

PALESTINE CHRONOLOGY

2018

January

Jan. 14: During a PLO Central Council meeting convened in Ramallah against the backdrop of US President Trump's December 6 declaration on Jerusalem, President Abbas says Israel killed the Oslo Accords and calls Trump's Mideast peace plan "a slap in the face", adding that "we will slap back," and "We will not be an authority without authority, and an occupation without a cost." He also says that "We will defend our achievements in the international community and locally, and we will continue to fight against terror, and struggle non-violently. We will join all political processes, led by the international community, toward the end of the occupation."

- Hamas official Mohammed Hamdan is wounded in a car bomb explosion next to his home in Sidon; Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah accuses Israel of carrying out the attack.

Jan. 16: The US announces that it will withhold \$65 million – over half of the planned \$125 million budget for 2018 - from its payment to UNRWA, saying that the way it operates and is funded needs to be reexamined.

Jan. 24: President Trump threatens to cut aid to Palestinians if they don't accept his terms, including Jerusalem's recognition as Israel's capital.

Jan. 26: The Danish parliament adopts a resolution calling on the government to exclude "occupied territories" (West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights) from the bilateral agreements with Israel and endorsing UNSC Resolution 2334, which states that Jewish settlements are illegal.

Jan. 31: The UN Human Rights Council has identified 206 companies doing business linked to unlawful Israeli settlements in the West Bank and it urges them to avoid any complicity in "pervasive" violations against Palestinians, including contributing to Israel's confiscation of land, transfer of its population, and exploitation of Palestine's natural resources. Some 143 of the companies are in Israel or the settlements, 22 in the US, and the rest in 19 other countries.

February

Feb. 4: The Israeli government unanimously approves plans to legalize the illegal Israeli settlement outpost Havat Gilad near Nablus in response to the killing of one of its settlers a month earlier.

Feb. 20: In an address to the UNSC, President Abbas calls to convene an international conference by mid-2018 based on international law and the relevant UN resolutions that would result in the recognition of a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders.

March

March 13: The convoy of Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah and head of the General Intelligence Service Majid Faraj is struck by an explosion, seen as an assassination attempt, just after it entered Gaza via Erez checkpoint, lightly injuring several people.

March 15: Israeli Transportation Minister Yisrael Katz approves a plan for the first-ever light rail connecting Israeli settlements to Israel proper. The new rail line, which will bisect the northern West Bank, is anticipated to cost \$1.16 billion and to take until 2025 to complete.

March 23: The US passes the Taylor Force Act under which Washington will cut aid payments to the PA as long as it continues to transfer allocations to the families of martyrs and prisoners in Israeli jails.

March 30: On the anniversary of Land Day at least 17 Palestinians are killed and over 1,400 injured in Gaza as Israel suppresses the Great Return March, which thousands of people attend and which marks the first of a planned 45-day protest along the border fence.

April

April 1: The US blocks a draft resolution at the UNSC calling for an investigation into the killing of Palestinian protestors in Gaza.

April 8: The US blocks a UNSC statement calling on Israel to respect international law and the right of Palestinian civilians to peacefully protest.

April 27: Israeli army forces kill three Palestinians and injure over 600 on the fifth "Great March of the Return" protest day on the Gaza border.

May

May 4: On the 6th Friday of protests in Gaza, over 40 Palestinians are injured by Israeli forces.

May 14: Israeli forces shoot and kill at least 68 Palestinians and wound over 1,200 as tens of thousands protest along the frontier against the opening of the US embassy in Jerusalem.

May 15: Nakba day: Commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Nakba.

May 18: UNHRC calls for an international investigation into Israel's deadly use of force against protesters along the Gaza border as well as into the state of human rights in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza. With a vote of 29-2 with 14 abstentions it backs a resolution that also condemned "the disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force by the Israeli occupying forces against Palestinian civilians." UN human rights chief Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein tells the Council that "Nobody has been made safer by the horrific events of the past week" and that Gazans "are, in essence, caged in a toxic slum from birth to death; deprived of dignity; dehumanized by the Israeli authorities to such a point it appears officials do not even consider that these men and women have a right, as well as every reason, to protest."

May 22: PA Foreign Minister Riad Al-Malki officially submits a request to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate Israel's illegal settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territory, which he called a "grave crime."

May 24: Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman announces plans for some 2,500 new Israeli settler homes in the West Bank, including the immediate construction of 1,400 units, to be distributed as follows: 400 units in Ariel, 460 in Ma'ale Adumim, 15 in Kiryat Arba, 130 in Avnei Hefetz, 180 in Talmon, 160 in Kfar Etzion, and 60 in Halamish/Neve Tzuf.

- The Knesset discusses a new law that would criminalize the photographing or documenting of Israeli soldiers while on duty.

- The State of Palestine's envoy to the UN in Geneva, Ibrahim Khraishi, has officially submitted a letter from President Abbas seeking membership of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

- Israel's Supreme Court approved the demolition and forcible transfer of the entire community of Al-Khan Al-Ahmar Abu Al-Helu, a home to 35 Palestinian families with a total population of 180 people, over half of whom children and the majority are UNRWA registered refugees. The move is directly linked to the advancement of the E1 colonial project.

May 27: Israel's Defense Ministry announces that work began on an underwater sea barrier at the northern Gaza border to prevent Palestinian infiltrators from entering Israel by sea.

May 31: Israel has approved 2,070 new settlement units in the West Bank - at least 696 for construction, while 1,262 were advanced through an earlier planning stage known as a "deposit".

- Israel's High Court of Justice rules unanimously in favor of expelling the population of the Khan Al-Ahmar Bedouin village and razing their homes.

June

June 1: The UNSC votes with 10:1 (=US) and 4 abstentions on a Kuwait-drafted resolution that condemned Israel's use of force against Palestinian civilians at the Gaza border protests.

- The Trump administration is considering changing the status of the US Consulate General in Jerusalem, which handles Palestinian affairs, turning it into part of its new embassy in the city. If implemented, it will be seen as American recognition of Israeli control over east Jerusalem and the West Bank.

June 4: A bill submitted by three Joint List MKs calling for Israel to be defined as a state of all its citizens is disqualified by the Knesset presidium before it even reached the Knesset floor for deliberation.

June 9: A motion promoted by the Podemos party in the City Council of Valencia, Spain's third-largest city, is passed declaring a boycott of Israel and Valencia a "Israeli apartheid-free zone."

June 10: Over 1,500 people demonstrate in Ramallah calling for President Mahmoud Abbas to lift the punitive sanctions he had imposed on Gaza in an attempt to weaken Hamas.

June 19: The Trump Administration announces that it has withdrawn from the UN Human Rights Council, believing it to have an anti-Israel bias and a tolerance of abusive regimes.

June 26: The US suspend aid funds to the PA under the "Taylor Force Law," which was passed in March, and aims to prevent the PA from paying monthly stipends to families of killed, wounded and imprisoned Palestinians.

July

July 2: Australia decides to redirect some \$7.4 million from direct PA budget support to the UN Country Based Humanitarian Pooled Fund in the oPt.

- The Knesset passes a law requiring the withholding from clearance revenues the amount that the PA annually spends on payments to prisoners and detainees convicted, or accused, of security offenses against Israelis, to their families, as well as to families of Palestinians killed or injured in attacks or alleged attacks against Israelis.

July 12: The Irish Senate approves a bill to boycott products from West Bank settlements.

July 16: The Knesset approves with 43:24 a second and third reading of the "Breaking the Silence" law, which outlaws educational organizations that oppose Israeli soldiers and the Israeli state education from entering schools and meeting with students.

July 17: The Knesset passes the first reading of a bill dubbed the "Facebook Bill" which demands deleting "inciting" content from social media. If passed into law, it will authorize the court to issue orders to delete internet content which was classified as harmful to "human safety, public, economic, state or vital infrastructure safety," including blocking content of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and private blogs.

July 18-19: The Knesset approves the controversial and long-debated Jewish nation-state law by 62-55, with two abstentions. The law, which becomes one of Israel's Basic Laws, enshrines Israel as "the national home of the Jewish people."

August

August 5: Exiled Hamas leaders, including Hussam Badran and Khalil Al-Hayya, arrived to Gaza City for high-level discussions in the context of indirect negotiations between Hamas and Israel over Gaza.

August 11: Tens of thousands of people protest against Israel's Nation-State Law in Tel Aviv and its provisions, among them defining Israel as "the national home of the Jewish people" with Hebrew as its official language and Jerusalem as its capital.

August 23: The US announces that it would redirect funding slated for USAID programs and a few days later that some \$230 million of its Economic Support Fund for the oPt for fiscal year 2017 will now not be disbursed.

August 31: The Trump Administration announces officially that starting 2019, it will cut the entire US aid budget to UNRWA.

September

Sept. 10: The Trump administration announces that it was shutting down the PLO diplomatic delegation in Washington, saying in a State Department statement that "the PLO has not taken steps to advance the start of direct and meaningful negotiations with Israel." PLO representative in the US, Dr. Husam Zomlot, says that "Palestinian rights are not up for sale or negotiation. We will not be subject to blackmail and threats by the American administration."

Sept. 28: Palestinian leaders file a complaint with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) over the US decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel last December.

October

Oct. 10: UNESCO adopts by consensus two resolutions on Palestine, sponsored by Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar and Sudan. One confirms Jerusalem as "the sacred city of the three monotheistic religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam," and reaffirms that "all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel (...) which have altered or purport to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem (...) are null and void and must be rescinded forthwith," while the other reaffirms that the Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron as well as the Bilal Ibn Rabah Mosque (also known as Rachel's Tomb) in Bethlehem are an integral part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, deploring the ongoing Israeli excavations and works at those sites.

Oct. 17: The International Criminal Court prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, publishes a stark warning to Israeli authorities about Khan al-Ahmar, writing that "extensive destruction of property without military necessity and population transfers in an occupied territory constitute war crimes under the Rome Statute."

- The UN General Assembly votes with 146:3 (US, Israel, Australia) and 15 abstentions in favor of a resolution granting the State of Palestine additional powers to be able to assume the chairmanship of the Group of 77 and China.

Oct. 21: The Israeli Security Cabinet approves the postponement of the evacuation of the Bedouin village of Khan Al-Ahmar for several weeks.

Oct. 29: After meeting in Ramallah, the Palestinian Central Council (PCC) decides to end all commitments in agreements the PLO has signed with Israel, suspend recognition of Israel until it recognizes the State of Palestine, end security coordination and end the Paris Economic Protocols.

November

Nov. 2: Israel begins construction on the illegal settlement of Migron located between the Ofra and Beit El settlements near Ramallah.

Nov. 4: Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu gives the green light to a legislation that would make it easier for Israeli courts to issue death sentences against Palestinians accused of carrying out "terrorist" acts.

Nov. 17: The UN General Assembly votes in favor of eight resolutions on Palestine - four related to UNRWA and four to Israeli practices in the occupied territories.

Nov. 19: Airbnb decides to remove about 200 listings in Israeli West Bank settlements, which are considered illegal under international law.

December

Dec. 13: The Israeli army imposes a complete closure on Ramallah, following a shooting attack carried out by a Palestinian near the Ofra settlement, killing two Israeli soldiers and critically injuring another two.

Dec. 19: The Knesset votes with 69:38 on the first reading of a bill, presented by the Jewish Home party, that would allow expelling families of Palestinians involved in attacks against Israelis.