

## Chronology 2021

### January

**Jan. 4-5:** At a summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Saudi Arabia ends its two-and-a-half-year blockade of Qatar with the announcement of reopening the border and airspace to Qataris. The GCC members also reach an agreement on the full normalization of relations among themselves.

**Jan. 6:** Sudan officially agrees to normalization with Israel, with Justice Minister Nasredeen Abdulbari signing the Abraham Accords with US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin present.

**Jan. 7:** According to B'Tselem, Israeli authorities demolished 729 Palestinian structures, including 273 homes and 456 non-residential structures and infrastructure facilities, leaving 1,006 Palestinians homeless in 2020.

**Jan. 10:** With a shipment of olive oil and honey from the Tura Winery in the Rehelim settlement and Paradise Honey in the Hermesh settlement, the Samaria Regional Council begins exporting settler products to the UAE with labels stating that Israel is the country of origin.

**Jan. 11:** Egypt hosts the foreign ministers of Germany, France and Jordan to discuss ways to revive peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians. In a joint statement, they call for practical steps to launch "credible negotiations" on achieving a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital in territory Israel captured in the 1967.

- B'Tselem, for the first time, labels Israel an apartheid state, saying "Israel is not a democracy that has a temporary occupation attached to it; it is one regime from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, and we must look at the full picture and see it for what it is: apartheid."

**Jan. 15:** President Abbas issues a presidential decree that amends the Palestinian election law; accordingly, the parliamentary elections will be held first, on 22 May, followed by presidential elections on 31 July and National Council elections on 31 August. In addition, the quota for women's representation in the PLC will be increased from 20% to 26%.

**Jan. 17:** Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu approves some 780 new homes in West Bank settlements three days before the inauguration of US President-elect Joe Biden. In response, Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz approve a number of Palestinian construction projects in the West Bank, legalizing hundreds of Palestinian structures in Area C.

**Jan. 19:** Speaking to official Palestinian radio, PNC Secretary Mohammed Sbaih says Palestinian factions have agreed to reduce the number of the PNC members from 765 to only 350, with 35-150 from inside Palestine and 200 from the Diaspora.

- On the eve of US President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration, Israel's Construction and Housing Ministry issues tenders for 2,572 new settlements units.

**Jan. 20:** Israel's settler population growth has decreased to 2.6% in 2020 (down from 3.4% in 2019, but way higher than the national average of 1.7%), primarily due to a lack of readily available housing. According to the Yesha Council, there are currently 476,033 Israelis living in 150 "towns" across "Judea and Samaria."

**Jan. 24:** In a unanimous vote, Israel's cabinet approves the normalization agreement with Morocco.

**Jan. 25:** Israeli Minister of Intelligence Eli Cohen becomes the first Israeli government minister ever to visit Sudan, where he meets with the head of Sudan's governing council and Minister of Defense and Intelligence Chief, General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan in Khartoum.

- Some 1,034 Irish actors, writers, poets, painters, sculptors, film-makers, dancers, architects, composers, designers, musicians and others, have signed the 'Irish Artists' Pledge to Boycott Israel' in support of Palestine.

**Jan. 26:** Reversing former US President Trump's policy, US President Joe Biden's administration announces via acting Ambassador Richard Mills during a UN Security Council that it was restoring relations with the Palestinians and renewing aid to Palestinian refugees meeting, as it believes this "remains the best way to ensure Israel's future as a democratic and Jewish state while upholding the Palestinians' legitimate aspirations for a state of their own and to live with dignity and security."

**Jan. 27:** Palestine extended an official invitation to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to observe its general elections scheduled for May 22.

- Imprisoned Fatah leader Marwan Al-Barghouthi, serving a life-term sentence in Israel, intends to run for the Palestinian presidency in July.

## February

### Feb. 4:

**Feb. 5:** The Pre-Trial Chamber I of the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued a decision according to which the Court has jurisdiction over the situation in the Palestinian territories, which in turn opens the way to it investigating alleged war crimes committed in the 2014 Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Gaza.

**Feb. 8:** Leaders of a dozen of Palestinian factions, including Fatah and Hamas, meet in Cairo to hold reconciliation talks and discuss the upcoming elections.

**Feb. 9:** At the close of the Cairo talks, the participating factions release a statement announcing agreement on cooperation in and "mechanisms" for the forthcoming elections and to respect their outcome. The PFLP expresses reservations about the final statement while the Islamic Jihad movement announces that it will not participate in the elections as they are being held in accordance with the Oslo Accords.

**Feb. 10:** Palestinians open election registration offices in Gaza and the West Bank.

**Feb. 28:** Nearly 450 parliamentarians from 22 European countries and the EU parliament have signed a letter sent to foreign ministers in Europe, urging them to take advantage of the change in US administration to renew pressure on Israel to stop its "de facto annexation" of the West Bank.

## March

**March 1:** Israeli President Reuven Rivlin formally receives the first-ever ambassador to Israel from the UAE, envoy Mohammed Mahmoud Al-Khajah.

- Israel sentences senior PFLP member Khalida Jarrar to two years in prison, after having already jailed for over a year without charges.

**March 2:** One week after it was secretly approved by the PA government, the PA issues a decree that allows it to tighten its grip on Palestinian civil society organizations, effectively turning them into government-controlled departments. It obligates civil society organizations to present to the PA an annual action plan and estimated budget, in which no more than 25% can go for salaries and running costs.

**March 3:** The chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Fatou Bensouda, announces that she was opening an investigation into alleged war crimes committed by Israel and the Palestinians. The PA welcomes the announcement, Israel condemns it.

**March 8:** The Fatah Central Committee, headed by President Abbas, gives Nasser Al-Qudwa a 48-hour ultimatum to backtrack on his intention to form an independent list for the PLC elections.

**March 10:** With 167 votes of the 320-member Shura Council, Yahya Sinwar is re-elected as head of Hamas' political wing in Gaza, defeating rival Nizar Awadallah, who gets 147 votes.

**March 11:** Nasser Al-Qudwa, a nephew of Arafat, is sacked from Fatah after his surprise announcement to run a separate list - National Democratic Forum - in the May 22 PLC elections. President Mahmoud Abbas also cuts off funding to the Yasser Arafat Foundation, headed by Al-Qudwa.

**March 14:** Hamas reveals the identity of its 20-member political bureau following an internal vote ahead of the PLC elections, which includes for the first time ever two women, elected Jamila Al-Shanti and appointed Fatima Shurab.

**March 16:** Palestinian factions and leaders meet in Cairo for a second round of the national dialogue to prepare for the upcoming Palestinian elections. They sign a code of honor that guarantees the success and smooth conduct of the electoral process.

**March 24:** The UN Human Rights Council ends a two-day meeting in which it passed 4 resolutions criticizing Israel.  
- Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi announces his country's plan to invite Palestinians and Israelis for talks in Beijing and proposes a five-point initiative to achieve security and stability in the Middle East.

**March 29:** Hamas unveils its "Jerusalem is Our Promise" list of candidates for the PLC elections, ending speculation over a joint list with Fatah.

**March 30:** Bahrain appoints Khaled Yousef Al-Jalahma as its first-ever head of diplomatic mission in Israel.

## April

**April 7:** US Secretary of State Antony Blinken announces that the US plans to restart US economic, development, and humanitarian assistance for the Palestinian people, including \$75 million in economic and development aid, \$10 million for USAID peace building programs, and \$150 million in humanitarian assistance for UNRWA.

**April 8:** Israel says it would formally reject the International Criminal Court's decision to launch a probe into potential war crimes against the Palestinians, denying that it has committed such crimes and saying the court lacks the jurisdiction to investigate.

**April 11:** The executive board of JNF approves, in a narrow six-to-five vote, a plan that would allow it to purchase land throughout Area C of the West Bank, where all of the over 200 Jewish settlements and illegal outposts are located. The decision is pending the approval of the full board of directors, which is scheduled to meet on April 22.

**April 12:** Former Hamas chief Khaled Masha'al is elected to be head of Hamas's office in the Diaspora.

**April 13:** Members of the Board of Directors of Keren Kayemeth Lelsrael – Jewish National Fund demand an immediate halt to all plans by the organization to purchase land in the West Bank on the grounds that such acquisitions violate its constitution, which stipulates that the JNF is only authorized to purchase land in sovereign Israeli territory which does not apply to the West Bank.

**April 14:** British Prime Minister Boris Johnson says that the ICC has no jurisdiction for an investigation into Israel which "gives the impression of being a prejudicial attack" on the Jewish state.

**April 17:** Human Rights Watch issues a report stating that Israel is committing crimes against humanity of apartheid and persecution in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.

**April 19:** Progressive senators Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren use their addresses at the J Street lobby's national conference to call for regulating US aid to Israel, asserting that such assistance should not be allowed to bankroll Israeli policies in the West Bank that damage prospects for a two-state solution. The stances mark a shift by more left-wing Democrats away from talk of "conditioning" aid to Israel to "restricting" it.

**April 22:** Hamas official Khalil Al-Hayyeh warns that any change to the timetable for the PLC elections would deal a heavy blow to reconciliation and unity efforts.

- PA Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh rejects the European offer to hold Jerusalem elections online, telling the European Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee that "The issue is not numbers; it is political. It has to do with Israeli recognition that Palestinians in east Jerusalem have the right to vote and stand for elections."

**April 25:** Speaking during a Fatah Central Committee's meeting in Ramallah, President Abbas reiterates that the general elections could not be held if East Jerusalemite Palestinians can't participate.

**April 27:** HRW publishes a 213-page report alleging that Israel's treatment of Palestinians both within and outside of sovereign Israel meets the international legal definition of apartheid as set out under the Rome Statute.

**April 28:** The EU passes an unprecedented resolution to condemn UNRWA for printing, distributing and using textbooks inciting and endorsing violence against Israel and the Jewish people in PA schools, expressing concern "about the hate speech and violence taught in Palestinian school textbooks."

- Secretariat-General of the League of Arab States confirms the importance of the international community and the ICC to take punitive measures and practical steps to hold accountable Israel for the crimes it committed against the Palestinians and to provide international protection for the Palestinian people.

- Hamas rejects the idea of postponing the May 22 PLC elections, which President Abbas is expected to announce soon.

**April 29:** President Abbas announces the indefinite postponement of the planned elections.

**April 30:** EU, UN call on Abbas to set new date for Palestinian elections

## May

**May 4:** Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu fails to meet a midnight deadline to put together a new governing coalition, raising the possibility that his Likud party could be pushed into the opposition for the first time in 12 years.

**May 5:** The US expresses its deep concern over Israeli advancement of a legalization bill that would legalize 70 outposts in the West Bank.

**May 6:** Over 180 Israeli scientists and intellectuals, including 10 Israel Prize recipients, 35 professors, senior reserve army officers, and authors, sign a letter calling on the ICC chief prosecutor Fatou Bensouda in The Hague not to accept Israel's conclusions arising from its investigation into alleged war crimes but to get assistance of Israeli human

rights organizations to gather evidence, stating that Israel "has no intention to seriously investigate complaints of war crimes."

**May 9:** After rockets are fired from Gaza, Israel shuts the border and strikes Hamas military posts in Gaza.

**May 10:** Hamas calls on Palestinians to take to the streets to protest the "massacre" and "war crimes" happening at Al-Aqsa Mosque.

- Izzedin Al-Qassam Brigades spokesman Abu Obeida publishes a statement giving Israel an ultimatum to withdraw its forces from Al-Aqsa Mosque and Sheikh Jarrah by 18:00 h local time and release those who were arrested in clashes or the 'Joint Operations Room' of Palestinian factions will respond. After Israel did not fulfill the demand, rockets began to fly, setting of a 11-day war.

**May 23:** Following the severe country-wide violence in the past two weeks, the Israeli police launches 'Operation Law and Order' to restore "deterrence and increased governance" and maintain "the personal security of Israeli citizens." According to the police over 1,550 arrests were made and 150 indictments against offenders filed.

**May 26:** Ireland has become the first EU country to condemn Israeli settlements as 'de facto annexation', unanimously passing a motion in this regard in the Irish parliament.

**May 27:** The UNCHR votes with 24:9 to establish an international permanent commission of inquiry to investigate alleged Israeli war crimes.

**May 30:** The UAE embassy in Tel Aviv officially opens with Mohammed Al-Khaja as ambassador.

## June

**June 1:** Isaac Herzog is elected new President of Israel, replacing Reuven Rivlin, whose seven-year term ends.

**June 3:** As Israel's Operation Law and Order ends after prosecuting for two weeks those who were involved last month in violence, mainly in mixed cities, a total of 2,142 suspects have been arrested, 91% of them Arab.

- OCHA reports that there has been a 90% increase in the number of Palestinian structures demolished in 2021 compared with the equivalent period in 2020.

**June 4:** Hamas Shura Council Abroad has elected the rest of its members: the politburo will be headed by Khaled Mashaal, with Musa Abu Marzouq as deputy.

**June 9:** Two members of the PA military intelligence and one other Palestinian are shot and killed by Israeli undercover forces during an arrest raid in Jenin.

**June 13:** Replacing Binyamin Netanyahu after 12 years, Naftali Bennett (Yamina) and Yair Lapid (Yesh Atid) form a new Israeli government with the former becoming Prime Minister and the latter Foreign Minister before rotating in 2023.

- In Cairo, Hamas-Fatah conciliation talks reach an impasse after 4 days due to demands by Hamas that are akin to a takeover to the PLO and PA and would push the PA into international isolation.

**June 17:** In an open letter, over 680 global leaders and influencers - including Christian Aid, former Irish President Mary Robinson, expatriate Israeli academic Ilan Pappé, US academic Noam Chomsky, Israel's former Attorney General Michael Ben-Yair, former Knesset speaker Avraham Burg, and Palestinian NGOs, urge US President Biden to honor his commitments toward protecting the human rights of the Palestinians.

**June 18:** The PA cancel a deal to receive over 1 million COVID-19 vaccines from Israel after an initial Israeli shipment shows an expiration date sooner than had been agreed by end of June.

- The EU releases its report on PA textbook, which was completed in February, claiming instances of antisemitism and incitement to violence. Pre-released excerpts sparked condemnations across the European Parliament and there are calls for review of conditions of educational aid to PA.

**June 20:** In response to a rise in antisemitic attacks, Germany bans Hamas flags.

**June 21:** In his first public remarks about the new government in Israel, President Mahmoud Abbas says he is willing to work with "whoever the Israeli people choose" but adding that cooperation relies on Israel "stopping its aggression and so on" before progress can be made on final status negotiations.

**June 24:** Prominent Palestinian political activist Nizar Banat dies after PA security forces severely beat him during arrest. His death triggers heavy protests against the PA, which many see as cracking down on political opponents. The PA promises an investigation.

- Oman's foreign minister Badr Al-Busaidi tells his Israeli counterpart Yair Lapid over the phone that he hopes Israel's new government will take concrete steps towards creating an independent Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital.

**June 28:** PA officials have given the US administration a list of about 30 proposals on restoring the government powers, improving the economy and addressing the quality of life that they wish to pursue to advance the diplomatic process with Israel during Joe Biden's term as president.

**June 29:** Bahrain formalizes the appointment of Khaled Yousef Al-Jalahmah as the Gulf state's first-ever ambassador to Israel.

## July

**July 1:** UNHRC chief Michelle Bachelet urges the PA to ensure the safety of protesters after security forces and supporters of President Mahmoud Abbas attacked demonstrators over the weekend.

- Dozens of Palestinians are injured during protest outside the illegal Evyatar outpost.

**July 2:** Some 50 settlers families leave the illegal outpost of Evyatar following an agreement reached with the Israeli government that the army would re-establish a presence at the site, and an accelerated land survey will be conducted to determine land status, with areas found not to be privately owned by Palestinians will be declared "state land" and made available for building a yeshiva school and staff residence, while structures found to be outside "state land" will be demolished.

**July 4:** Hamas elects Saleh Arouri as new commander for the West Bank.

**July 7:** Ahmed Jibril, founder of the PFLP-General Command, dies at the age of 83 in Damascus.

- Isaac Herzog is sworn in as 11<sup>th</sup> President of Israel, replacing Reuven Rivlin.

- According to the UN Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment, the repair to the damage caused by the 11-day fighting in Gaza in May 2021 will need an initial \$485 million for two years. In total, physical damage amounted to \$380 million and economic losses to an additional \$190 million.

- Israeli forces arrest Shatha Odeh, Director of the Health Work Committees, at her home in Ramallah after she had defied an Israeli military order shutting down her office for six months over her activism.

**July 8:** Israel's Supreme Court rules that the Nation-State Law is constitutional, denying petitions arguing the law is discriminatory by defining Israel the as state of the Jewish people.

- Some 600 scholars, artists and intellectuals from over 45 countries have signed a petition, organized by the Association of Academics for the Respect of International Law in Palestine (AURDIP), condemning Israeli practices and calling for an immediate end to the apartheid regime in occupied Palestine and a "democratic constitution" that ensures equal rights and an end to discrimination based on race, ethnic origin, or religion.

**July 9:** UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, Michael Lynk, calls on the international community to designate the creation of Israeli settlements as a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, because they violate the absolute prohibition against the transfer by an occupying power of parts of its civilian population into an occupied territory.

**July 12:** Israel bars jailed senior PFLP member Khalida Jarrar from attending funeral of her daughter Suha, 31, a rights activist who had suddenly died of a heart attack in Ramallah.

**July 14:** The UAE open their embassy in Tel Aviv, with President Isaac Herzog and the UAE's ambassador to Israel, Mohammed Al-Khaja, attending the ceremony.

**July 19:** The US-based ice cream company Ben & Jerry's announces that it will halt its sales in Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories. The move is credited to pressure by the BDS movement.

**July 21:** According to a new Breaking the Silence report, which includes testimonies from former Israeli soldiers, Israeli forces are complicit in a "drastic surge" in violence committed by settlers against Palestinians in the West Bank.

**July 22:** UNHRC head Nazhat Shameem Khan announces the appointment of Navi Pillay, Miloon Kothari and Chris Sidoti as the three members of the independent international commission to investigate Israeli violations of Palestinian rights, the formation of which had been decided on May 27.

**July 25:** Israel airlines launch nonstop commercial flights to Marrakesh, Morocco, from Tel Aviv following the upgrading of diplomatic relations last year.

**July 27:** According to the Official Gazette, the PA has per government decision abolished Article 22 of Cabinet Resolution No. 4 of 2020 (Code of Conduct and Ethics for Public Service) that allows employees to express their opinions freely.

**July 28:** The Knesset votes down with 64:50 the first reading of a bill to apply Israeli sovereignty to West Bank settlements, which had been introduced by Likud MKs Miki Zohar and Shlomo Karhi.

## **August**

**Aug. 2:** Hamas re-elects Ismail Haniyeh as its politburo chief for another four years.

**Aug. 4:** Addressing the Aspen Security Forum, Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Faisal Bin Farhan has rejected the possibility of normalizing ties with Israel, saying that the goal of Palestinian statehood must be addressed first, adding that "Without solving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in a sustainable long-term way, we're not going to have real sustainable security in the region."

**Aug. 5:** The agenda of the Board of Directors of Jewish National Fund (KKL-JNF) meeting includes approving allocating NIS 100 million over the next five years in the JNF's land registration project of lands and deals which had not been completed or registered in the deed office, including some 530 files in the West Bank and 2050 in East Jerusalem..

**Aug. 12:** Prime Minister Naftali Bennett approves 2,200 new settler homes (down from an original 3,200 in order not to upset the US administration), along with 1,000 units for Palestinians in Area C, mostly in the Jenin and Bethlehem areas. The PA denounces the move as an attempt to whitewash Israeli colonial settlement construction and mislead the international community and public opinion.

**Aug. 16:** Four Palestinian youths are killed by Israeli army gunfire during a raid into Jenin.

**Aug. 19:** Ahead of Bennett-Biden meeting, the UN and Qatar reach and sign an agreement for the resumption of Qatari cash payments to needy families in Gaza, which will be transferred by the UN directly to their bank accounts, with Israel overseeing the recipients.

**Aug. 29:** Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz meets with President Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah to discuss security, political, civilian and economic issues, marking the first official meeting by an Israeli cabinet minister with the PA Chairman since 2010. Several Palestinian factions condemn the meeting as "stab in the back of the Palestinians" as it is not connected to a political process but only looks for ways to "manage" the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

**Aug. 30:** Fatah Central Committee member and head of the General Authority of Civil Affairs, Hussein Al-Sheikh, announces an agreement with Israel on allowing family reunification for a first batch of 5,000 foreign national spouses of Palestinians so as to legalize them.

## **September**

**Sept. 5:** Six Palestinian prisoners from the Jenin area – Fatah's Zakaria Zubeidi and Islamic Jihad members Mohammed Aradeh, Mahmoud Aradeh, Yaqoub Qadri, Ihram Kamamji and Munadil Nafiyat - escape from the high-security Gilboa Prison via a tunnel under the prison's walls, triggering a massive manhunt by Israeli forces.

- PA security services spokesperson Talal Dweikat announces that the Military Prosecution has completed investigations into the case of the late citizen Nizar Banat who was beaten to death during arrest and decided to indict all 14 members of the force that participated.

**Sept. 6:** The Palestinian government decides to hold the first phase of municipal elections – for 388 local councils in Area C - on 11 December, with elections in Area A and B yet to be announced and pending on the health situation.

**Sept. 10:** Escaped Islamic Jihad prisoners Mahmoud Aradeh and Yaqoub Qadri are apprehended after civilians report two suspicious figures in Nazareth to police.

**Sept. 11:** Escaped prisoners Zakaria Zubeidi of Fatah and Mohammed Aradeh of Islamic Jihad are captured in the northern village of Umm Al-Ghanam.

**Sept. 13:** Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett meets with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sissi in Sharm Esh-Sheikh, marking the first official visit by an Israeli premier since 2010.

**Sept. 19:** All six Palestinians who escaped Israeli high-security Gilboa prison through a tunnel dug under a sink are back in custody, after the army recaptures the last two - Ayham Kamamji and Munadel Nafayat in Jenin.

**Sept. 20:** Nasser Al-Qudwa says that the Oslo Accords no longer exist and all that is in the occupied Palestinian territories "is a group of city links."

**Sept. 21:** A new PCPSR poll finds that nearly 80% of Palestinians want President Mahmoud Abbas to resign.

- Addressing the UN General Assembly, US President Joe Biden says that “a two-state solution is the best way” to ensure Israel’s future as a Jewish democratic state, living in peace alongside a viable, sovereign and democratic Palestinian state.”

**Sept. 24:** Addressing the UN General Assembly, President Abbas gives Israel a one-year ultimatum withdraw from Palestinian territory or otherwise to withdraw recognition of 1967 border and press charges in the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

**Sept. 26:** Israel releases senior PFLP member and member of the PLC Khalida Jarrar after 2 years in prison.

**Sept. 27:** A Palestinian military court begins the trial of 14 security officers charged with beating to death prominent critic of President Mahmoud Abbas, Nizar Banat on 24 June.

**Sept. 30:** A new report by the Don't Buy Into Occupation coalition reveals that there are over 670 European financial institutions with ties to companies that are involved in Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, a civil society report said Wednesday. DBIO (a group of 25 Palestinian, regional and European organizations) calls on the companies, which include BNP Paribas and Deutsche Bank, "to end all investments and financial flows" into the settlements, which are considered illegal under international law.

**Sept. 1:**

## October

**Oct. 3:** Egypt’s national carrier EgyptAir makes its first official direct flight to Israel since the two countries signed an historic 1979 peace treaty, landing at Tel Aviv’s Ben Gurion Airport.

- Registration opens for the first stage of Palestinian local elections on December 11.

**Oct. 19:** Israel announces it would grant legal residency to 4,000 Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza, who have lived under severe restrictions for years without official IDs.

**Oct. 21:** Settlers have begun construction work on a new settlement of 31 housing units in the heart of the Old City of Hebron, in the old bus station complex.

**Oct. 22:** Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz signs an order declaring six Palestinian NGOs – Al-Haq, Addameer, Defense for Children international (DCI), Union of Agricultural Work Committees, Union of Palestinian Women’s Committees, and the Bisan Research and Advocacy Center - terrorist organizations because they are allegedly linked to the PFLP. The decision sparks furious Palestinian and international backlash.

**Oct. 24:** For the first time since US President Joe Biden took office, Israel invites bids for the construction of 1,355 housing units in Jewish settlements.

**Oct. 27:** Israel announces approval of construction of 3,144 new settler homes in the West Bank, sparking international criticism, with 13 EU states urging Israel to reverse its decision.

**Oct. 26:** Israel’s Higher Planning Council approves a total of 2,860 new units in 30 settlements.

**Oct. 1:**

**Oct. 1:**

**Oct. 1:**

## November

**Nov. 1:** Israel’s Higher Planning Council approves 6 plans with 1303 units for Palestinians in Area C.

**Nov. 2:** Israeli authorities advance an estimated 1,303 Palestinian housing units in the West Bank, a week after drawing international condemnation for announcing over 3,000 new housing units in settlements.

**Nov. 17:** Over 100 celebrities – including actors Richard Gere, Claire Foy, Tilda Swinton and Susan Sarandon; director Ken Loach, musician Jarvis Cocker, the band Massive Attack, and authors Philip Pullman, Colm Tobin and Irvine Welsh - have signed an open letter calling Israel’s designation of Palestinian organizations as “terrorist” as “an unprecedented and blanket attack on Palestinian human rights defenders”.

**Nov. 18:** Some 157 UN member states vote in favor of a resolution affirming Palestinian sovereignty over their natural resources. Seven countries – Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau and the United States – voted against the motion, with 14 abstentions.

**Nov. 1:**

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## **December**

**Dec. 14:** US and Palestinian officials relaunch economic dialogue after a 5-year, Trump-era hiatus.

**Dec. 15:** During its 16<sup>th</sup> meeting in Paris, UNESCO approves the Palestinian request to include the "The Art of Embroidery in Palestine: Practices, Skills, Knowledge, and Rituals" on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

**Dec. 19:** The Israeli military has revised its open-fire policies for the West Bank, officially allowing troops to shoot at Palestinians who had thrown rocks or firebombs at cars, even if the assailants no longer present an immediate threat.

**Dec. 23:** Former Israeli high court judge Menachem Mazuz says he considers house demolitions to be illegal, immoral and ineffective; and that his frustration over the issue was a major reason for his leaving the court in 2020.

**Dec. 28:** President Mahmoud Abbas meets with Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz at the latter's home in Rosh Haayin along with the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories Maj. Gen. Ghassan Aliyan, PA Civilian Affairs Minister Hussein Sheikh and Commander of the PA General Intelligence Maj. Gen. Majed Faraj to discuss security and civilian issues in the wake of the escalating security situation in the West Bank.

**Dec. 29:** The PCBS reports that there are about 14 million Palestinians by the end of 2021: 5.3 million in the Palestinian territory, 1.7 million in the 1948 territories, and nearly 7 million in the Diaspora (of which 6.3 million in Arab countries).