

PALESTINE CHRONOLOGY 2007

JANUARY

Jan. 6: In Gaza, kidnappings and shootings between Hamas and Fateh leave three dead and many wounded.

Jan. 8: In Gaza, 10,000s of Fateh supporters attend a rally, marking the 42nd anniversary of the movement.

Jan. 13-16: US Sec. of State Condoleezza Rice begins a three-day tour of Israel, Ramallah, Egypt, and Jordan to explore the possibilities of reviving the road map and implementation and Palestinian-Israeli negotiations.

Jan. 19: Israel transfers a portion of withheld tax revenues (\$100 million) to cover humanitarian needs to the office of the Pres. Abbas, as part of a plan to bolster him and keep money out of the hands of the Hamas govt..

Jan. 21: In Damascus, Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al and Pres. Abbas fail to settle differences on unity govt..

Jan. 26: One of the bloodiest days of intra-Palestinian fighting in Gaza and the West Bank leaves 14 Palestinians killed and 45 wounded. Fateh and Hamas suspend national unity talks until fighting ceases, each blaming the other for starting the violence.

Jan. 29: Islamic Jihad and Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades claim joint responsibility for a suicide attack in Eilat that kills three.

Jan. 30: A ceasefire between Hamas and Fateh, brokered by Egypt, comes into effect.

FEBRUARY

Feb. 2: Quartet FMs meet to discuss a permanent solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They agree on the need to speed up the creation of a Palestinian state, but differ on the need to have talks with Syria and stress the primacy of the Road Map as major conditions precedent to resuming financial aid for the Palestinians.

- Hamas-Fateh fighting continues, with Fateh-dominated Presidential Guard attempting to overrun the Hamas-controlled PA Interior Ministry and Hamas overrunning compounds used by Abbas's security forces in the West Bank.

Feb. 6: For the first time since in a month, Israel allows departures through Rafah crossing causing a near riot among the 10,000-12,000 Palestinians gathered in the exit areas.

- Israeli renovations near the Mughrabi Gate of Al-Aqsa Mosque spark widespread riots in the Arab world.

Feb. 6-8: On the 3rd day of Saudi-sponsored talks in Mecca, Pres. Abbas and Hamas head Khaled Masha'al sign the Palestinian Unity Agreement/Mecca Agreement, charging PM Haniyeh to form a national unity govt., calling for an immediate intra-Palestinian ceasefire and agreeing on a power-share between Hamas and Fateh. US and Israel insist that the new govt. must recognize right of Israel to exist, which the agreement does not mention, disarm terrorist groups and agree to end violence.

Feb. 13: The PA dismisses 470 members of the security forces for "mutinous behavior". Tens of fired security officers stage sit-in outside the PA offices in Gaza to demand that the PA rescinds their dismissals.

Feb. 15: Pres. Abbas formally asks PM Haniyeh to form a unity cabinet and to respect peace accords signed with Israel.

Feb. 19: Trilateral Israeli-Palestinian-US summit with Sec. of State Rice, PM Olmert and Pres. Abbas ends with no visible result and Rice calling for maintaining contacts between Israel and the PA.

MARCH

March 7: The World Bank reports that the PA faces a fiscal crisis that could threaten its existence.

March 11: PM Olmert and Pres. Abbas meet in Jerusalem to discuss the Palestinian national unity govt., the issue of kidnapped Israeli corporal Gilad Shalit, and conditions laid down by the Quartet.

March 12: BBC Correspondent Alan Johnston is kidnapped in the Gaza Strip.

March 15: Pres. Abbas and PM Haniyeh agree on a National Unity Government.

March 17: The Palestinian unity govt. takes office, after the cabinet list is overwhelmingly approved by the PLC.

March 24-27: Sec. Rice tours the Middle East calling on Arab countries to get involved in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Meeting with Pres. Abbas and later Israeli PM Olmert, she stresses the need for an Arab peace plan with Israel and discusses the possibility of holding a regional summit bringing together Israel, the Palestinians and the "moderate" Arab countries.

March 28- 29: At the 19th Arab League summit in Riyadh, the 'Riyadh Declaration' is adopted, stressing their resolution to renew the 2003 Arab peace initiative and their determination to create to this end a "special ministerial committee", and calling for full Israeli withdrawal from all the Arab territories occupied since June 1967, for Israel's acceptance of an independent Palestinian state, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and a just solution to the Palestinian refugee problem, in return for Arab states' establishing normal relations with Israel.

March 31-April 2: German Chancellor Angela Merkel, then also Pres. of the EU, tours the region, calling for the resumption of the peace process and for a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

APRIL

April 1-3: FM Ziad Abu Amr visits France in a first visit of a Palestinian diplomacy chief to a EU capital since Hamas came to power in March 2006. He calls for the resumption of European financial aid and for the union govt. to be treated without differentiating between Hamas and non-Hamas ministers.

April 8: Hamas provides Israel with a list of Palestinian prisoners it wants released in return for freeing Gilad Shalit. The list includes Marwan Barghouti.

April 12: After meeting with PA Finance Min. Salam Fayyad in Oslo, **Norwegian FM** Jonas Gahr Stoere says Norway is ready to recognize the Palestinians' new govt. and to resume direct aid to that administration as soon as conditions permit.

April 15: **Pres.** Abbas and PM Olmert meet for talks in Jerusalem, in a first of a series of fortnightly talks they agreed on during US Sec. Rice's visit to the region.

April 22: MK Azmi Bishara (Balad) resigns from the Knesset after investigations and accusations of treason and espionage being leveled against him by the Israeli Security Services.

April 24: Hamas declares the 5-month ceasefire with Israel to be over.

April 23-24: Pres. Abbas tours Europe (Greece, Italy, Vatican City, Switzerland) discussing the peace process, the situation in the OPT, and the Palestinian national unity govt..

MAY

May 4: US security plan "Acceleration Benchmarks for Agreement on Movement and Access" sets a schedule for removing roadblocks and opening passages in the territories and upgrading the

Palestinian forces loyal to Pres. Abbas. Israel is also urged to approve requests for weapons, munitions and equipment required by forces loyal to Abbas. Hamas denounces the Document, while Abbas urges support for it, finding that it includes important steps.

May 10: The UN Sec.-Gen. appoints experts to begin the work of establishing the Register of Damage caused by the Construction of the Wall in the OPT.

May 12: Interior Min. Hani Al-Qawasmeh resigns after five days of intense fighting between Hamas and Fateh forces in Gaza.

May 15: In Gaza, 16 people are killed in Hamas-Fateh clashes.

- The UN Sec.-Gen. appoints Michael C. Williams of the UK as his Special Coordinator for the MEPP and Personal Representative to the PLO and the PA.

May 19: After days of heavy clashes between the two factions, Hamas and Fateh sign a new ceasefire.

May 27: Hamas says it will not halt rocket fire against Israel, after Israel vows to press ahead with its attacks on Gaza.

JUNE

June 1: A video is released showing first images since the abduction of BBC Correspondent Alan Johnston.

June 11: Amid more deadly clashes, PA HQ in Gaza come under fire.

June 14: Hamas seizes Fatah HQ and Fateh-affiliated Preventive Security HQ in Gaza.

- Shimon Peres is elected Israeli Pres..

June 15: Hamas takes control of the Gaza Strip. Pres. Abbas declares a state of emergency and dismisses the Hamas-Fateh coalition govt. headed by PM Haniyeh. Salam Fayyad is appointed new PM and forms a new emergency govt. with 11 ministers two days later.

June 25: At the Israeli-Arab summit in Sharm el-Sheikh PM Olmert, Pres. Abbas, King Abdullah II and Hosni Mubarak discuss ways to revive the MEPP and confirm their support to Pres. Abbas in the face of Hamas' power grab. Israel promises to release 250 prisoners and transfer withheld taxes to the PA.

June 26: Pres. Abbas signs a decree banning all armed militias.

June 27: Former British PM Tony Blair is appointed as the Quartet's special envoy to the Middle East.

- Israeli troops kill at least 12 Palestinians, incl. a boy, in military raids in the Gaza Strip.

JULY

July 4: BBC Correspondent Alan Johnston is freed and handed to Hamas officials in Gaza.

July 16: Pres. Bush proposes a new international peace conference to restart Middle East peace talks as well as supposed economic support for the govt. of Pres. Abbas. Hamas rejects the US proposal, the Quartet states its support three days later.

July 22: Israel frees 255 Palestinian prisoners as a sign that it is willing to help the moderate Fateh-led govt.

July 25: Egyptian and Jordanian FMs open first talks in Israel over the Arab land-for-peace plan.

July 31: US Sec. of State Rice signs a joint statement with Egypt, Jordan and six Gulf States, endorsing the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative as one of the foundations for Middle East peace.

AUGUST

Aug. 2: US Sec. of State Rice signs an aid deal granting the PA \$80 million to reform its security services and strengthen Fateh.

Aug. 15: Japan gives the PA \$20 million in aid and humanitarian assistance in order to boost economic relations between Israel and the Palestinian Territories and revive the peace process.

Aug. 16: The US signs a military aid agreement with Israel, providing Israel with \$30 billion over the next 10 years, of which Israel is allowed to spend 26% on military equipment from local companies, while the rest has to be spent on US arms.

Aug. 28: PM Olmert and Pres. Abbas meet in Jerusalem to discuss issues such as how to achieve the two-States solution.

Aug. 30: At Bet El near Ramallah, PA security organizations participate, for the first time since 1994, in a senior-level meeting with Israeli counterparts.

SEPTEMBER

Sept. 2: Pres. Abbas unveils a series of changes to the electoral law: Palestinians will now vote solely for party lists, while district voting would be eliminated. All presidential and parliamentary candidates are furthermore required to recognize the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Sept. 4: Israeli Supreme Court orders its govt. to redraw the route of the West Bank barrier near Bil'in village, a key focus of Palestinian and international nonviolent anti-barrier protests. To date no implementation of the ruling has taken place.

Sept. 4-5: Quartet Representative Tony Blair visits Israel and the OPT.

Sept. 6: Syria's air defence opens fire on Israeli warplanes and forces them out of the country after the planes entered Syrian airspace through the northern border and flew toward the eastern region.

Sept. 10: Pres. Abbas and PM Olmert agree to set up negotiating teams ahead of the international conference.

Sept. 19: Israel's Security Cabinet votes to declare the Gaza Strip an "enemy entity" and says it will cut back power and fuel supplies to the region in an effort to stop Palestinian militants from firing rockets at Israel.

Sept. 21: Israel's opposition leader Binyamin Netanyahu is the first to confirm that an Israeli air strike on an unknown target in Syria took place earlier this month.

OCTOBER

Oct. 1: Israel releases 87 Palestinian prisoners, mostly members of Fateh.

Oct. 3: PM Olmert and Pres. Abbas meet in Jerusalem, together with their negotiating teams, to start work on a joint document ahead of the US-proposed international peace conference.

Oct. 10: Pres. Abbas, setting out his demands before the US-sponsored peace conference in Annapolis, insists that Israel must give up territory under its control for a Palestinian state.

- The ILA issues permits for the construction of 6,100 new apartments in the Modi'in Ilit settlement.

Oct. 15: In Ramallah, visiting US Sec. of State Rice says it is "time for the establishment of a Palestinian State".

Oct. 26: The Israeli DM authorizes the reduction of power supplies to the Gaza Strip.

- Pres. Abbas meets PM Olmert to seek common ground ahead of US-proposed Middle East peace conference.

NOVEMBER

Nov. 2: Pres. Abbas meets Hamas officials for the first time since June, but refuses to begin a dialogue with Hamas unless it gives up power in the Gaza Strip.

Nov. 10/11: Thousands commemorate the late Pres. Arafat's death as the new mausoleum complex in Ramallah is opened.

Nov. 12: Hamas police kill at least six at a Fateh rally in Gaza City to mark three years since the death of Yasser Arafat. Dozens of Fateh activists are arrested and questions following the rally.

Nov. 14: Israeli Pres. Peres and PA Pres. Abbas address Turkey's parliament in Ankara, strongly advocating a peaceful resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Peres' address is the first by an Israeli Pres. before the legislature of a Muslim country.

Nov. 27: US-sponsored peace conference takes place in Annapolis, US.