

PALESTINE CHRONOLOGY

2017

January

Jan. 14: President Abbas inaugurates the Palestinian embassy at the Vatican and meets with Pope Francis to discuss the situation in Palestine and relations with the Vatican.

Jan. 15: In Paris, over 40 foreign ministers and senior diplomats from 75 countries gather for an international peace conference aimed at renewing efforts to resolve the decades-old Palestinian-Israeli conflict through the two-state solution. At the close, a statement is issued with watered down condemnation of settlements. Neither Israelis nor Palestinians participated. While Fatah had endorsed the summit, other Palestinian factions were opposed saying no breakthrough is expected from such an event.

- In Moscow, Hamas and Fatah begin holding a new round of reconciliation talks.

Jan. 17: The Knesset passes a controversial bill that would allow verdicts from military court proceedings in the occupied West Bank to be submitted as evidence in Israeli civilian courts, a move which critics claim is another step aiming to illegally annex the West Bank by applying Israeli domestic laws in the territory.

- In Moscow, Hamas and Fatah agree to establish a Palestinian unity government. As part of the deal Hamas and the Islamic Jihad will join the PLO and form a new Palestinian National Council, which will then select the PLO Executive Committee.

Jan. 31: The widely condemned outpost "Legalization bill" passes its final committee vote, according to Israeli media, only necessitating one more round of votes for it to be adopted into Israeli legislation. The bill aims to retroactively legalize dozens of Israeli outposts built on private Palestinian land and confiscate thousands of dunums of Palestinian land.

February

Feb. 6: With a vote of 60:52 the Knesset passes into law the contested outpost "Regularization Bill", dubbed also "Land-grab Bill", granting official Israeli governmental retroactive recognition to over a dozen illegal settlement outposts in the West Bank established on private Palestinian lands. PLO leader Saeb Erekat decries the move as killing the two-state solution, while the EU delays a summit with Israel in protest.

Feb. 10: After learning of a plan by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to appoint former Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad to lead the UN political mission in Libya, US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley says that the US was "disappointed" by the selection and that the move was proof of the UN's bias against US ally Israel, indicating that the US could use its veto against Fayyad's nomination. The PLO in turn calls the US's move "a case of blatant discrimination on the basis of national identity."

Feb. 12: Israel's Ministerial Committee for Legislation approves an amendment to the contested "Muezzin Bill," which seeks to impose limits on the Muslim call to prayer in Israel and in occupied East Jerusalem, paving the way for the bill to be voted on in the Knesset.

Feb. 15: During his first press conference with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu in Washington, DC, and in a radical departure from the US' long-held position in favor of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, President Donald Trump says he could "live with either" a one- or two-state solution, adding that "if Bibi, if Israel and the Palestinians are happy, I'm happy with the one they like the best."

Feb. 19: King Abdullah II of Jordan says that any move to relaunch serious negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians should be in accordance with the two-state solution, which he called the only way to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Feb. 22: The PA launches a new National Policy Agenda (NPA) for the next five years, seeking to achieve Palestinian national unity, economic independence, social justice and rule of law, the end of the occupation and realization of Palestinian independence. It is received with mixed reactions over the feasibility of its ambitious goals.

Feb. 27: The French Newspaper *Le Journal Du Dimanche* publishes a letter signed by over 150 French parliamentarians calling on President Hollande to recognize a Palestinian state before his term comes to an end in May, based on January's international summit in Paris and to reaffirm commitment to the two-state solution.

March

March 1: The Knesset passes an amendment into law forbidding entry into Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory to foreigners calling for a boycott of Israel. Amendment No. 27 to the Entry Into Israel Law (No. 5712-1952) stipulates that the entry ban will apply to any non-citizen “who knowingly issues a public call for boycotting Israel that, given the content of the call and the circumstances in which it was issued, has a reasonable possibility of leading to the imposition of a boycott – if the issuer was aware of this possibility.”

March 13: Israeli NGO Yesh Din reveals that Israeli authorities have served indictments in only 8.2% of cases of Israeli settlers committing anti-Palestinian crimes in the West Bank in the past three years.

March 15: A United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) report concludes that Israel was guilty “beyond a reasonable doubt” of imposing apartheid policies against Palestinians, urging the international community to abide by its “legal obligation” to punish such discriminatory measures. Israeli officials compare the report to Nazi propaganda and call for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to publicly reject it.

March 16: Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman declares the Palestinian National Fund (PNF) - a PLO institution that provides monthly financial aid to thousands of families of Palestinians who were either killed or wounded in the conflict with Israel - as a “terrorist organization.” President Abbas and other Palestinian officials denounce the decision as unjustified and as part of Israel’s attempts to replace the two-state solution with an apartheid system.

March 22: At a conference at the Netanya Academic College Ex-Mossad Chief Tamir Pardo says that the occupation and the conflict with the Palestinians are the only existential threat facing Israel, adding that Israel is sticking its head in the sand regarding the conflict ignoring that “It won’t resolve itself”.

March 23: Israeli Police refuse to grant permit for annual Nakba March of Return, which for 18 years has taken place in parallel with Israel’s Independence Day celebrations, on the grounds of not having enough resources to secure the event, while Palestinians say the move is politically motivated.

March 24: The UN Human Rights Council in Geneva adopts four resolutions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including a motion condemning settlement construction in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, calling on states and firms to avoid both direct and indirect ties with the settlements. The other resolutions concern ensuring accountability for human rights violations perpetrated by Israel in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, the Palestinians right to self-determination, and the status of Palestinian human rights in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem.

March 25: The UN Commission on the Status of Women approves with a vote of 30:1 (=Israel) and 12 abstentions a draft resolution regarding the status of Palestinian women, including strengthening economic and social policies to enhance their situation, while expressing “deep concern” over the “ongoing illegal Israeli occupation and all of its manifestations,” specifically Israel’s illegal settlement construction, continued home demolitions, and imprisonment.

- Mazen Fuqahaa, a member of the member of the Izz Eddin Al-Qassam Brigades who was released from serving a life sentence in Israeli custody in the 2011 Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal and exiled to the Gaza, is shot dead in front of his house by unknown assailants widely believed to be collaborators with Israeli intelligence.

March 30: Palestinians across Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory hold protests and marches to mark the 41st anniversary of Land Day. Israeli forces suppress multiple protests in the West Bank, leaving dozens of peaceful Palestinian protesters injured.

April

April 16: The Gaza Power Plant is forced to shut down due to a lack of fuel.

April 17: Under the banner of “Freedom and Dignity” over 1,500 Palestinians in Israeli prisons, led by Fatah’s Marwan Barghouti, launch an open-ended hunger strike, calling for basic needs and rights of prisoners.

April 19: The city of Barcelona adopts an official declaration supporting Palestinian human rights and ending the city’s complicity with the Israeli occupation, and recognizing the right to organize with the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement.

April 23: Hundreds of Palestinians clang pots and pans while marching through the streets of Ramallah in to solidarity with over 1,500 hunger striking prisoners.

April 27: A general strike in solidarity with hunger-striking Palestinian prisoners is observed across the West Bank and East Jerusalem, leaving shops, institutions, banks, and schools closed.

April 28: Thousands of Palestinians held protests in at least a dozen locations around the West Bank and East Jerusalem as part of a “day of rage” called for in solidarity with hunger-striking Palestinian prisoners. Tens of Palestinians are injured and others detained.

May

May 1: Hamas announces its new charter, presenting an acceptance of a Palestinian state along the 1967 "Green Line" border, while rejecting any legitimacy of “the Zionist entity,” in reference to the state of Israel.

May 2: Thousands of Palestinians participate in the “March of Return” in Israel, which set off from the destroyed Palestinian village of Al-Kabri to the western Galilee in commemoration of the Palestinian Nakba.

May 3: During a press conference after meeting President Trump in Washington President Abbas says he trusts Trump’s “courageous stewardship” and “wisdom” to achieve a peace deal between Israelis and Palestinians, while Trump hails the security coordination between Abbas’ PA and Israel.

May 6: The Hamas Shura Council elects Ismail Haniya as head of the movement's political bureau, succeeding Khaled Mashaal as overall head of Hamas.

May 7: The Israeli Ministerial Committee for Legislation votes to present the controversial "nation-state bill" that states "the right to realize self-determination in the State of Israel is unique to the Jewish people" and that Hebrew would be the lone national language, thus downgrading Arabic to "a special status in the state".

May 9: The Dublin and Sligo city councils vote to fly the Palestinian flag above their respective city halls, during May in a show of solidarity to mark the 69th anniversary of the Nakba

May 11: At a conference in Manama, Bahrain, FIFA cancels a final vote on a Palestinian resolution to prohibit FIFA games from being played on Israeli settlements constructed on occupied Palestinian territory in violation of international law. The move is condemned by the HRW and other organization who had backed the resolution.

May 13: Municipal council elections take place in 145 municipalities across the West Bank with a voter turnout of 53.4%. Electoral lists (mainly Fatah) in another 181 municipalities won automatically after running unopposed, and 65 localities had no nominated electoral lists at all. Lists not officially tied to a political party won 65% and official political party lists 35% of seats. Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and PFLP boycotted the vote.

May 15: Palestinians commemorate the 69th anniversary of the Nakba with marches and demonstrations across the West Bank, Gaza and inside Israel. Especially in Bethlehem and Ramallah Israeli forces crack down on Palestinians injuring several of them with gunshots and tear gas.

May 21: A Peace Now report reveals, *inter alia*, a 34% increase in illegal Israeli settlement construction over 2016, with Israeli settlers breaking ground on 1,814 new housing units, compared to 1,350 new construction starts in 2015. Almost 70% (1,263 units) of the new housing were in areas that are highly problematic in terms of a two-state solution.

May 23: President Abbas meets President Trump during the latter’s brief visit to Bethlehem. During a joint press conference, Trump says “I truly believe if Israel and the Palestinians can make peace, it will begin a process for peace in the Middle East,” and that “Abbas assures me he is ready to work toward that goal in good faith, and (Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu has promised the same. I look forward to working with these leaders toward a lasting peace.”

May 25: In Gaza, Hamas executes the suspected assassin of Mazen Fuqahaa and two suspected accomplices in a move widely condemned by the international community.

May 27: Tens of thousands of Israelis gather in Tel Aviv's Rabin Square to voice opposition to Israel's 50-year-long occupation of the Palestinian territory. A message from President Abbas is read during the rally, saying: "There isn't a voice stronger than the voice of just and inclusive peace, just like there isn't a voice stronger than the right of people for self-determination and freedom from the burden of occupation."

- After 40 days, and coinciding with the first day of Ramadan, Palestinians suspend their mass hunger strike in Israeli prisons after reaching an agreement with the Israel Prison Service.

June

June 1: Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the UAE, Egypt, Yemen and Libya sever their ties with Qatar in a dispute over Doha's alleged support for Islamist groups fomenting terrorism, in particular the Muslim Brotherhood, which they regard as a political enemy.

June 5: Marking 50 years of *Naksa*, as Palestinians refer to the Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip in 1967, Palestinian officials and rights groups denounce half a century of “oppression

and subjugation” of the Palestinian people amid international inaction, call for an end to the occupation and its “ugly” impact on generations of Palestinians, as well as for renewed efforts to achieve a two-state solution.

June 6: A number of far-right Israeli MKs call for the permanent annexation of the occupied Palestinian territory during a Knesset plenary session to mark the 50-year anniversary of the Six-Day War.

June 11: Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu calls for dismantling UNRWA and integrating it into the UNHCR, arguing that “UNRWA, to a large degree, by its very existence, perpetuates - and does not solve - the Palestinian refugee problem.”

June 14: The Knesset plenum approves with 48:13 a preliminary reading of a bill which would see the Israeli government cease to transfer an estimated NIS 1 billion per year to the PA over the controversial compensation program that provides financial allowances to Palestinians imprisoned by Israel and their families.

June 2: Prime Minister Netanyahu announces that ground had been broken for the construction of the first Israeli West Bank settlement in 25 years, called Amichai. Located near Shiloh and Eli settlements north of Ramallah it is to accommodate settlers of the illegal Amona outpost, which was evacuated in February in line with court orders because it was built on private Palestinian land.

June 23: During a speech at the annual Herzliya conference, Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman rejects the possibility of Palestinian refugees ever being able to return to their lands un accordance with UN Resolution 194, saying, “We will not agree to the return of a single refugee to within the ‘67 borders.”

July

July 7: Despite intensive diplomatic efforts waged by Israel and the US in recent weeks, UNESCO votes with 12:3 with six abstentions to recognize Hebron's Old City and the Tomb of the Patriarchs as Palestinian heritage site and as world heritage site in danger. Israeli leaders respond with scorn, accusing UNESCO of anti-Semitism, with Prime Minister Netanyahu calling the decision "surreal."

July 21: A Palestinian, Omar Al-Abed, 19, from Kobar near Ramallah, is shot and injured after breaking into a home in the Halamish settlement and stabbing four Israelis, killing three and injuring one.

August

Aug. 1:

Aug. 1:

Aug. 1:

Aug. 1:

Aug. 1:

September

Sept. 17: After two days of Hamas-Fatah talks in Cairo, Hamas announces its readiness to dissolve its administration in Gaza, hold general elections and immediately begin direct reconciliation talks with Fatah.

Sept. 20: Four Palestinian human rights organizations - Al-Haq, Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR), and the Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights - submit a 700-page document to the International Criminal Court (ICC), providing evidence of Israeli war crimes and crimes against humanity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

- President Abbas addresses the 72nd UN General Assembly meeting in New York, slamming Israel's half-century occupation and the international community's complicity in Israel's “settler colonial process,” and saying that only an independent Palestinian state or “equal rights for all inhabitants of the land of historic Palestine” - referring to a one-state solution – would bring the occupation to an end.

Sept. 27: Meeting in Beijing for its 86th annual session, Interpol's General Assembly votes with 75:24 and 34 abstaining to admit "the State of Palestine" as a new member country, despite adamant opposition by Israel.

October

Oct. 3: The Palestinian cabinet, headed by Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah, holds its weekly meeting in the Gaza Strip for the first time in three years.

Oct. 12: After two days of negotiations under auspices of Egyptian officials, Fatah and Hamas sign a reconciliation agreement in Cairo, focusing on fully implementing the PA's authority over Gaza, and joint management of the enclave's border crossings.

- The US and Israel announce their respective withdrawals from the UNESCO World Heritage Committee for "anti-Israel bias."

Oct. 17: Israel's security cabinet decides that Israel will not engage in political negotiations with a Palestinian government supported by Hamas.

Oct. 18: In an unprecedented move, eight EU countries – Belgium, France, Spain, Sweden, Luxembourg, Italy, Ireland and Denmark - sign an official protest letter to Israel, demanding over €30,000 (\$35,400) in compensation for confiscating and demolishing structures and infrastructure which they had built in Area C of the West Bank.

Oct. 31: At least seven Palestinians are killed, and 12 others wounded when Israeli forces blow up a tunnel in southern Gaza, allegedly built by Hamas to reach Israel.

November

Nov. 1: As part of their unity deal, Hamas hands over Gaza border crossings to the PA, which assumes control; for the first time in over 10 years, the Rafah crossing on the border with Egypt will return to full operations.

Nov. 1:

December

Dec. 6: As President Trump recognizes Jerusalem as capital of Israel and announces his intention to move the US embassy there from Tel Aviv, US Congress approves cutting aid to the PA.

Dec. 14: Palestine becomes a member of the bureau of the assembly of States Members of the ICC.

Dec. 18: The US vetoes a draft resolution on Jerusalem to the UNSC.

Dec. 19: With a majority vote the UN General Assembly endorses a resolution on the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

Dec. 20: Israeli forces have detained 490 Palestinians, including 148 minors and 11 women, since the beginning of the protests that followed President Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

Dec. 21: Prior to a UN General Assembly vote against the US's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, President Trump and Nikki Haley, the US ambassador to the UN, threaten that Washington would remember which countries "disrespected" America by voting against it and take action accordingly, including cutting of US aid.

Dec. 22: The African National Congress (ANC), the ruling party in South Africa, decides to downsize its embassy in Israel to a liaison office, in response to the US government's controversial policy changes in the country.

- In an emergency session the UN General Assembly votes with 128:9 and 35 abstaining (21 absent) in favor of Resolution ES-10/L.22 declaring the status of Jerusalem as Israel's capital as "null and void", thus rejecting US President Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel as well as his plans to move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The countries voting against the resolution were Guatemala, Honduras, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Togo and United States.

Dec. 27: US Ambassador to Israel David Friedman requests the US State Department to stop using the word "occupied".

Dec. 31: Likud's Central Committee unanimously passes a resolution to extend Israeli sovereignty to all West Bank settlements, to end the difference between the legal situations for Jewish settlers living on occupied territory and Israelis who live inside Israel proper, thus effectively annexing them to Israel.