash for attempting to rebuild their house in Hebron, which was previously demolished twice by the Israeli army, forcing the family to live in a nearby tent.

- The PA commemorates the 30th anniversary of the Battle of Al-Karama.

March 23: UN Sec. Gen. Kofi Annan arrives in Gaza to hold talks with Pres. Arafat, who called for unleashing a political initiative to rescue the staggering peace talks, particularly on the Palestinian-Israeli track.

- Washington proposes a new motion to monitor the construction or expansion of Jewish settlements in a prelude to resuming negotiations on the Palestinian-Israeli track.

- PM Netanyahu and his cabinet are in unanimous opposition to a reported US proposal calling for Israel to withdraw from 13% of the WB; Israel says it will not relinquish control of more than a further 9%.

- Some 500 relatives of Palestinians held in Israeli prisons march in Gaza City calling on visiting UN Sec. Gen. Kofi Annan to pressure Israel for their sons' release.

- Student council elections at Hebron's Polytechnic College result in the Islamic Bloc winning 15 of the 31 seats, Shabibeh (Fatah youth) 13 and the Islamic Group 3.

March 24: Israel says the US knew the Israelis could not withdraw from more than another 9% of the WB. A new American initiative is reported to be seeking a 13% pullback. Uzi Arad, PM Netanyahu's adviser, tells Army Radio: "The Americans know the size of 9% ... This is how much the State of Israel can maneuver and it must be clear that we are not dealing with numbers that can be played with."

- In Cairo, Pres. Arafat, speaking at a meeting of the Arab League FMs, stresses the need to protect Palestinians against attacks by soldiers and settlers, which he says will destroy the peace process and drag the whole region into a circle of violence. He also says he hopes the US will move quickly to salvage the situation.

March 25: Pres. Arafat renews his call for an urgent Arab summit to adopt a unified Arab stance in the face of Israel's hard-line policies.

- Kofi Annan criticizes the Jewish settlement schemes and says that the option of land for peace is the only basis for the success of the Middle East Peace Process.

- Israeli forces demolish six Palestinian houses and destroy agricultural enterprises in the area of Yatta, Hebron.

- Netanyahu publicly opposes anything more than a 9% withdrawal from the WB as Cabinet Sec., Dan Naveh adamantly rejects an anticipated US plan.

- UN Sec. Gen. Kofi Annan is forced to defend the world body against a barrage of Israeli criticism expressed by Speaker Dan Tichon, who refers to 50 years of 'hostile' UN action against the Jewish state.

March 26: UN Sec. Gen. Kofi Annan tells the Israeli Council on Foreign Relations that the majority of the world's countries blame Israel for its provocative actions and that "[Palestinian] grievances are not groundless."

March 28: Pres. Arafat says, after concluding a second round of talks with US Special Envoy Dennis Ross, that the final American ideas regarding peace process were not passed on yet and that the Palestinians insist on full implementation of the signed agreements.

- The Arab League calls on Washington to intervene to force Israel into implementing the agreements.
- A report issued by the Palestinian Min. of Trade states that 216 new companies, 179 trademarks, four patents and 57 work permits have been issued.
- Israeli forces fire live ammunition at a mass demonstration in Assira, injuring eight, among them two PLO members.

March 29: Mohiyeddin Ash-Sharif, considered number two of Hamas's military wing Izz Eddin Al-Qassam after assassinated leader Yahya Ayyash, is found dead in a mysterious explosion that also ripped a car apart in Beitunia, an industrial area west of Ramallah. Hamas blames the slaying on Israeli agents and says it will carry out attacks against Israeli targets, while PA sources say they believe it was an accident that occurred whilst preparations for a car bomb attack were being carried out.

- Elias Freij, Mayor of Bethlehem from 1972-1997 and a leading voice of Palestinian Christians in the WB, dies in Jordan at the age of 80.
- Egypt urges Pres. Arafat not to reject the US peace initiative, although both the Israeli and the Palestinian Cabinet have voted against it.

March 30: Some 37 Palestinian political prisoners held in Jneid Prison in Nablus enter their sixth day of an open-ended hunger strike to protest their prolonged illegal detention without charge or trial.

- Popular rallies and marches marking the anniversary of Land Day are held throughout the Palestinian territories.
- Pres. Arafat leaves for Egypt and Holland and welcomes the idea of holding an international meeting in Washington to revive the peace process.
- Israeli soldiers scuffle with some 150 Palestinians protesters and fire teargas to break up a demonstration against the confiscation of Palestinian land near the Egypt-Gaza border in the town of Rafah.

March 31: While Washington says that peace process is facing a critical situation after the failed Ross mission, Netanyahu promises to support settlers.

- The Palestinian Police rounds up several Hamas supporters for questioning about the explosion of a car reportedly rigged with 50 kilos of TNT.
- Netanyahu rejects the 13% withdrawal.
- Israeli authorities release Ribhi Qattamesh, 42, after four years in administrative detention.

- PA Min. of Finance Zuhdi Nashashibi presents the draft budget for 1998 to the PLC. The total revenue is \$1,777m., the expenses \$1,814m, leaving a deficit of \$37m. Reasons given for the deficit include the increase in public sector employees and the non-disbursement of promised international funding.

March 1998: Fayez Abu Rahmeh resigns from his position because of continuous intervention by the Min. of Justice, Freih Abu Meddein and the commanders of the security services.

April 1: The Palestinian Police reveals the findings of the autopsy on Mohiyeddin Ash-Sharif, saying that he was shot three times before being placed near the explosives-packed car, which had Israeli license plates. The PA denounces the crime, which it says is a serious attempt to shake national security.

- Pres. Arafat confers with the Egyptian Pres. in Cairo about the US peace proposal.

- The PLC approves in first reading a draft law on social reforms and rehabilitation.

- King Fahd of Saudi Arabia rejects says the normalization of relations with Israel can only occur when Palestinian rights are restored, including the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

April 2: Israel again extends the administrative detention orders of Ahmad Qattamesh and Khaled Deleisheh for additional six-month periods. Qattamesh, a writer, has been in administrative detention since October 1993, Deleisheh, an engineer, since April 1994.

- Following Mohiyeddin Ash-Sharif's funeral in Al-Bireh, attended by thousands of Palestinians including members of the PLC, a war of words ensues between the PA and Hamas.

April 4: Israeli troops shoot and wound dozens of Palestinians in clashes in Abu Dis, which erupt after a rally to mourn the death of Mohiyeddin Ash-Sharif.

April 6: PA Presidential Sec. Tayyeb Abdul Rahim and Jibril Rajoub, head of the Palestinian Preventive Security, announce the capture of three Hamas members who allegedly were involved in the killing of Mohiyeddin Ash-Sharif, while a fourth - the actual assassin - remains at large. As a motive for the killing, the PNA mentions internal power struggles within Hamas. Hamas rejects the findings and renews promises to launch revenge attacks against Israel.

- Israel approves the creation of six Jewish settlements/towns along the WB border, south of Hebron, to prevent a link-up between Palestinian areas and Bedouin communities inside Israel.

April 9: The PA orders the closure of the Reuters office in Gaza for "distributing false news" relating to the assassination of Mohiyeddin Ash-Sharif and detains the political head of Hamas in Gaza, Dr. Abdul Aziz Ar-Rantisi.

April 9-10: The anniversary of the Deir Yassin massacre of 1948, in which 200 men, women and children were killed by the Jewish Irgun and Lehi gangs, is commemorated throughout the Palestinian territories.

April 10: In the wake of the assassination of Mohiyeddin Ash-Sharif Palestinian security forces detain Dr. Ibrahim Al-Maqadmeh, a prominent figure in the Islamic movement.

April 11: Imad Awadallah and other prominent Hamas leaders including Ibrahim Maqadmeh and Ismail Abu Shanab are arrested and accused of the assassination of Mohiyeddin Ash-Sharif. According to Jibril Rajoub, 'Awadallah shot Ash-Sharif, while accomplice Ghassan Al-Addassi, a Birzeit University student whose family owns the garage where the incident took place, blew the car up with the body inside.



April 12: Since the assassination of Mohiyeddin Ash-Sharif, Palestinian security forces have arbitrarily arrested some 31 Hamas activists, including the political head Dr. Abdul Aziz Rantisi and Dr. Nezar Rayan, Dean of Al-Azhar University.

- Over 10,000 Israeli militants flock to the Jewish enclave in Hebron to attend a rally marking 30 years of the Jewish presence in Hebron and Israel's 50th anniversary. Several hundred Israeli peace activists are barred from entering the city. According to Israeli press reports, the Israeli Govt. gave the Hebron settlers \$100,000 to organize the rally.

April 13: Pres. Arafat's advisor, Nabil Abu Rudeineh asks Washington to publicize its initiative to save the peace process.

- EU envoy Moratinos urges Israel to get rid of its old fashioned ideas and to face the fact that the EU wants to play a role other than that of funder.

- The Pope denounces settlements, saying "Peace in the Middle East is put at risk by dangerous political decisions."

April 13-14: In a new escalation of the events that followed the death of Mohiyeddin Ash-Sharif, Palestinian security forces arrest the nine members of the Student Council at the Islamic University in Gaza and raid houses throughout the GS. It is believed that the arrests were carried out in resto a gathering held at the university on April 12, in which a communiqué signed by Kata'ib Al-Qassam was distributed.

April 15: Israel releases the longest serving Palestinian administrative detainee, Ahmed Qattanesh, from jail after five years and eight months. Another detainee, Hassan Fatafteh, is also set free after more than four years without trial or charges.

- Tayeb Abdul Rahim blames internal feuds among Hamas factions for the assassination of Mohiyeddin Ash-Sharif.

- Israel confiscates hundreds of acres in the Jordan Valley.

- A one million-signature campaign for the release of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails starts in Gaza.

- The Palestinian daily Al-Ayyam reports that 10,000 Palestinians have been arrested by Israel since the signing of the Oslo Accords.

April 18: Pres. Arafat states that the Palestinians will declare their Palestinian state in 1999 and urges the US to officially announce its proposal for reviving the peace process, dealing with a 13.1% redeployment from Palestinian land and some kind of halt to settlement activities.

April 21: PM Netanyahu asks the far-right party Moledet, which advocates the 'transfer' of Arabs in Israel and the WBGS to Arab countries, to join his coalition.

April 22: Pres. Arafat meets King Fahd and senior Saudi officials in Jedda to discuss efforts exerted to save and revive the peace process.

April 23: PM Netanyahu threatens to annex parts of the WB if Pres. Arafat unilaterally declares an independent Palestinian state.

April 27: Israeli Pres. Ezer Weizmann meets with Palestinian negotiators in Jerusalem to discuss efforts aimed at restarting the peace process.

April 28: Egyptian FM Amr Musa visits Palestine and emphasizes the Egyptian position and the need to rescue the peace process. He also signs 14 agreements with Palestine on behalf of Egypt.

April 29: Civil Aviation Authority head Brig.-Gen. Fayez Zeidan announces that the Gaza airport will be formally named Yasser Arafat International Airport.

- Thousands of Palestinians evicted in 1948 visit (the sites of) their original villages to commemorate the 50th anniversary of An-Naqba.

- Israel officially kicks off its 50th anniversary celebration (in accordance with the Hebrew calendar).

April 1998: For the first time since 1967, Israel denies an international organization entry when it bars the ILO delegation from entering to carry out their annual mission.

May 5: After two days of indirect talks in London involving Netanyahu and Arafat, US Sec. of State Madeleine Albright announces that Pres. Arafat has accepted US proposals for rescuing the peace process (13% redeployment from the WB) and challenged Israel to do the same. Talks end with no progress.

May 6: A settler from the settlement of Eli near Ramallah, shoots and kills Amad Alan, 22, from Qariout village.

- Some 66 dunums of land are confiscated from two Palestinian families in Hebron in order to build a gas station for Israeli settlers of the Givat HaHarsina settlement.

May 7: At a seminar in Switzerland, US First Lady Hillary Clinton tells Israeli and Arab students, "I think it will be in the long-term interests of the Middle East for Palestine to be a state." The statement is condemned by the majority of Jews and brushed off by some US officials as "her personal opinion."

May 11: The Constitution, Law and Judiciary Committee in the Israeli Knesset approves a draft law that is designed to make the release of any Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails conditional on the PA handing over to Israel Palestinians in Palestinian jails who are wanted by Israel.

May 12: During a visit to the WB settlement of Bet El, Labor Party leader Ehud Barak declares, "Bet El will remain in our hands forever! And the Palestinians will remain in Ramallah forever."

May 13: The European Commission recommends an EU boycott of all products imported from Israeli settlements.

- Israeli and Palestinian historians meet in Paris to seek common ground in their views of what happened in the first Arab-Israeli war of 1948.

- PM Netanyahu arrives in Washington to lobby against the US Middle East peace plan, as Sec. of State Albright prepares to try to sell it to him.

May 14: The National Committee for Commemorating An-Naqba holds marches ('One Million March') in all Palestinian districts. The marches are followed by the sounding of a siren by the Voice of Palestine and a one-minute period of silence in memory of the victims of the War of 1948, and speeches by Pres. Arafat and poet Mahmoud Darwish. Clashes with Israeli troops leave eight Palestinians dead and more than 300 injured.

- Talks between US Sec. of State Albright and PM Netanyahu in Washington end with no breakthrough.

May 15: An embroidered Palestinian quilt commemorating '50 Years of Palestinian Dispossession' and honoring the 418 Palestinian villages destroyed by Israel begins its tour of US cities after being unveiled at the UN Dag Hammerskjold Park in New York (scheduled to conclude with a mass rally in front of Capitol Hill in Washington DC on June 14).

May 15: The EU announces the exclusion of Israeli products manufactured in the WB, East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, and the GS from the free- trade agreement with Israel.

May 15-17: Throughout the Palestinian territories, clashes with Israeli soldiers continue in the aftermath of An-Naqba day, which left ten Palestinians dead and hundreds injured.

May 17: In Oslo, Labor chairman Barak discusses peace process with Arafat, who attends a Socialist International meetings and holds talks on peace process with Norwegian officials.

May 18: US Sec. of State Albright and Pres. Arafat meet in London to discuss possible new advances in the peace process after Israel's refusal of the US-proposed 13% withdrawal from the WB.

May 19: B'Tselem releases a report on the interrogation methods used by the Israeli General Security Service (GSS), estimating that of the some 1,000-1,500 Palestinians annually interrogated by the GSS, some 85% are subjected to torture.

May 20: The Israeli High Court of Justice re-declares that Israel has the right to use torture when security requirements justify 'ill-treatment' or 'moderate physical pressure'. This decision comes immediately after the UN Committee against Torture reiterates its call for Israel to cease the use of painful interrogation methods that violate the Convention against Torture, of which Israel is a signatory.

- EU representatives meet with Israeli Finance Min. Ya'akov Neeman to discuss Israel's practice of exporting goods from the OPT with 'Made in Israel' labels.

May 23: US House Speaker Newt Gingrich and House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt lead a congressional delegation to Israel to celebrate Israel's 50th anniversary and Jerusalem Day.

- In Damascus, Sheikh Yassin meets with the leaders of the 10 Damascus-based Palestinian opposition groups.

May 26: In Cairo, Arafat attends Arab League meeting to commemorate the 50th anniversary of An-Nakba and calls for an Arab summit on the peace process.

- Speaking at a Cairo meeting to commemorate An-Naqba, Pres. Arafat calls for an Arab summit on stalled Middle East peace efforts and says Palestinians will keep striving to establish their state.

- Hamas spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin says he expects the elimination of Israel and the establishment of a Palestinian state to occur during the first quarter of the next century.

- Opposition parties in the Knesset temporarily block approval of NIS120m. for additional bypass roads.

May 27: Sheikh Fawzi Az-Zafzaf for the Al-Azhar Higher Islamic Association and Cardinal Francis Arzini for the Vatican form an Islamic-Christian Committee and sign an agreement to fight religious fundamentalism and terrorism and promote mutual religious respect.

- Israeli soldiers, accompanied by two bulldozers, tear down 15 Palestinian tents, home to around 170 Palestinians of Jiftlik village, and destroy around 30 animal pens, killing approximately 30 sheep and goats.

- Pres. Arafat receives US House Speaker, Gingrich and a 20-member congressional delegation in Ramallah.

May 28: Pres. Arafat issues the Civil Service Law, the Law for Rehabilitation and Correctional Centers, the Civil Defense Law, the Firearms and Ammunition Law, and the Law on Jewelry Monitoring and Hallmarking.

- Right-wing MK Michael Kleiner proposes that Arabic should be denied its status as the official second language of Israel after Hebrew since "Israeli Arabs can identify with the Palestinian Authority if they want, but Israel cannot become in any sense a bi-national state."

- PM Netanyahu says he would rather face world condemnation than accept US terms for saving the peace process.

- In Amman, EU special envoy Miguel Moratinos discusses peace process with Crown Prince Hassan, PM Majali and FM Anani.

May 29: Sheikh Yassin arrives in Sudan, meets with Pres. 'Umar Hassan Al-Bashir.

May 30: The PLC gives Arafat's cabinet two weeks to respond to its queries concerning budgetary and administrative reforms or risk a no-confidence vote for the first time.

- In Beirut, French Pres. Jacques Chirac calls on Israel to leave South Lebanon and Golan Heights, saying that it cannot have security without peace.

May: The International Solidarity for Human Rights organization issues a report that states that the Israeli authorities arrested about 535,000 Palestinians between 1967 and 1997 and that more than 3,000 Palestinians are presently being held in Israeli jails.

- In Bethlehem University's Student Council elections the joint Shabibeh (Fatah) and PPP bloc wins six seats, while the PFLP-DFLP bloc wins two and the Islamic Movement one.

June 1: Al-Hayyat Al-Jadeedah reports that the World Bank agreed to extend a new \$90m. grant to the PA to support projects in the WBGS, particularly the Bethlehem 2000 project.

June 2: A delegation from the European Parliament meets with the PLC Political Committee and promise to reevaluate the treatment of goods made in Israeli settlements and the possibility of excluding them from tariff reductions.

- YESHA distributes to Israeli households one million booklets arguing against any Israeli redeployment in the WB.

June 3: Details of the US initiative to revive the peace process are revealed: the second phase of redeployment would take place in three stages over a 12-week period, at the end of which 12% of Area C land would become Area B and 1% of Area C and 14.2% of Area B would become Area A. Palestinians accept on the condition that the dates and scope will be clearly defined; Israel rejects, saying it will only withdraw from 13% and only if this was the last redeployment before the final status talks.

- An Israeli soldier shoots and wounds a 13-year old Palestinian boy who approached Gush Katif settlement in the GS.

June 4: The Palestinian High Court of Justice orders the release of Dr. Abdul Aziz Ar-Rantisi, detained by the Palestinian Police since 9 April 1998.

June 5: The Follow-Up Committee for Israeli Arab Affairs calls on Arab citizens of Israel to 'boycott' the products of Israeli settlements.

- The PA calls for a 'general mobilization' to confront Israel's settlement policies

June 8-10: Pres. Arafat attends the annual summit of the Organization of African Unity in Burkina Faso; the African nations adopt a resolution reaffirming the Palestinians' right to self-determination, to return and regain their properties, and to establish an independent state.

June 9: In an official ceremony the management of El Al and Vatican officials endorse the June 2 decision that El Al should be the official airline for pilgrimage to the Holy Land on the occasion of the millennium celebrations.

- An Israeli soldier shoots and kills Ra'afat Mohammed Al-Bardawil, 23, from Khan Yunis, near the Morage settlement to the west of Rafah.

June 11: Ariel becomes the second settlement after Ma'ale Adumim to be granted city status.

- Israeli forces demolish the house of the Atrash family in Hebron, for the third time (the home was rebuilt in March by the family with help from international activists).

- For the first time since 1967, a civilian guard is established for settlements in the WB. The guard is to operate independently of the Israeli Police or the army.

June 13: Pres. Arafat receives the 'Golden Pegasus' prize in Florence and calls for European economic pressure on Israel.

- Israelis cut down trees to clear portions of Um-Safa Forest near Ramallah situated between two illegal Jewish settlements, claiming they are 'improving' the land.

June 15: The PLC shifts today's deadline for a vote on the motion of no confidence to June 25.

June 16: Mohammed Khaled Abu Turki, 45, from Hebron is killed when settlers hid him on the head with an axe on the bypass road near Beit Hagai settlement.

June 17: Yediot Aharanot publishes the results of a poll conducted by the Israeli Dahaf Institute showing that 59% of Israelis support a 13% withdrawal while 36% are opposed. Some 74% also said that they supported the continued implementation of the Oslo Accords while 24% opposed.

June 18: An EU Executive Commission statement on EU-Israeli trade relations states that the EU plans to investigate goods imported from Israel to determine if they originate in East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, the WB, or the GS. The document claims that products from these areas are receiving illegal customs privileges due to inappropriate use of the 'Made in Israel' label that permits them to enter the EU duty free.

- Greenpeace activists intercept the Israeli ship 'Aribel' while it is dumping toxic sludge into international waters off Haifa. The dumped material is very acidic and contains heavy metals such as zinc, cadmium and mercury.

June 21: Yousef Al-Arear dies as a result of suspected medical negligence a month after undergoing heart bypass surgery, and only ten hours after his transferal from hospital to Ramla Prison.

June 22: Israeli authorities demolish a house in the village of Al-Walajeh and hand local residents demolition notices for another 14 Palestinian houses.

June 23: Five Palestinian houses are destroyed in the Hebron region and 30 Bedouin families evicted, bringing to 81 the total number of houses demolished this year in the WB.

June 24: Pres. Arafat sends a letter to PLC Speaker Ahmed Qrei'a informing him that he accepts the resignation of all cabinet members.

June 24: Israeli forces demolish five houses in Yatta.

- Sheikh Ahmad Yassin returns to Gaza from a four-month tour of Arab states.

June 28: The Netanyahu cabinet approves Min. of National Infrastructure Ariel Sharon's plan to extend the construction of new Israeli cities along the 'Green Line' to the region near Hebron, where six cities are to be built.

June 29: In the wake of Netanyahu's hard-line stand hindering any progress in the peace process, Israeli Pres. Weizmann calls for early elections and says Netanyahu is deceiving the Israeli people. Netanyahu in turn accuses Weizmann of "siding with Arafat and Mubarak."

June 30: A Vatican delegation holds talks with Palestinian officials on putting the activities of the Roman Catholic Church in Palestinian areas on an official footing and strengthening the relationship between the Vatican and the PA.

- The PLC votes with 36 in favor, 22 opposed and six abstentions to ratify the new PA budget.

- The Israeli army's 'Security Interests' map presented to a Knesset committee excludes 59 of 150 WB settlements (i.e., not considered essential to the security of the Jewish state).

July 1: Israeli authorities demolish six houses in the district of Nablus and another house in the Jenin district.

July 2: Palestinians and Israeli forces clash in Gaza after Israel closes off the coastal road between Deir Balah and Khan Yunis.

July 5: At the end of their summit in Cairo, Pres. Arafat, Pres. Mubarak and King Hussein call on Israel to revoke its decision to expand the boundaries of Jerusalem and request it to abide by international resolutions.

July 6: The Knesset Law Committee endorses a draft law, submitted by the Moledet faction, which would extend Israeli law, justice, and jurisdiction to the local and regional councils of settlements in the WBGS. The Netanyahu govt. opposes the legislation.

- Israeli authorities demolish two houses in the northern WB, one in the village of Kardala, Toubas, the other in the village of Aqaba.

Ju7: The UN Gen. Assembly approves by a vote of 124 in favor, 4 against, and 10 abstentions a resolution entitled 'Participation of Palestine in the Work of the UN' upgrading the representation of Palestine at the UN, though the resolution falls short of Palestinian expectations. The PLO's seat will be moved and it will be allowed to put its signature as 'co-sponsor' on proposed resolutions. The new non-voting category recognizes the PA's control of territory, a precursor to statehood.

July 9: Israeli authorities demolish four houses in the WB.

July 10: Ha'aretz reports that "for the first time in the history of the state, it is said this year in the annual estimate of the security services that radical groups in Israeli society may react violently – including by using weapons - as a consequence of developments in the peace process that require a territorial withdrawal and perhaps the removal of settlements."

July 14: The UNSC issues a statement condemning the Israeli decision to expand the boundaries of Jerusalem and demanding that Israel halts all actions in the city until final status talks.

July 16: Pres. Arafat returns from a three-day visit to China, where Chinese Pres. Jiang Zemin, confirmed China's support of the Palestinians' cause.

July 17: Israeli authorities hand eviction order to 40 Bedouin families living near Tubas.

July 19: Peace Now reports that 11% of the apartments built and marketed by the Min. of Housing and Construction in 1998 (5,242 of the 48,862 units) are located in settlements (excluding East Jerusalem).

July 20: The Israeli Govt. says it will accept the US 13% redeployment proposal if the disputed 3% (Israel insists on 10% only) will be transformed into natural reserves supervised by both sides.

July 26: Singapore's recognition of the Palestinian passport brings the number of countries who have recognized it to 78.

- Jamal Al-Khamisi, who suffered from liver cancer, dies five days after being released from Ramla Prison where his health had deteriorated after a malignant tumor had not been properly treated. His case is the second death of a critically ill detainee in a one-month period.

July 27: Israeli authorities hand eviction orders to 12 Palestinian families from Yatta, near Hebron in preparation for the demolition of their homes, the land in question being needed for 'military purposes'.

July 29-30: The Al-Quds Committee of the Islamic Conference Organization formally establishes Beit Al-Mal Al-Quds Ash-Sharif to provide assistance and support to the Palestinian people and institutions of Jerusalem and to protect, safeguard and restore the city's religious, cultural and architectural heritage. Members are Jordan, Indonesia, Iran, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Senegal, Iraq, Guinea, Palestine, Egypt, Morocco, Mauritania, Niger and Lebanon. Wajih Ali Hassan Qasem is named Dir.-Gen.

July 30: Over the past two days, Israeli authorities have demolished four more houses in the WB.

Aug. 1: Over the last four months, the Israeli authorities have issued 49 demolition warnings for 44 houses, four livestock coups and one well in Hebron, affecting some 250 individuals.

- The Israeli Govt. announces that it plans to initiate a campaign to expand the settlements in the southern part of the WB.

Aug. 5: Pres. Arafat announces the cabinet shuffle. The appointment of another ten Min.s (added to the existing 22) is considered a breach of the provisions of the draft Basic Law, which limits the number of cabinet members to 28.

- Israeli authorities start construction of a new bypass road extending from the Etzion settlement bloc south of Bethlehem to Jerusalem.

Aug. 9: PA prisoner Walid Al-Qawasmeh, 48, from Hebron, dies while being transferred from Jericho Hospital to a hospital in Nablus, bringing the number of Palestinians who have died in PA custody to 20. He is said to have died of heat stroke (the temperature in his cell had reached 49°C), but an autopsy showed he had died of a fractured skull.

- The PLC votes to approve the new Cabinet with 55 in favor and 28 against.

Aug. 10: Palestinian Min.s Hanan Ashrawi and Abdul Jawad Saleh – both of whom were ousted from their former ministries and reassigned new ones – resign.

Aug. 12: Israeli authorities demolish a house in As-Sawahra Ash-Sharqiyeh, owned by Ibrahim Halase and home to 12 persons.

Aug. 13: Peace Now reports 5,892 new units under construction and 2,888 empty dwelling units in WBGS settlements, meaning 7% of the existing 42,000 units are vacant.

- The Israeli Govt. initiates new housing plans for settlements regardless of the fact that there are more than 3,000 units vacant in the WB alone.

Aug. 15: Imad Awadallah escapes from the Jericho Detention Center, where he had been held since March 29 on suspicion of having assassinated Mohiyeddin Ash-Sharif; Palestinian security forces impose their first ever curfew on the city of Jericho, put his family in Al-Bireh under house arrest, and ban relatives from visiting.

Aug. 16: Jordan's King Hussein, for cancer treatment in the US, gives Crown Prince Hassan power to name new government in response to public criticisms of government handling of the ongoing domestic water pollution crisis.

- Israeli PM Netanyahu approves a plan to build km-long of walls, ditches, fences along the Green Line in order to prevent car thefts; stresses that the barriers will not constitute a de facto border demarcation.

Aug. 17: In Washington, US Pres. Bill Clinton testifies before a grand jury on his relationship with White House intern Monica Lewinsky. In a televised address afterward he admits having an affair; misleading the special prosecutor and the public.

Aug. 18: Israeli forces demolish the home of the Faqih family for the second time, in Qattana village near Ramallah.

Aug. 19: Israeli authorities demolish eight 'illegally built' houses in and around Hebron, making over 60 Palestinians homeless, some of whom are beaten and hospitalized.

- The Israeli Govt. approves plans to build an additional 2,500 settlement units on the occupied Golan Heights, adding significantly to the 13,000-strong Jewish population there.

Aug. 20: The Israeli army demolishes eight Palestinian houses in Hebron District, seven houses in Samu' village and one house in Baq'a valley for allegedly being built without a license.

- The Israeli authorities demolish a house in Jenin and 12 barracks owned by the Bedouin Hroush tribe in Salfit.

- In retaliation for the US embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, the US launches 79 cruise missiles striking six training camps in Afghanistan allegedly connected to Saudi dissident Osama Bin Laden, as well as a pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum, Sudan.



- King Hussein replaces PM Abdel Salam Al-Majali with Chief of the Royal Court Fayiz At-Tarawnah after Majali officially resigns over recent water pollution scandal. Tarawnah is replaced by FM Jawad Al-Anani. Abdallah Al-Khatib is named new FM.

Aug. 21-30: Israel imposes a total blockade on Hebron and a curfew on Palestinian residents of the H2 area following the stabbing death of an extremist Jewish rabbi in the settlement of Tel Rumeida.

Aug. 22: Three-month old Qusay Tammimi dies at an Israeli checkpoint in Kharasina near Hebron after his family are prevented from taking him to hospital by the seven-day closure imposed on Hebron.

Aug. 23: After the killing of a settler on Aug. 20, the Israeli Cabinet decides to replace settlers' mobile caravans in Tel Rumeida/Hebron with permanent structures at an estimated cost of \$3m.

- In Oslo, Norwegian FM Knut Vollebaek hosts dinner to celebrate 5th anniversary of the initialing of the DoP on 20 Aug. 1993 with Shimon Peres, Ahmad Qrei'a, Uri Savir, and Dennis Ross attending.

- The Israeli cabinet approves construction of permanent structures in Tel Rumaida after the killing of a settler there three days earlier.

Aug. 24: The Israeli Govt. has budgeted \$3m. for a plan to build permanent houses in the radical Jewish settlement of Tel Rumeida in Hebron, where 63-year old Rabbi Shlomo Raanan was stabbed to death on Aug. 20.

- The Israeli Finance Min. approves transfer of \$23.4 m from urban building to settle.

- The Israeli army intensifies security arrangements for 20 West Bank settlements, partly by installing wire fences and doubling the number of security guards.

- UNSC holds an informal, closed-door meeting on US strikes on Sudan and Afghanistan, but decides to take no action to reprimand the US.

- The Arab League holds an emergency session, condemning the US attack on Sudan.

Aug. 25: Journalists and PLC members are attacked and beaten by members of the Palestinian security services during a peaceful protest in front of the house of Imad Awadallah's family in Al-Bireh.

- Fadwa 'Abd As-Salem Al-Aladem, 24, from Beit Ula, gives birth in a car whilst being refused permission to pass through a checkpoint on the way to Alia Hospital. The baby dies on arrival at the hospital.

- Israeli Housing Min. states that some 25% of housing units built in settlements between 1989 and 1992 are still empty; only 45% of the units have been sold.

Aug. 26: Libya tentatively accepts proposal approved by the UK and US to try the two suspects in the 1988 Pan Am bombing in The Hague under Scottish Law.

Aug. 27: The Israeli army bulldozes tens of dunums of land belonging to Um Ar-Rehan and Az-Zawieh villages in Jenin District, uprooting thousands of fruit trees, in preparation for the construction of two new settlements.

- The Israeli authorities demolish two houses in the village of Sarta and one in Salem village, Nablus area.

- Twenty-one Israelis are injured in Tel Aviv when a bomb explodes in a trash can near a synagogue in the city center.

Aug. 28: The Israeli authorities demolish two houses in Sarta village, Nablus, and one in the Qalqilia district.

Aug. 30: Pres. Arafat approves the death sentence that was passed the day before by the Military Court in Gaza against three brothers, Faris, Mohammed, and Ra'ed Abu Sultan, who were accused of killing two brothers from Al-Khalidi family on Aug. 27. Mohammed and Ra'ed are executed by police gunfire in Gaza. To date, the military and state security courts have released 20 death sentences.

- The Hebron Chamber of Commerce estimates the loss incurred by various Palestinian economic sectors as a direct result of the Israeli military curfew imposed for nine days on the city at approx. \$5 million.

- Ahmad Mohammed Fataftah, 12, from Tarqoumiyeh near Hebron dies after being run over several times by a settler's car.

-The Israeli High Planning Council announces the structural plan of Road 61 passing through Tulkarem and Jenin districts and requiring the confiscation of some 2000 dunums of Palestinian agricultural land.

Aug. 31: In a joint press conference in Amman, Pres. Arafat and Crown Prince Hassan reject PM Netanyahu's draft plan for redeployment and stress the need to carry out the US peace initiative without alterations.

- Israel erects 13 electronic gates in Hebron's old city and seals off the offices of the Palestinian Min. of Supplies.

Sept. 1: Israeli bulldozers tear down three houses, owned by Ali Radaida and home to 45 people.

Sept. 2: The Palestinian Min. of Higher Education reports that Israel has denied 500 Gazans permits to travel to the West Bank to study in the coming academic year.

Sept. 2-3: At the summit of non-aligned countries in South Africa, Pres. Arafat calls for support of the Palestinian right to declare an independent state and to obtain full UN membership.

Sept. 3: The Israeli authorities release Lebanese activist Suha Bishara after ten years in prison (Kham Detention Center in South Lebanon) without a trial, following a failed attempt to kill SLA Commander Anton Lahad.

Sept. 6: Hussein Abed Abu Ghali, 55, a resident of Khan Yunis dies in suspicious circumstances, with family members accusing the Presidential Security Forces of beating him to death.

Sept. 7: Israeli forces demolish a house in Al-Khader and two houses in the village of Obaidia, Bethlehem area.

Sept. 8: Palestine and Turkey sign three cooperation agreements in different areas; among others Turkish PM Yilmaz agrees to hand the Palestinians important Palestinian documents.

Sept. 11: Israeli official announce the assassination of Imad and Adel Awadallah, Hamas fugitives wanted for their alleged involvement in attacks against Israel that took place in Zone C in the At-Taibeh area, near Taqoumiyeh, in the Hebron district. In the wake of the killings, Israel imposes an indefinite closure on the Palestinian territories.

Sept. 14: B'Tselem reports that 262 Palestinians have been killed since the signing of the Oslo Accords, including seven children under the age of 12 and 58 people who were killed by Jewish settlers.

Sept. 15: The Oasis Resort with its controversial casino opens in Jericho.

Sept. 16: In Hebron, Israeli bulldozers tear down the house of Atta Jaber for the second time, a month after the house was rebuilt and destroy the houses of Jibril Abdeen in the Farsh Al-Hawa area and of Fadel Al-Qawasmeh with all the furniture still inside.

Sept. 17: An Israeli settler fires at a group of students on their way home from Beitunia Secondary School, killing Iyad Rawhi Qurabseh, 18, and injuring Issa Jabareen, 17.

- The Israeli Govt. announces its plan to build 600 new homes in the Yitzhar settlement near Nablus.

Sept. 19: Thousands of Palestinians join a demonstration in Al-Bireh/Ramallah called for by national and Islamic forces, in protest against the Israeli refusal to hand over the bodies of Adel and Imad Awadallah.

- Some 96 Palestinians are injured by Israeli soldiers firing rubber bullets during a fierce confrontation in Al-Bireh to protest the murder of Iyad Qurabseh by an Israeli settler.

Sept. 20: Force 17 arrests the General Director of the Min. of Youth & Sports Mohammed Mahmoud Muqbel, of Ein Munjed, Ramallah, after he speaks of national solidarity and condemns the Israeli assassination of the Awadallah brothers at a public rally one day before.

- Israel imposes a full closure on the WBGS due to the Jewish New Year holidays.

Sept. 21: PM Netanyahu threatens to annex the WB should the PA establish an independent Palestinian state in May 1999, saying the declaration of a state will lead to the cancellation of all the agreements.

- The International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA) begins its general assembly with Israel's secretive nuclear program being examined for the first time. Israel has never officially admitted that it possesses nuclear weapons though experts credit it with between 100 and 200 warheads that could be fitted to ballistic missiles.

Sept. 22: The Palestinian Min. of Agriculture starts a national tree-planting campaign as part of the preparations for the declaration of an independent Palestinian state in May 1999.

Sept. 23: The Palestinian media reports on Israeli military exercises taking place in preparation for a possible confrontation after the declaration of a Palestinian state and the re-occupying of the WBGS.

- PA intelligence chief Amin Al-Hindi alleges that Israeli forces assassinated fugitives Imad and Adel Awadallah and then moved the bodies to a remote country house to make it look as if they had been killed in a raid.

Sept. 25: The Times of London reports the existence of a "shadowy biological institute situated in the growing suburban community of Nes Ziona ... believed by many foreign diplomats to be one of the most advanced germ warfare institutions in the Middle East."

- The PNA Cabinet issues a statement saying the Pres. Arafat will declare a state at the end of the five-year interim period on 4 May 1999.

Sept. 26: US Sec. of State Albright meets separately with Pres. Arafat and PM Netanyahu in an effort to narrow the differences between the two sides regarding the proposed further withdrawal from 13% of the WB.

Sept. 27: Palestine gains observer status at the International Agency for Nuclear Energy.

- Israeli forces uproot some 1,300 olive trees belonging to Palestinians from Jalboon, Kufr Kaddoum, and Ba'lin.

- Violent clashes between Palestinians inside the 'Green Line' and Israeli forces break out over land confiscation in Um Al-Fahm and Wadi Ara, leaving over 100 Palestinians injured.

Sept. 28: Palestine participates for the first ever time in the GDebate of the UNGA. Pres. Arafat addresses the plenary - marking the first time that a non-member state entity participates -, saying that the Palestinians will not give up their national rights, incl. the right to a Palestinian state.

Sept. 29: During his meeting with Pres. Clinton, Pres. Arafat accepts for the first time the 13% withdrawal including a 3% nature reserve.

- On the eve of Yom Kippur, Israel imposes a total two-day closure on the WBGS.

- Zahran Zahran, 29, is killed and two others injured when a suitcase in their car explodes in Beitunia. All three are Hamas members wanted by Israel; the suitcase is reported to contain weapons they had just bought.

Sept. 30: Jewish settlers throw a hand grenade at a crowd of Palestinians in Hebron, blowing up an Israeli jeep and injuring 14 soldiers and 11 Palestinians; amid the ensuing panic, Israeli soldiers open fire at Palestinians and deny access to ambulances. Israel reports it as a 'Palestinian terrorist attack' and imposes a curfew on the Palestinian population. Clashes between Palestinian citizens and Israeli soldiers continue for several days.

Sept. 1998: A poll conducted for the Israeli daily Ma'ariv shows that 65% of Jewish Israelis support the idea of transferring Palestinians from the WBGS.

Oct. 2: At a conference on the EU-Palestinian partnership, Palestinians urge the EU to play a more active role in the Middle East peace process and to put more pressure on Israel.

- Israel tightens its closure of the WBGS after defense chiefs warn that Hamas is plotting a major attack in Israel.

Oct. 4: At an event being held by the Jewish Federation of Portland, former PM Shimon Peres says that Israel would be wise to help a separate Palestinian state on its borders become democratic and prosperous. He also says, "You cannot expect 100 percent security unless you give the other people 100 percent freedom" and that the status of Jerusalem is not negotiable.

- In an interview with Ha'aretz Egypt's FM Amr Musa says that no one believes Israel when it talks about making peace with Palestinians.

- The Palestinian Min. of Education decides that school uniforms for male students in public schools will become mandatory as of this year (female students are already obliged to wear a uniform).

- Ahmad Asfour, 23, a Yemini of Palestinian origin who had entered Gaza in 1995 to visit his family and was arrested in Dec. 1997 because of his expired visa, is found hanged in his cell in Beersheba Prison.

Oct. 5: Egyptian Pres. Hosni Mubarak warns in a TV interview that Israel "will not be secure unless the Palestinians get their land back," and appeals to Israel to "decide and choose with courage between peace and stability or annexing Palestinian land."

- US Sec. of State Albright arrives to the region with Special Envoy Dennis Ross and Asst. Sec. of State for Middle East Affairs, Martin Indyk, to prepare for a summit to be held in the US later this month; holds first meeting with PM Netanyahu.

- PA officials join Hamas spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin at the head of a march through Gaza City on the eve of US Sec. of State Albright's visit, calling for the release of all Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails.

Oct. 6: US Sec. of State Albright meets with Pres. Arafat in Jericho.

- Ramallah High Court issues an order for the release of Ghassan Adassi - arrested on 29 March 1998 in relation to the assassination of Mohiyeddin Ash-Sharif, stating that his detention is illegal and in contravention of Art. 100 and 103 of the Penal Law # 9 (1961). However, the PA refuses to release him.

Oct. 7: During talks at Eretz checkpoint PM Netanyahu accepts a lunch invitation by Pres. Arafat and enters for the first time PA-held territory. Later, US Sec. of State Albright says that Israeli and Palestinian leaders have agreed to an intensive three-way summit with Pres. Clinton, to start Oct. 15.

- PM Netanyahu attends a ceremony in Ariel marking the official transformation of the settlement (16,000 settlers) into a city just hours after meeting with US Sec. of State Albright and Pres. Arafat, both of whom have demanded a freeze on settlement expansion.

- Thousands of Jewish settlers dance and chant religious songs during a cornerstone-laying ceremony in the Tel Rumeida enclave, where the Israeli Govt. has agreed to build permanent houses to replace a handful of trailer homes.

Oct. 8: Israeli troops shoot dead a Palestinian protester, seriously wound a news photographer and injure at least 20 more during clashes that erupt following the start of a general strike protesting the week-long curfew clamped on Palestinians living in the Israeli-held section of the city.

- US Rep. Jim Saxton introduces a resolution to the Congress (H. Con. Res. 345) that opposes a Palestinian State and requests that the Pres. should reassert the traditional opposition of the US to the unilateral declaration of a Palestinian State.

- Former PM Shimon Peres reiterates his call for a Palestinian state and says PM Netanyahu negotiates more with factions in his own govt. than with the Palestinians.

- Israel announces the building of 150 new housing units in the settlement of Ma'ale Mikhmas near Ramallah.

Oct. 9: PM Netanyahu names cabinet hawk Ariel Sharon as Israel's new FM (replacing resigned David Levy).

Oct. 10: A CPRS poll on peace, violence, and domestic issues finds that of WBGS residents over the age of 18, 66% support and 30% oppose the current peace process; about two-thirds believe that final status talks will not succeed; 49% believe that the peace process will lead to a Palestinian state; 51% support and 44% oppose armed attacks against Israelis; and 45% support a unilateral declaration of the Palestinian state in May 1999, while 44% support waiting for a Palestinian-Israeli agreement first.

- Huriyeh Abu Hmaid, 40, dies in Hebron Hospital after the ambulance carrying her while in labor with complications is turned back at a checkpoint and forced to use a longer route, taking an extra 40 minutes over unpaved roads. She leaves behind four children, including the newborn baby.

Oct. 13: Israel lifts the 13-day curfew - the longest in the city since the 1994 Al-Ibrahimi Mosque massacre - in the center of Hebron but keeps main streets closed and erects military blockades in vital locations. According to Chamber of Commerce Chairman Hashem Natsheh the city's economic losses due to the curfew were \$1.5m. per day, with 300 small factories having to shut down.

Oct. 14: Palestinians and Israelis both hold demonstrations on the eve of the Washington summit aimed at finalizing an Israeli-Palestinian peace accord, which centers on Israel making a further 13% withdrawal from the WB. While some 350 Palestinians demonstrate in Gaza City and 200 demonstrate in Ramallah, demanding that PA negotiators do not give in to Israeli and US pressure, thousands of Israeli settlers and militant Jews block traffic in a massive demonstration near PM Netanyahu's residence in Jerusalem.

- A poll conducted by Zogby International of 864 likely voters finds that 53.9% of American voters think Palestinians should have an independent state, against 15.3% who disagree and 30.8% who are not sure. The survey also finds that 60.7% of voters think the US should suspend aid to Israel until a peace settlement between the Palestinians and Israelis is reached.

- The Vatican's charges d'affaires in Jordan, Msgr. Dominique Rezeau, says the Vatican is ready to recognize a Palestinian state and opposes the Israeli settlement policies and unilateral expansion of the Jerusalem boundaries.

Oct. 15: Israeli, Palestinian leaders meet at Wye Plantation for a summit to negotiate a final deal based on the US-proposed package that includes further Israeli withdrawals and specific Palestinian steps to halt anti-Israeli violence. US Pres. Clinton warns the two sides that the failure of the summit to result in an agreement would mark the end of intensive US intervention in efforts to save the peace process.

- Amnesty International calls on Israel, the PA and the US to ensure that human rights are not once again thrown overboard in the Israeli-Palestinian security agreement be negotiated at the Wye Plantation summit.

- Jewish settlers firebomb Palestinian homes in Beit Sahur, seriously damaging one of the buildings.

- PA security personnel arrest two Israelis outside the home of PLO Executive Sec. Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) in Al-Bireh. It is later discovered that they are settler security guards in civilian clothes, who claim to be pursuing stone-throwers.

Oct. 16: Israeli TV quotes a poll according to which 53% of Israeli Jews believe that Israel will eventually be forced to agree to the creation of an independent Palestinian state if the US summit is successful. Another poll, published by Ma'ariv, shows that only 36% of Israelis believe the summit would result in an accord, while 52% think the differences between Netanyahu and Arafat would remain.

Oct. 17: About 400 Palestinians demonstrate in Ramallah for the release of Palestinians prisoners from Israeli jails.

Oct. 18: Ha'aretz reports that Israeli archeological authorities have protested the plan to construct permanent housing for settlers on Tel Rumeida in Hebron - an extremely important site with ruins dating back to the Bronze and Iron Ages.

- Al-Quds reports that three new Israeli settlements are in the works in the northern WB: Eli Zahav, a 500-unit site to be established on land belonging to Kufr Dik and Deir Balout; Tel Menashe, a 212-dunam site slated for 400 units on Ya'abad land; and a third, unnamed, to be established on Qaryout land.

- Jewish settlers from Yitzhar damage olive groves and assault Palestinians from the nearby village of Hawara.

Oct. 19: Three Palestinians are shot and injured by Israeli soldiers near the Dahariya checkpoint near Hebron.

- Hand grenades are thrown at the Beersheba Central Bus Station, injuring 64 Israelis. The perpetrator is identified as Salem Sarsour whom the PA charges to be an agent of the Israeli security services.

- Jewish settlers from Elon Moreh cut down at least 110 olive trees in the village of Deir Al-Hatab near Nablus.

- Ha'aretz reports on an Israeli army document that warns that a Jewish extremist could massacre Palestinians in Hebron, as happened in 1994, referring to the increased activity of Rabbi Moshe Levinger in the area and the establishment of a military security committee, which Levinger heads.

- Hundreds of Palestinians march in Gaza to demand the release of relatives held in Israeli jails.

- Over the past three days, the Palestinian Security Service has waged an arrest campaign against Islamic opposition activists in the WB.

Oct. 21: Palestinian security services arrest some 15 people linked to Hamas in the wake of the grenade attack in Beersheba two days before.

- Jewish WB settlers protest against efforts to strike an Israeli-Palestinian accord at the Wye River summit, throwing stones at Palestinian cars and blocking roads near settlements.

Oct. 22: During the negotiations at the Wye summit, Israeli FM Ariel Sharon proposes the creation of a rail link for Palestinians between the WBGS.

- Israeli MK Naomi Blumental (Likud) calls for revoking the Israeli citizenship of Arab-Israeli member of the Palestinian delegation to the Wye River summit, Ahmed Tibi.

- The New York-based Human Rights Watch warns that the Israeli-PA security accord discussed at the Wye River summit may result in further PA human rights violations; urges the US and Israel not to pressure the PA to expand its security crackdown without all sides making a clear commitment to safeguarding human rights.

Oct. 23: Pres. Arafat and PM Netanyahu sign the deal negotiated over nine days at the Wye River summit, which at times was attended by US Pres. Clinton and Jordan's ailing King Hussein. The two sides agreed as follows: Palestinians will step up efforts against alleged terrorists and confiscate weapons according to a security plan with a timetable and under CIA supervision, and remove anti-Israel phrases from their national covenant. In turn, the Israelis will re-deploy from a further 13% of the WB, release several hundred of the 3,000 Palestinian political prisoners, allow the Palestinian airport in Gaza to open, and provide the safe passage for Palestinians to move between the WBGS. Both sides will establish a joint Israeli-Palestinian committee to discuss a third troop withdrawal.

- The Palestinian Police seal off all the roads leading to the house of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin in Gaza, prevent ten Palestinian journalists working with foreign press agencies and an American Newsweek reporter from conducting interviews with Yassin and holds them at police headquarters for several hours.

Oct. 24: Members of the PA Military Intelligence go to the Fatah District Offices in Ramallah to arrest suspects named in the Israeli extradition list handed over to the PA at the Wye Plantation talks and to seize unlicensed weapons and inspect files. On facing resistance, the officers smash up the offices.

- The Palestinian Police arrests Sheikh Hamed Al-Bitawi at his home in Nablus after he gives a TV interview criticizing the new deal, and Islamic Jihad leader Sheikh Nafez Azzam in Gaza.

- Syria condemns the Middle East peace accord as 'scandalous' for surrendering all Palestinian rights while meeting all Israel's demands, and warns of renewed bloodshed. Egypt refers to the US-brokered deal as a step in the right direction assuming it is implemented honestly. Jordan's main opposition party, the Islamic Action Front rejects the deal, calling it an 'aggressive act' against the Palestinians.

- Israeli authorities announce a structural plan for Ma'ale Shamron resulting in the confiscation of thousands of dunums of the Azoun, Kufur Thulth, and Bidya villages.

Oct. 25: A demonstration protesting the raiding of the Fatah office in Ramallah the day before turns violent when Palestinian policemen start firing from rooftops, resulting in the death of Wassim At-Tarafi, 16. Fatah calls a three-day strike in Ramallah. The killing of the youth sparks a wave of demonstrations across the WB with protestors demanding the death penalty for those responsible.

Oct. 26: Unknown assailants kill A Jewish settler from Kiryat Arba near Hebron.

- The Union of Rabbis for Eretz Yisrael, headed by Rabbi Shapira, releases a statement rejecting the latest withdrawal agreement saying that it "is a degradation of our national pride, is against Halacha (Jewish Law), and is in violation of several Biblical prohibitions."

- The Israeli Knesset discuss a bill that calls for early elections and consider a no-confidence vote over PM Netanyahu's signing of the new peace deal.

- Representatives of Hamas, Islamic Jihad, the Islamic National Salvation Party, the PFLP, the DFLP, and the Arab Liberation Front meet in Gaza to express their dissatisfaction with the Wye Plantation Accord. They also stress the need to maintain Palestinian unity.

Oct. 27: The Palestinian military court in Jericho sentences four military intelligence officers to prison terms of between three and four years for raiding the Fatah office four days ago.

- Extremist Jewish settlers continue their efforts to build a new settlement near Yatta, Hebron district, and erect three housing caravans.

- A 70-year-old Palestinian from the village of Beit Furik is found murdered near the settlement of Itamar outside Nablus. The killing sparks clashes between Palestinian youth and Israeli troops in Nablus.

Oct. 28: Work on bypass Road 60 (leading to Efrat settlement) begins on land belonging to Al-Khader and Artas villages near Bethlehem.

Oct. 29: In a suicide attack organized by Islamic militants, a Palestinian motorist drives into an Israeli convoy of army jeeps and a school bus, killing himself and an Israeli and wounding three Israelis. Hamas claims responsibility. Palestinian security forces begin a massive wave of arrests of leaders, members



and supporters of Hamas and other Islamic groups. Sheikh Ahmed Yassin is put under house arrest and his telephone lines are cut.

Oct. 30: The PA intensifies its crackdown on Islamic militants (so far some 130 have been arrested) and imposes severe restrictions on the work of journalists, including a new measure that requires them to obtain a permit to enter Gaza from the General Committee of Information under the President's office.

- The Israeli Govt. decides to allocate some \$60m. for bypass roads and the security of settlers in the WB.
- The Palestinian Cabinet approves the Wye River Memorandum.

Oct. 31: Israeli authorities confiscate 4,367 dunums from the areas of Yabad, Um Rehan, Turrah Al-Gharbieh, and Nazlet Ash-Sheikh Zeid in the district of Jenin for settlement purposes.

- Egyptian FM Amr Musa expresses pessimism about the future of the peace process because of Israel's continued settlement policy in the Palestinian territories, which reduces the peace process and the latest Wye Plantation agreement to nothing.

Oct. 1998: UNSCO reports that there are 237 NGOs working in the GS, 28 of which are international. Gaza City hosts most NGO (171), followed by Khan Younis (30 NGOs).

- Ha'aretz reports that Israel, the second largest recipient of US foreign aid, has demanded that Washington pay over half a billion dollars to cover any costs incurred by a further Israeli withdrawal.
- Wafa reports that since the beginning of the year, 10 Palestinians have been killed in Hebron, while 250 have been injured, 221 imprisoned, and 48 homes have been demolished. In addition, 133 demolition orders and 65 orders to stop construction have been issued.
- Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahhar denies reports published in the Israeli media that Israeli intelligence people have uncovered a Hamas plot to assassinate Col. Jibril Rajoub, head of the PA Preventive Security.
- A girl from Yatta village, Hebron district, is struck and killed by a car driven by an Israeli settler on a bypass road.
- Eight mobile homes for a new settlement called Jed'onim are installed on land belonging to Beit Furik, 'Awarta, and Deir Al-Hatab villages.

Early Nov.: Results of a poll by the Palestinian Center for Opinion Polls in Beit Sahour show that 42% of Palestinians in Jerusalem and the WB support the Wye Plantation Agreement, 45% oppose it, and 12% did not respond. Some 51% said that they were not satisfied with the negotiators' performance, while 32.8% said that they were; 61% opposed amending the National Charter.

Nov. 1: Israel begins confiscating land to pave bypass roads and a northern entrance into the Efrat settlement. The land for the road runs from the Givat Hazayit hilltop, past Solomon's Pools and the Arab village of Artas to the main Jerusalem-Hebron highway.

- The Israeli Govt. confiscates 4,367 dunums from villages in the Jenin area to expand nearby settlements.
- Jordan agrees to allow the PA to use the Red Sea port of Aqaba for imports.

- The Jordan Govt. warns Hamas leaders in Jordan to abide by Jordanian Law and refrain from making any declarations that incite violence.

Nov. 2: A coalition of Damascus-based radical Palestinian factions condemns the new peace accord and pledges to continue armed struggle against Israel.

- Palestinians in Lebanon's Ain Al-Hilweh Refugee Camp burn Israeli and US flags to protest the new interim Palestinian-Israeli peace deal.

- Israel begins work to expand Kiryat Arba settlement near Hebron with a new neighborhood of 200 housing units.

- Palestinian UN observer Nasser Al-Qidweh criticizes a letter that Israeli FM Sharon sent to the UN Sec.-Gen. in which he presented a flawed interpretation of the Wye River Memorandum of Oct. 23, saying. In the letter, Sharon makes it clear that he considers Israel's undertakings as 'conditional' upon compliance by the Palestinian side.

- In order to regulate the work of foreign correspondents, the PA General Information Services issues 'Executive Regulation No. 9', based on a presidential verbal directive, which is seen as an attempt to impose more restrictions on the freedom of expression and increasing censorship on the press.

- Israel has set aside \$114 million from its 1999 budget for Jewish settlements in the WBGS and the Golan Heights, according to Peace Now. The budget passed its first reading in the Knesset with members of Netanyahu's hard-line coalition, who back the settlers, voting with the Prime Minister.

- The Speaker of the PNC Saleem Za'noun says the 120-member Palestinian Central Council will convene within four weeks to ratify or abolish the articles in the National Charter as stipulated in Wye Plantation Agreement.

- The PA accuses Iran of supporting and funding a wing inside Hamas in order to disturb the stability inside the Palestinian arena and to attempt to create a new Afghanistan.

- An official in the US State Dept. says the PA has honored its commitment and submitted a security work plan.

Nov. 3: Israeli FM Sharon suggests implementing the final settlement within 20 years.

- PM Netanyahu delays a cabinet meeting during which the interim peace agreement is due to be approved, demanding that the PA give Israel a timetable for arresting 30 Palestinians accused of killing Israelis.

Nov. 4: At a meeting of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), the Palestinian areas are assigned their own international telephone code: 970.

- Israel ratifies the opening of 11 new bypass roads in the WBGS.

- Israeli police arrest Rabbi Moshe Levinger on charges of inciting violence and strongly criticizing PM Netanyahu.

- Some 12,000 teachers throughout the WBGS participate in a warning strike called for by the General Union of Teachers, demanding an improvement in their living conditions and salaries.

Nov. 6: A suicide car bomb explodes near Mahane Yehuda market killing the two assailants and wounding 21. The bombing prompts the Israeli Cabinet to postpone a vote on whether to ratify the Wye Peace Accord. Islamic Jihad claims responsibility.

- Anaqa' Islamic Women's Society in Bethlehem is raided closed down as part of the PA campaign against Islamic welfare organizations.

- In the wake of the wave of arrests of around 200 persons from the Islamic opposition in Gaza, the PA arrests seven PFLP/DFLP supporters after a rally the two groups organized in Jabalia Refugee Camp.

Nov. 7: Kuwait's National Assembly denounces the Wye Plantation Agreement signed by Pres. Arafat and PM Netanyahu on Oct. 23, saying it failed to take necessary steps to protect the holy places in Jerusalem.

Nov. 8: While the Israeli army conducts intensive searches for militant Palestinians, PM Netanyahu demands that the PA outlaw the military wings of Islamic Jihad and Hamas.

- The EU has agreed to find a way to recognize exports from the settlements as Israeli, on condition that Israel will enable implementation of the free trade agreement between the EU and the Palestinians.

Nov. 9: Mohammed Rajah N'rat, 70, is released after 23 years in prison.

- The PA and the EU sign an agreement in Ramallah pledging ECU 20 million for supporting municipal infrastructure programs.

- Palestinian opposition factions meeting in Damascus vow to block any plans for an amendment of the PNC charter.

Nov. 10: A UN Gen. Assembly committee has adopted a resolution - with 134 votes in favor and two against (Israel and the US) - calling on Israel to renounce nuclear weapons and join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Nov. 11: The Israeli Cabinet narrowly ratifies the Wye Plantation Agreement after a two-week delay and some US pressure, setting the stage for a troop withdrawal from 13% of the WB by the end of January. The accord is approved by eight of the 17 ministers, with five abstaining and four voting against. However, the cabinet added so many conditions to its narrow approval that US officials said they fear fresh delays and disputes over implementing it are inevitable. Israeli PM Netanyahu says that after the three-month implementation period for the accord, "if there is the least deviation from the (Palestinians') obligations ... we reserve the right to annex security zones, areas near Jerusalem and Jewish settlements."

- Although the Wye Agreement was supposed to prohibit settlement activities and land confiscation, Israeli settlers have seized tens of acres of Palestinian land throughout the Palestinian territories to establish new makeshift settlements.

- In an address to the UN Gen. Assembly, Archbishop Renato Martino, the Vatican's permanent representative to the UN, states that the security of Israel depends in large part on recognition of the rights of Palestinians.

Nov. 13: Israel has authorized the paving of 13 roads to Jewish settlements in the West Bank, including one that will require the expropriation of huge tracts of land owned by Palestinians.

- In Gaza, Hamas hints that it might suspend attacks on Israelis to end a crackdown against the PNA.

Nov.: 14: The Iraqi government says it will allow UN weapons inspections to resume immediately, backing down in a standoff with the US.

Nov. 15: Near Bethlehem, some 100 Palestinians protesting against Israeli confiscation of West Bank lands to build roads for Jewish settlers clash with Israeli soldiers.

- At a meeting of the extreme right-wing Tsomet party, Israel's FM Ariel Sharon calls on Jewish settlers in the West Bank to "to move, run and grab as many hilltops as they can to enlarge the settlements because everything we take now will stay ours".

Nov. 16: PM Netanyahu announces that he is suspending an Israeli troop pullback in the West Bank – according to the Wye Accord scheduled for later this week - until the Palestinians drop plans to declare independence in May.

- PM Netanyahu tells his cabinet that under the Wye River accord "Israel will still maintain security control over 82 percent of the West Bank and Gaza, out of which 59-60 percent will be under civilian control".

- Hours after FM Sharon called on the settlers to 'grab' territory before it falls into Palestinian hands a group of 30 settlers seizes a hilltop near the settlement of Kedumim and sets up two mobile homes. Israeli police evacuates them two days later.

- The decision by four rabbis associated with the right (Rabbi Yaacov Yosef of the Shas party; Rabbi Dov Lior of Kiryat Arba; Rabbi Yitzchak Ginzburgi of Od Yosef Chai Yeshiva in Nablus, and Rabbi David Chanzin) forbids supporting the transfer of territory to the PA as "against laws of the Torah."

Nov. 17: Israeli authorities demarcates the land for a new bypass road that will cut through land of the Palestinian villages Burqin, Kufr Adik, and Deir Ballut, to link the settlements of Ma'ale Labona, Eli and Shilo. Most of the to-be-confiscated land are olive groves.

- The Knesset ratifies the Wye Agreement with 79 members in favor; 19 opposed and nine abstentions.

- UN weapons inspectors return to Iraq.

Nov. 18: Israeli and Palestinian officials resume long-suspended talks about a final peace treaty with Israeli FM Sharon and Palestinian negotiator Mahmoud Abbas meeting at Israel's Foreign Ministry to discuss an agenda for full-scale talks, expected to begin by the end of the month.

- The Knesset ratifies the Wye Memorandum by a wide margin comprised mostly of the Left. The vote, 75 to 19, with 9 abstentions, turned into a motion of confidence in the PM after Moledet leader Rehavam Ze'evi proposed a no-confidence motion, which would have put the vote off.

- UN General Assembly adopts a resolution supporting the PA's Bethlehem 2000 project to mark the new millennium with events focusing on the birthplace of Jesus.

- Israeli authorities start works on a bypass near Nablus linking the settlement of Kfar Tafouh with the settlement of Eli.

- Israeli PM Netanyahu admits that the two Israelis arrested in Cyprus a day earlier are Mossad agents but says that Israel was neither spying on Cyprus nor on Turkey's behalf.

Nov. 19: Israel public radio reports that Israeli authorities have launched legal procedures to seize an additional 10 percent of the West Bank in order to expand the size of Jewish settlements. PA officials

condemn the move as the "biggest robbery of the century", involving an estimated 125,000 acres of West Bank land.

- The PNA issues an Anti-Incitement Decree (Presidential Decree no3) in order to fulfil one of the requirements of the Wye agreement (paragraph II/3: Security/Preventing Incitement).
- Israeli authorities announce the confiscation of more West Bank land for the expansion of settlements
- In Washington, the House of Representatives opens hearings on impeachment of Pres. Bill Clinton.
- The Israeli cabinet approves the first stage of further redeployment; meanwhile the PA rejects Israel's list of 250 Palestinians to be freed in the first of three Israeli prisoner releases as 150 of them are common criminals and not political prisoners as agreed in the Wye Memorandum.
- Israel tells the Christian community that a second entrance in the wall of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in the Old City must be made to accommodate the many pilgrims expected to come to Jerusalem in 2000.

Nov. 20: Israel carries out the first installment of the obligations of the Wye River Memorandum, and hands over a slice of the northern West Bank, home to tens of thousands of Palestinians in 34 towns and villages. It further releases 250 prisoners, most of which, however, turn out as normal criminals rather than political detainees, which sparks protest throughout the territories.

- Israel and Britain sign a 10-year military cooperation pact, focussing on joint research in defense technology.
- An Italian court rejects Turkey's request for extradition of PKK leader Abdallah Ocalan. Turkey orders boycott of Italian goods in protest.

Nov. 22: Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli prisons threaten with hunger strikes in protest of the Israeli Govt.'s decision to include common criminals in the release of 750 Palestinian prisoners agreed upon in the Wye River Memorandum.

- Israeli West Bank settlers call for armored, bulletproof buses and the stockpiling of weapons, to ensure security following the withdrawal of Israeli troops as part of the Wye River Agreement.
- Israel has approved a plan to build a high-tech industrial center at the Jewish settlement of Kiryat Arba
- The Israeli army demolishes the house of Akram Maswadi in Taybeh near Hebron where the two Awadallah brothers were reportedly killed by Israeli commandos in September.
- Israeli settlers erect three mobile homes on another hilltop near Bethlehem
- In Washington, Israeli Finance Min Neeman meets with senior US officials to reassure that the \$1.2-billion aid that the US plans to give Israel will not be used directly for settlements.

Nov. 23: In Gaza, over 1,500 Palestinians demonstrate against the PA for failing to secure Israel's release of political prisoners.

- Jewish settlers seize West Bank hilltop near Elon Moreh.

- The IDF submits a defense plan costing \$40 million for the defense of 18 settlements defined as "settlements in great danger" as a consequence of their proximity to areas under Palestinian control. The plan includes construction of circuitous patrol roads and moats, creation of firing emplacements and guard towers known as 'hedgehogs', and placement of lighting, closed-circuit cameras, and electronic gates (and in some cases complete fences) around settlements.

Nov. 24: Palestinians inaugurate Gaza International Airport after Israel had held up its opening for two years over security concerns. However, under the Wye River Accord Israel will continue to control the airspace, pre-approve all flight schedules and passenger lists, and can shut down the airport at any time.

- The Mossad chief of operations resigns over the arrest of two agents in Cyprus on Nov. 17.

- The new Lebanese Pres. Emile Lahoud is sworn in.

- In London, US Asst. Sec. of State Martin Indyk meets with Iraqi opposition leaders; nominates former FM Adnan Al-Pachachi, to form a united Iraqi opposition movement.

Nov. 27: Dir. of the PM's Bureau Uri Elitzur calls on the YESHA settler council to take any steps that encourage settlement, including initiating new West Bank encampments, saying "you don't know how long this government will last and what will be the depth of the further withdrawal."

Nov. 27/28: Palestinians demonstrate throughout the WBGS demanding the release of relatives in Israeli jails. Subsequent clashes with Israeli troops leave at least 57 people injured.

Nov. 28: Clashes between Palestinians demonstrating for the release of political prisoners and Israeli forces leave dozens injured.

Nov. 29: On the eve of the donor conference in Washington, the London-Sunday Times reports that \$20 million in EU aid earmarked for housing projects for needy Palestinians in the WBGS was used to build luxury apartments for Arafat aides.

- Israel's FM Ariel Sharon says a final peace settlement in the Middle East would not mean the return of Palestinian refugees.

- In Gaza, PA police block Israeli trucks carrying building supplies to Netzarim settlement. Israeli forces 'reply' by blocking the VIP entrance to Gaza to PA officials, while settlers block roads to Palestinian traffic.

Nov. 30: The PLC holds a special session to study and discuss ways of confronting Israeli settlement activities. Speaker of the PLC, Ahmed Qrei'a, threatens to stop negotiations with Israel if it continues with its settlement plans in the WBGS, and calls along with other Palestinian officials on the Palestinian public to confront the activities of the Jewish settlers and the opening of bypass roads.

- Human Rights Watch calls upon donor governments meeting in Washington to incorporate human rights guarantees in all their agreements with Israel or the PA.

- Donor Countries Conference in Washington DC discusses the Palestinian budget for the next five years. Pres. Clinton pledges to increase US assistance to US\$900 million (from US\$329 million for 1994-1998).

Nov. 1998: The UN makes some changes regarding Palestine in the book of Permanent Missions to the UN. Palestine is moved and placed immediately after non-member states and before the inter-governmental organizations. The title of Palestine's category is changed from 'Organizations Having received a standing invitation to participate as observers...' to 'Entities Having Received a Standing Invitation to Participate as Observers in the Sessions and the Work of the General Assembly and

Maintaining Permanent Observer Missions at Headquarters'. Another change is the use of the title 'Ambassador' in conjunction with 'Permanent Observer of Palestine'.

- A study conducted by Terre Des Hommes shows that 33.5% of mothers in Gaza were married before age 18 and 2.2% of them are illiterate.

- Kamal Sharafi, Chairman of the PLC Monitoring Committee reveals that many of the 211 directors and director-generals in PA institutions are an unnecessary burden as their salaries amount to 65 percent of the budget.

Dec. 1: At a US-sponsored conference in Washington, international donors pledge more than \$3 billion in new financial aid to the PA.

- Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Yasser Arafat have launched a US-Palestinian commission to channel \$900 million in new US aid to the WBGS.

- Some 150 Palestinian children lit candles in Gaza to signal their protest at Israel's detention of their fathers.

- Israeli authorities confiscate 3,000 dunums from Jaba'a village in the Bethlehem district near the Green Line.

Dec. 2: Jewish settlers spray large areas of green fields near 'Ein El Bidda village in the Jordan Valley with toxic materials resulting in the poisoning of 25 sheep.

- Israeli bulldozers destroy seven dwellings in the Jordan Valley near Jiftlik, leaving dozens of Palestinians homeless because their homes were unlicensed.

Dec. 3: A day after Palestinian crowds ambushed an Israeli soldier near Bet El the Israeli Cabinet ministers decides unanimously to suspend its West Bank troop withdrawal.

- Israel has asked US Pres. Clinton to renounce plans to fly directly into Gaza's new airport when he visits the territory later this month, fearing this would boost Palestinian aspirations to sovereignty.

- In Nablus district, 45 sheep are killed as a result of spraying green fields with toxic materials in Tubas village.

Dec. 4: The UN has condemned Israel for serious violations of the international covenant on economic, social and cultural rights. In its first review of Israel's compliance, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed its concern at the discrimination faced by Palestinians.

- Jewish settlers uproot 900 olive trees in Deir Ballut near Nablus.

Dec. 5: 650 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli Prison begin a hunger strike to protest the refusal of Israel to release them under the Wye Agreement as well as the neglect of the issue of prisoners in all other Israeli-Palestinian Agreements.

- The first Palestinian flight returned to Gaza International Airport from Amman with 42 passengers on board.

Dec. 6: The Palestinian police begins to collect illegal weapons in accordance with the Weapons Control Law of May 1998.

Dec. 7: Na'amat, the women's branch of the Israeli Histadrut, announces that it favored the creation of an independent democratic Palestinian state alongside Israel.

- Some 200 Fatah followers from Balata RC storm the old Nablus prison now housing the special police force in protest against the police dispersal of a march earlier in the day in solidarity with Palestinian prisoners, which resulted in 11 injured youths.

- Israeli bulldozers level 4,000 dunums of Salfit's best agricultural land in order to make palce for the extension of Ariel settlement.

- In Ramallah, Jewish settlers from Halmesh settlement set fire to 140 Palestinian-owned olive trees.

Dec. 8: British junior FM Derek Fatchett urges Israel to carry out its commitments towards the Palestinians under the Wye River peace deal, stressing that new conditions are 'inappropriate.'

Dec. 9: Violence escalates on the West Bank as thousands of Palestinians clash with Israeli troops in protest of the delayed release of prisoners on the anniversary of the Intifada, leaving Jihad Ayad, 17, from Silwad killed and over 120 Palestinians injured.

- EU special envoy to the Middle East peace process, Miguel Angel Moratinos, warns of 'difficult days' if the Israelis and Palestinians fail to keep up the momentum of a recently signed peace deal.

Dec. 10: The Palestinian Central Council meets in Gaza to vote to approve a letter from Pres. Arafat to Pres. Clinton, explaining the ramifications of the 1996 PNC decision to amend the Palestinian National Charter.

- PM Netanyahu says he had ordered an Israeli crackdown on Palestinian unrest ahead of Pres. Clinton's visit.

- During a meeting with Israeli FM Ariel Sharon UN Secr.-Gen. Kofi Annan urges Israel to implement its part of the latest land-for-peace accord and to continue releasing Palestinian prisoners.

- According to a Dahaf Institute survey of 833 Israeli adults most Israelis are concerned about the human rights of Palestinians in the occupied territories, with 67 percent saying Palestinians should have the same rights as Israelis.

Dec. 11: Dozens of delegates headed to participate in the Palestinian Popular Conference to convene in Damascus tomorrow to reaffirm adherence to the PNC Charter and oppose the Wye River deal are prevented from getting through to Syria by Jordanian border authorities.

- Khamal Adwan, 21, and Mohammed Omar, 18, are killed and some 50 wounded in violent clashes after Israeli troops fire at a demonstration of several hundred Palestinians in Qalqilya.

- A report prepared by the Land Research Center of the Arab Studies Society of the Orient House states that the Israeli government started construction on 16 new settlement bypasses after the signing of the Wye agreement.

- Some 500 people, including members of Hamas, Islamic Jihad, DFLP and PFLP band together in a 'national conference' in Gaza to denounce the Wye River Agreement and changes to the Palestinian national charter.

Dec. 12: Pres. Yasser Arafat and Jordanian PM Fayez At-Tarawneh call for the hundreds of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails to stop the open-ended hunger strike which they began a week ago.



- As US Pres. Clinton arrives in the Middle East on a trip that will include a historic visit to the Palestinian areas.

- The EU condemns the upsurge in violence in the West Bank, saying it could doom to failure the Wye River interim peace accord.

- Hamas Izz Eddin Al-Qassam military wing issues a statement threatening to resume military operations if the PA does not lift the house arrest imposed on the movement's spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin.

Dec. 14: In the presence of US Pres. Clinton, who arrived at Gaza airport by helicopter, hundreds of Palestinian officials revoke parts of the Palestinian charter that called for the destruction of Israel.

- Israeli, Palestinian and US officials inaugurate a new industrial park along the Israeli border at Karni crossing, Gaza.

Dec. 15: A trilateral meeting at Erez checkpoint between Pres. Clinton, PM Netanyahu and Pres. Arafat, fails to provide results after Netanyahu refuses to fix a date for further redeployment.

- US Pres. Clinton visits Bethlehem, prays in the Church of Nativity, sing Christmas carols with Palestinian children and place ornaments on a Christmas tree.

- Palestinian prisoners decide to end their hunger strike to give Israel an opportunity to release them in accordance with the Wye River Accord.

Dec. 16: Ha'aretz reports that Israeli settlers have seized 10 hilltops alongside their settlements since the signing of the Wye Memorandum and put up caravans on the sites.

- Netanyahu opts for early elections rather than facing the disintegration of his coalition.

- The Knesset Finance Committee approves \$6.5 million for settlement housing and infrastructure construction.

Dec. 17: Throughout the Palestinian territories thousands of Palestinians protest US air strikes against Iraq, clashing with Israeli army who fired rubber bullets, killing 19-year-old Mohammad Daoud near Al-Bireh and injuring dozens more.

- The air strikes against Iraq divide the UN Security Council, leaving it unable to decide on any course of action to resolve the conflict.

Dec. 18: Palestinian police breaks up a protest march against the US-British bombardment of Iraq and in solidarity with the Iraqi people, and arrests four leading members of the (PFLP) and eight journalists, including the head of the Palestinian

- The PA closes three Ramallah-based radio and TV stations (Radio Peace and Love, Wattan TV and Nassar TV), presumably for their broadcasting news about the British and US air-raids on Iraq.

Dec. 19: The US suspends action against Iraq after a fourth day of air strikes, saying the "operation is now complete."

Dec. 20: The Israeli cabinet decides to suspend implementation of the Wye River Accord, provoking much criticism from the international community.

Dec. 21: The Israeli parliament votes overwhelmingly for early elections, signaling the demise of PM Netanyahu's government and effectively freezing for months the peace with the Palestinians. The new election date is set for 17 May 1999.

Dec. 23: The Austrian EU presidency says that the EU "deeply regrets" Israel's decision to suspend implementation of the Wye peace accord.

- The PA lifts the house arrest on Sheikh Ahmad Yassin (imposed on Oct. 29).

- A statement by Amnesty International accuses the Wye River memorandum of being "founded on the sacrifice of human rights in the name of security."

Dec. 24: Pres. Arafat's arrives in Bethlehem for Christmas celebrations.

Dec. 27: A member of the Palestinian security forces fires at his cousin, Khalid Abu Shuaib, 35, from Deir El-Balah during a family dispute.

- The PLC ratifies the Law of Charitable Association and Community Organizations.

Dec. 30: Early Israeli elections are announced to be held on 17 May 1999.

Dec. 31: Peace Now reveals that the Israeli Ministry of Housing has published tenders for construction of 1,051 new housing units in Upper Beitar (651) and Ofarim (400) settlements.