

CHRONOLOGY

16 NOVEMBER 2005–15 FEBRUARY 2006

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This section is part eighty-four of a chronology begun in JPS 13, no. 3 (Spring 1984). Chronology dates reflect Eastern Standard Time (EST). For a more comprehensive overview of events related to the al-Aqsa intifada and of regional and international developments related to the peace process, see the Quarterly Update on Conflict and Diplomacy in this issue.

16 NOVEMBER

The **Israel Defense Forces (IDF)** shuts the Hebron–Bethlehem road to Palestinian traffic; demolishes 3 **Palestinian homes** northwest of Jerusalem for construction of the **separation wall**; conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Ramallah, in Tulkarm, nr. Bethlehem, Hebron. **10 Jewish settler girls** fr. Binyamina settlement cut open sacks of olives harvested by Palestinians in nearby Sinjil; more than 10 IDF soldiers observe but do not intervene until after the damage is done, detaining 6 of the girls. (YA 11/16; PCHR 11/17, 11/24)

17 NOVEMBER

IDF plainclothesmen fatally shoot wanted **al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades (AMB) mbrs. Ahmad Abahra and Muhammad Zayid** as their car crosses a checkpoint in Jenin in an apparent assassination. The **IDF** also erects a new observation tower nr. Kiryat Arba settlement in Hebron; sends troops into Silwad nr. Ramallah, fires on stone-throwing youths who confront the troops, wounding and arresting 2; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Hebron, nr. Tulkarm; begins work on a new segment of the **separation wall** northwest of Ramallah that is expected to seize at least 5,330 dunams (d.; 4 d. = 1 acre) of land in Abud village; bulldozes 26 d. of land outside Bethlehem for construction of a permanent IDF post. **Palestinians in Bethlehem** report that for the past few days, the **IDF** has imposed new arrangements at the entrances to the city, requiring tourists entering and exiting to leave their busses, enter a transit hall for passport and baggage checks and customs processing that last up to 2 hrs. The **Israel Lands Admin.** issues tenders for construction of 13 new housing units in Ma'ale Adumim settlement nr. Jerusalem; the **Israeli Housing Min.** issues tenders for construction of infrastructure projects in Adam, Ariel, Ma'ale Adumim settlements. **Jewish settlers** beat a Palestinian harvesting his olive trees in Awarta. In Gaza, **100s of AMB mbrs.** fire rifles in the air, defying the ban on carrying weapons in public, calling for reform within Fatah, demanding jobs and an international investigation into the 11/04 death of Yasir Arafat based on rumors (thus far unsubstantiated) that he was poisoned. In Nablus, **AMB mbrs.** protesting a recent PA crackdown on illegal weapons and criminal activity fire on **PA police**, leaving 1 PA policeman wounded. (Arab Hotel Association press release, PCHR, REU, XIN, YA 11/17; HA, NYT, WP, WT 11/18; PCHR 11/24)

Likud PM Ariel Sharon agrees to the demand of his coalition partner, newly elected **Labor leader Amir Peretz**, to hold early elections in 2/06 or 3/06. (BBC, WT 11/17; NYT, WP 11/18)

18 NOVEMBER

The **IDF** closes the Erez crossing into Gaza, citing threats of an attack; fatally shoots an unarmed **Palestinian** “in a suspicious position” nr. a settler bypass road outside Hebron; makes a predawn raid and fires on residential areas of Jenin town and refugee camp (r.c.), orders all male Palestinians ages 16–35 to gather for an ID check, arresting 1; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Nablus; confiscates 94 d. in Bayt Jala, 115 d. in al-Khadir, 119 d. in al-Walaja for construction of the **separation wall** outside Bethlehem; confiscates 10 d. of Palestinian land nr. Jenin for “military purposes.” In Khan Yunis, **PA police** fatally shoot a **Palestinian** in an exchange of gunfire with mbrs. of **2 Palestinian families** in a dispute over land on the vacated Neve Dekalim settlement site that also leaves 10 other Palestinians (including 2 policemen) wounded; in response, 10s of Palestinians vandalize a police station in nearby Khan Yunis, set 2 police vehicles on fire. (HA 11/18; AP, HA, NYT, WP 11/19; WP, XIN 11/20; PCHR 11/24)

19 NOVEMBER

The **IDF** reinforces troops in Hebron; shoots, wounds a Palestinian teenager playing with a toy gun nr. Ramallah; shoots, wounds 5 Palestinians allegedly carrying weapons at checkpoints across the West Bank; conducts predawn arrest raids, house searches in Hebron, al-Jalazun r.c. nr. Ramallah, al-Khadir (arresting 10 Palestinian boys ages 14–18); confiscates 110 d. of agricultural land in al-Jaba`a southwest of Bethlehem for construction of a settler bypass road linking Gush Etzion settlement to Bethlehem. (NYT 11/20; PCHR 11/24)

20 NOVEMBER

Israel partially reopens the Erez crossing into Gaza (closed on 11/18), allowing 2,000 Palestinian workers, 1,000 businessmen, and some goods to cross per day; conducts predawn arrest raids, house searches nr. Qalqilya and in Jenin town and r.c., Nablus. (XIN 11/20; PCHR 11/24)

21 NOVEMBER

The **IDF** bulldozes 2 **Palestinian homes** in Anata nr. Jerusalem, conducts arrest raids, house searches in Dahaysha r.c. The **Israeli Housing Min.** approves plans for 350 new housing units in Ma'ale Adumim settlement. (IMEMC, PM 11/22)

After several days of mtgs. with advisers and Likud colleagues, **Sharon** asks **Israeli pres. Moshe Katsav** to dissolve parliament, announces his departure fr. **Likud** and plans to form a more moderate centrist **Forward party** (Kadima) to run in 2006 elections; 15 of Likud's 40 MKs pledge to follow Sharon. (AP, BBC, JTA, NYT, REU, WP, WT 11/21; CSM, HA, WP 11/22; WP 11/25)

22 NOVEMBER

The **IDF** closes the Sufa commercial crossing in Gaza; demolishes 1 **Palestinian home** in Wadi al-Juz in East Jerusalem, 1 in Silwan nr. Jerusalem; conducts arrest raids, house searches, random ID checks in al-Khadir, nr. Hebron, in and around Tulkarm; sends troops into Ramallah to surround 2 mosques during dawn prayers, thoroughly checking IDs and searching Palestinians as they leave but making no arrests. **PA security forces** on a campaign to confiscate unlicensed Palestinian vehicles inadvertently foil an **IDF undercover unit** raid into Bethlehem when they stop the unit's car, bearing Palestinian plates; the undercover unit calls in **IDF** backup, which surrounds the PA officers and orders them to lay down their arms until they retreat. (IMEMC 11/22; PCHR 11/24; YA 11/30)

23 NOVEMBER

The **IDF** places a curfew on Jenin, sends in 70 jeeps and 25 armored personnel carriers, conducts arrest raids and house searches, exchanging gunfire with Palestinians, leaving 1 **Palestinian** stone-thrower dead, 9 Palestinians and 2 Israeli border police wounded; wanted **Islamic Jihad Jenin cmdr. Iyad Abu al-Rub** and an aide, fearing they would be assassinated, surrender in a deal brokered by **local AMB head Zakariya Zubaydi**. The **IDF** also conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Nablus. (HA, Israeli FMin. press release, PCHR 11/24, 12/1)

24 NOVEMBER

The **IDF** sends troops back into Jenin (see 11/23) to blow up a **Palestinian home** that allegedly was a bomb-making factory, also damaging 3 stores, firing rubber bullets at stone-throwing youths who confront them, injuring 1 Palestinian; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Bethlehem; for the first time since 1967, orders Hebron's Waqf authorities to close the Ibrahimi Mosque for 3 days so that **Jewish settlers** can celebrate a holy day; orders 50 Palestinian shops nr. Kiryat Arba settlement to be closed for 6 mos. "to keep public order and protect the security" of the IDF. (PCHR 12/1)

25 NOVEMBER

In keeping with the agmt. brokered by Rice on 11/15, **Israel** allows the **PA** to open the Rafah crossing under **EU** monitoring for 4 hrs./day; only foot traffic will be allowed until vehicle scanners are installed; **Egypt** will require men age 18–40 to obtain an entry visa. The **IDF** also tightens restrictions on Palestinian movement in Hebron; fires teargas at stone-throwing Palestinians outside a polling station in Aida r.c. nr. Bethlehem being used for the Fatah primaries in advance of the 1/25 elections (see Quarterly Update); conducts arrest raids, house searches in Bethlehem, Hebron. **Palestinians** report that a **private contractor for a Jewish settlement** nr. Bil`in recently uprooted 100s of the village's olive trees located on the western side of the **separation**

wall despite **IDF** pledges that villagers would be given access to the trees to harvest them. (JTA, REU, YA 11/25; IMEMC, NYT, WP, WT 11/26; PCHR 12/1)

Extremist Jews attack a busload of **Israeli Palestinians** in Shafa `Amr nr. Jerusalem, injuring 8 Palestinians. (IMEMC 11/26)

26 NOVEMBER

The **IDF** conducts arrest raids in Hebron. Also in Hebron, **100s of Jewish settlers** rampage through Palestinian areas of the city, forcing stores to close, vandalizing homes and shops, injuring 2 Palestinians. **Jewish settlers** fr. Harsina, under **IDF** protection, uproot 130 Palestinian olive trees in Hebron. **Jewish settlers** fr. Gilo nr. Bethlehem beat unconscious a 60-yr.-old Palestinian passing nr. the settlement. **Jewish settlers** fr. Elon Moreh nr. Nablus cut down more than 200 Palestinian olive trees in nearby Salim. (IMEMC 11/26; HA 11/27, 11/30; PCHR 12/1)

27 NOVEMBER

The **IDF** requests that all **Israelis** and **journalists** leave Gaza until further notice; reopens the Sufa commercial crossing in Gaza (closed on 11/22); conducts arrest raids, house searches in al-Arub r.c., `Ayn Bayt al-Ma`, Hebron, Nablus. The **PA security forces** launch a large-scale campaign to crackdown on criminal activity and to restore order to the West Bank and Gaza, focusing initially on Gaza, Jenin, Nablus, and Ramallah, searching for stolen property (primarily vehicles), unlicensed weapons, drugs; security forces exchange gunfire with local gunmen in Balata r.c. (IMEMC, JAZ 11/27; IMEMC 11/29; IMEMC, PCHR 12/1)

28 NOVEMBER

The **IDF** fires at least 20 artillery shells at the open area on the n. Gaza border, causing no injuries; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Hebron, al-Zababda nr. Jenin (arresting 8 Arab American University students). **Jewish settlers** driving nr. Nablus abduct, beat, release a Palestinian waiting for a taxi along the Beita–Nablus road. **Fatah** gunmen raid 10s of polling places, firing in the air, stealing ballot boxes, claiming that the party's primary voting is not fair (see Quarterly Update). (AP, NYT, REU, WP 11/29; HA, PCHR 12/1)

29 NOVEMBER

For the 2d time in a wk. (see 11/22), an **IDF** undercover unit driving a vehicle with Palestinian plates enters Bethlehem, attempts to stop a Palestinian taxi to arrest a passenger, but **PA security forces** observe and intervene, exchanging gunfire with the **IDF** unit, leaving 1 PA officer, 1 bystander wounded; the undercover unit calls in reinforcements to extract it. The **IDF** also fires rubber bullets at Palestinian stone-throwers in Hebron; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Dahaysha r.c. and Jenin town and r.c. (during which an **IDF** dog attacks and seriously injures a 12-yr.-old boy), in and around Hebron (severely beating 4 Palestinians), and nr. Bethlehem. **Jewish settlers**

fr. Emanuel settlement nr. Qalqilya uproot and burn a grove of Palestinian olive trees nearby. **Jewish settlers** fr. Ma'ale Adumim severely beat a Palestinian walking nr. the settlement. (IMEMC, REU 11/29; PCHR 12/1)

30 NOVEMBER

The **IDF** reinforces roadblocks around Qalqilya; sends 40 armored vehicles, escorted by helicopters, into Nablus to conduct arrest raids targeting the **AMB** and **Hamas**, shelling an apartment building, firing on stone-throwers and residential areas (wounding 10 Palestinians), rounding up all males over age 16 for ID checks (arresting 4); patrols in, fires on residential areas of Tulkarm town and r.c., nearby Anabta, and Tubas nr. Jenin; demolishes a **Palestinian home** in Bethlehem for being built without a permit; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Aida r.c. and Balata r.c., and nr. Hebron, Jenin, Ramallah, Tulkarm. In the evening, the **AMB** fires several mortars fr. Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries. (HA, IMEMC 11/30; PCHR 12/1, 12/8; HA 12/9)

1 DECEMBER

The **IDF** raids a Tulkarm school where Fatah primaries are being held, searches voters, leaves; arrests **al-Jazeera West Bank bureau chief Awad Rajub** at his home in Hebron "for security reasons." **Palestinians** detonate a roadside bomb nr. an IDF patrol outside Efrat settlement nr. Bethlehem, causing no damage or injuries. A **Palestinian gunman** fatally shoots another **Palestinian** in Bayt Hanun, sparking armed clashes btwn. the 2 families that leave 9 wounded. (HA, IMEMC 12/1; WP 12/2; PCHR 12/5; PCHR 12/8)

2 DECEMBER

The **IDF** makes a predawn arrest raid on Awarta nr. Nablus targeting the **Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)**; fires on 3 unarmed Palestinians attempting to cross the Gaza border fence into Israel to find work, killing **1 Palestinian**, wounding 2; fires on, damages a Palestinian fishing boat off Rafah, arresting the fisherman; fires tear gas, rubber bullets, percussion grenades at Palestinians holding a weekly nonviolent protest against the **separation wall** in Bil'in; confiscates 5 d. of Palestinian land nr. Alon settlement nr. Nablus for construction of an IDF outpost. **Palestinians** fire a **rocket** fr. Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries; fire at an IDF patrol nr. the s. Gaza border, causing no damage or injuries. (IMEMC, YA 12/2; HA, IMEMC 12/3; HA 12/4; PCHR 12/8)

3 DECEMBER

After **Palestinians** fire **2 rockets** into Israel, causing no damage or injuries, an **IDF** helicopter fires missiles at an **Islamic Jihad** charity in Gaza City, damaging the building, lightly wounding 1 bystander. In response, **Palestinians** fire **3 rockets** fr. Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries. In retaliation, the **IDF** carries out artillery and F-16 air strikes on open areas in Gaza, firing at least 30 shells and 3 missiles, causing no

damage or injuries. The **IDF** fires on, sinks a Palestinian fishing boat in Palestinian waters off Gaza, killing **1 Palestinian**, leaving 1 missing; the IDF says that it attempted to halt the boat after the Palestinian sailor headed toward Egyptian waters alone and returned with a passenger, but the boat ignored warning shots and fired back at the naval vessel, causing no damage or injuries. (The **IDF** says that videotape that routinely records the naval unit's activity ran out about three minutes before the incident.) The **IDF** also begins work on a new segment of the **separation wall** northwest of Jerusalem in al-Jib, Dahiyat al-Barid; conducts arrest raids, house searches in al-Khadir, Qabatya nr. Jenin. A **Jewish settler** injures a Palestinian child in a deliberate hit-and-run nr. Qalqilya. A **PA policeman, 4 Palestinians** are shot dead in Bayt Hanun during a clash btwn. rival Palestinian clans that erupts at the funeral for the mbr. of 1 family who was killed on 12/1. (AP, HA, IMEMC 12/3; AFP, HA 12/4; PCHR, WT 12/5; PCHR 12/8; IMEMC 12/10)

4 DECEMBER

Israel increases the number of Palestinian workers allowed into Israel fr. the West Bank to 37,000, while **Israeli police** launch a crackdown on Palestinians working in Israel without permits, arresting 250. The **IDF** erects a fortified observation tower on the Gaza border nr. Khan Yunis; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Jenin, al-Khadir and nr. Hebron. **AMB mbrs.** fire 3 **rockets** into Israel, causing light damage but no injuries. Late in the evening, the **IDF** responds with artillery strikes on rocket launch sites in n. Gaza, with fighter jets creating sonic booms over the Strip and conducting air strikes on an **Islamic Jihad** charity and alleged weapons-making factory; **Israeli DM Shaul Mofaz** approves an increase in assassinations in response to the rocket attacks. **PA police** shoot, seriously wound a Palestinian driver in Ramallah who refuses to stop for an ID check, precipitating a protest by some 100 bystanders, joined by AMB gunmen who force local shop owners to close their stores in protest. (HA, IMEMC, XIN 12/4; HA, VOI, WT 12/5; IMEMC 12/6; NYT 12/7; PCHR 12/8)

5 DECEMBER

An **Islamic Jihad suicide bomber** fr. Kefar Rai (btwn. Jenin and Tulkarm) detonates a device outside a shopping mall in Netanya, killing **5 Israelis**, wounding 31 (4 seriously). Islamic Jihad says the attack is retaliation for the IDF's 10/24 assassination of 2 of its leaders. The **IDF** immediately imposes closures on the West Bank and shuts pedestrian crossings in Gaza (keeping the Qarni crossing open for goods); announces that it is preparing for a wide-scale retaliation operation in northern Gaza and will step up assassinations and arrest campaigns in the West Bank, with DM **Mofaz** stating that the IDF had "decided to operate in a much broader, much deeper and more intensive manner against the **Islamic Jihad** infrastructure" and would make an effort to keep fr. drawing **Hamas** into the fighting. Later in the evening, the **Israeli security cabinet** authorizes the IDF to "adopt a harsher response" to rocket fire fr. Gaza, targeting built-up areas of Gaza as well as launch sites in uninhabited areas. During the day, the **IDF** also shells uninhabited areas in n. Gaza and in s. Gaza nr. Khan Yunis, causing no damage or injuries; makes 5 mock air raids over Gaza, breaking the sound barrier; fires on

residential areas of Aida r.c., wounding 2 Palestinians; conducts arrest raids in and around Hebron and in Bethlehem, Jenin (targeting **Hamas**, including detaining 2 candidates in the 12/15 municipal elections, 1 candidate in the 1/25 parliamentary elections), Ramallah; bulldozes 5 d. of Palestinian land in Silwan for construction of a parking lot for Jewish settlers. **Palestinians** throw 2 pipe bombs at an IDF patrol nr. Bethlehem and fire on an IDF checkpoint nr. Nablus, causing no damage or injuries. **PA police** fire at Palestinians in Jenin rallying in support of the Netanya bombing. **Israeli police** round up another 500 Palestinians working in Israel without permits (see 12/4). (BBC, HA, IDF Radio, IMEMC, XIN, YA 12/5; CSM, DS, HA, IMEMC, JAZ, NYT, REU, WP, WT, YA 12/6; AFP, PCHR 12/8)

6 DECEMBER

Overnight, the **IDF** raids Kefar Rai, arrests 15 Palestinians in connection with the 12/5 Netanya bombing, including the bomber's father, 3 brothers; also conducts arrest raids in villages around Hebron and Tulkarm, in Bethlehem. **PA security forces** detain 13 **Islamic Jihad** mbrs. in Balata r.c and Nablus, exchanging fire with **AMB** and Islamic Jihad gunmen opposed to the arrests, causing no reported injuries; also arrest 4 Islamic Jihad mbrs. in the n. West Bank. During the day, the **IDF** suspends Palestinian VIP passage through checkpoints; further tightens restrictions on Palestinian movement in the West Bank; conducts an air strike on Gaza City, targeting and destroying a 1950s statue of the unknown soldier; confiscates 85 d. of Palestinian land outside Bethlehem for construction of a permanent checkpoint to separate the western rural areas of Bethlehem fr. the rest of the governorate; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Balata r.c., Hebron; raids, closes 2 Islamic charities in Jenin. A **Palestinian** dies of injuries received earlier. (AP, HA, IMEMC, JAZ, XIN, YA 12/6; NYT, WP 12/7; PCHR, YA 12/8)

Israel suspends further implementation of the 11/15 **Rafah arrangements** brokered by U.S. Secy. of State Condoleezza Rice, aimed at easing Palestinian movement in and out of Gaza, between Gaza and the West Bank, and within the West Bank; tells the **U.S.** that it will not resume discussion of the issue until **PA Pres. Mahmud Abbas** acts against Palestinian militant groups. (NYT, WP, WT 12/9; HA 12/9, 12/10; HA 12/13; WP 12/15, HA 12/16) (see Quarterly Update)

7 DECEMBER

IDF air strikes target the **head of the Popular Resistance Comm.'s (PRC) Salah al-Din Brigades Mahmud Arqan**, assassinating him as he drives through a residential area of Rafah, wounding at least 5 bystanders. In retaliation, **Palestinians** fire several **rockets** and 1 **mortar** fr. n. Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries; **IDF** artillery fires 10s of shells on roads and uninhabited areas in n. Gaza, causing no reported casualties. The **IDF** also conducts arrest raids nr. Ramallah and in Balata r.c., Hebron, Tulkarm; raids Waqf offices, 2 charitable societies in Jenin, confiscating computers and files, sealing the buildings; conducts arrest raids in Bani Na'im nr. Hebron, Bayt Laqia, Bethlehem, Kafr Dan nr. Jenin, al-Khadi, Tulkarm r.c. Late in the evening, the **IDF** raids the Muslim Youth Association in Hebron, confiscates computers, copiers, documents and vandalizes and seals the building. A **Palestinian woman** (a bystander) is killed, several

Palestinians are wounded in a clash btwn. rival clans in Bayt Hanun in continuation of the fatal violence of 12/3. (Israeli FMin. press release, JAZ, JP, YA 12/7; HA, NYT, PCHR, WP, WT, XIN 12/8; HA 12/9; PCHR 12/15)

8 DECEMBER

The **IDF** assassinates **senior AMB mbr. Iyad Qaddas**, firing a missile at a house where he is staying in Jabaliya r.c.; a **2d AMB mbr., Iyad Najjar**, is killed and 1 AMB mbr. and 5 bystanders are wounded. Following the assassination, the **PRC** (firing **rockets**), **IDF** (responding with artillery and air strikes) trade heavy fire across the n. Gaza border, leaving 4 Palestinian civilians wounded. The **IDF** also demolishes 3 **Palestinian homes**, 2 shops nr. Jenin; conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Ramallah (including arresting the mayor of Bayt Laqia, who is a Hamas mbr.), nr. Tulkarm and in Bethlehem, Hebron, Jenin, Nablus, Tubas; confiscates 10 d. of Palestinian land east of Bethlehem for construction of an IDF post. At the Qalandia checkpoint outside Ramallah, an **AMB mbr.** fatally stabs an **IDF soldier**, is arrested; the **IDF** immediately seals the crossing until further notice. **PA police** raid some 40 Palestinian homes in Hebron and Tubas, arresting more than 10 **Islamic Jihad mbrs.** in connection with the 12/5 Netanyahu bombing; Islamic Jihad denounces the raids and warns the PA against becoming an "arm of Israel," while the **AMB** and **PRCs** warn that they will not renew the unilateral truce at the end of the yr. if the arrest campaign continues. (Israeli FMin. press release, XIN, YA 12/8; AFP, BBC, HA, JAZ, NYT, PCHR, REU, WP, WT, XIN, YA 12/9; HA 12/10; PCHR 12/15)

9 DECEMBER

In the 2d such incident in a wk. (see 12/2), an **IDF naval patrol** fires on a Palestinian boat nr. the Egyptian border, suspecting it of being involved in smuggling arms; **1 Palestinian** is killed, 1 is missing. The **IDF** fires tear gas, rubber bullets at the car of **UN special rapporteur on human rights Jon Dugard** when he visits Bil'in village to observe the weekly nonviolent demonstrations against the **separation wall**; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Hebron, Nablus and nr. Qalqilya, Tulkarm; enters, fires on residential areas of Jenin; issues confiscation orders for Palestinian land west of Dura for construction of 5 observation towers surrounding Nahal Negohot settlement. A **17-yr.-old Palestinian girl** attempts to stab an IDF soldier in Hebron, is arrested. (YA 12/9; AP, HA, IMEMC 12/10; NYT 12/11; PCHR 12/15)

10 DECEMBER

The **IDF** fires 3 shells at s. Gaza, causing no damage or injuries; conducts arrest raids in Hebron, Jenin, Nablus and nr. Bethlehem, Tulkarm. **AMB mbr. Khadir Rayan** dies of wounds sustained in the 12/8 Qaddas assassination. (HA, IMEMC 12/10; HA 12/11; PCHR 12/15)

11 DECEMBER

The **IDF** makes a major raid on Balata r.c., sending in 40 armored vehicles, fatally shooting **AMB cmdr. Iyad al-Hashash** and wounding a 2d Palestinian in what may be an assassination, searching 10s of homes; exchanges fire with Palestinians nr. Jenin, causing no casualties; fires on stone-throwing Palestinian youths nr. Askar r.c., wounding 2; fires on Palestinian fishing boats nr. Khan Yunis for no apparent reason, wounding 1 Palestinian; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Bethlehem, Hebron, Jaiyus, Jenin. **Palestinians** fire a **rocket** fr. Gaza into Israel, striking nr. Sederot, causing damage to a water network but no injuries; the **IDF** shells the suspected launch site in an open area of n. Gaza in response, causing no damage or injuries. Nr. Balata r.c., a **Palestinian** dies when a hand grenade he intends to throw at an IDF patrol explodes prematurely. (HA, IMEMC 12/11; PCHR 12/15)

12 DECEMBER

Before dawn, the **IDF** sends undercover units into Nablus to arrest 6 Palestinians, including **PA General Intelligence officer Amjad Mus`ad**; in the evening, fires 27 artillery rounds at n. Gaza in response to 3 **mortars** fired by Palestinians towards Israel, causing no damage or injuries on either side; late in the evening, undercover units return to Nablus, surround a PA security vehicle patrolling the area, order the 7 **PA security officers** to lie on the ground, confiscate their weapons and phones, hold them for an hr., release them. The **IDF** also lifts the seal on the West Bank and Gaza imposed on 12/5, opens Qalandia crossing (closed since 12/8); raids and closes 10s of shops in Anabta, withdraws, later returns to conduct arrest raids and house searches; bulldozes a **Palestinian home** in East Jerusalem, sparking clashes with 10s of local Palestinians; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Nablus, nr. Tulkarm. **IDF soldiers** bar an ambulance fr. transporting a critically ill 10-yr.-old Palestinian boy to a hospital in Jerusalem, beating a female paramedic and driver, arresting the paramedic; a 2d ambulance arrives, takes the patient to a Ramallah hospital. In Dayr al-Balah, 10 **AMB gunmen** angry over the Fatah primaries raid a PA election office, force it to close (see Quarterly Update). In Gaza City, **unidentified gunmen** fire on a **PA police** patrol, killing 1 **PA policeman**, wounding a 2d; the incident may be connected to the Bayt Hanun clan violence (see 12/7) as the dead policeman belongs to 1 of the families. (AP, HA, IMEMC, PCHR, PRCS, XIN, YA 12/12; AP, NYT 12/13; PCHR 12/15; PLO press release 12/21)

13 DECEMBER

The **IDF** makes a predawn raid on Nablus, clashes with stone-throwing Palestinian youths and gunmen, leaving 1 **Palestinian bystander** dead and more than 20 Palestinians and 2 IDF soldiers wounded; shells uninhabited areas of n. Gaza in response to 4 **mortars** fired by Palestinians into Israel (no damage or injuries on either side); raids, imposes a curfew on Bardala nr. Tubas; conducts arrest raids nr. Hebron, Jenin, Tulkarm and in Bethlehem, Birzeit, Ubidiyya nr. Bethlehem, Salfit nr. Nablus (arresting a **Hamas** mbr. running in the upcoming 1/25 elections). About 100 **AMB gunmen** occupy 3 election offices in Gaza and 1 in Nablus in ongoing Fatah primary disputes (see Quarterly Update); gunmen at 2 Gaza offices eventually leave without incident; gunmen at the

Gaza City office fire in the air, causing no injuries; gunmen at the Nablus office steal a computer, a television set. A **Palestinian farmer** in Abasan, Gaza, is killed when he accidentally triggers unexploded **IDF** ordnance. A **Palestinian** dies of injuries received earlier fr. settlers in Hebron. (AFP, AP, BBC, HA, IMEMC 12/13; AFP, NYT, WT 12/14; HA, PCHR 12/15; PLO press release 12/21)

14 DECEMBER

IDF conducts air strikes on 2 cars in Gaza City, assassinating **4 PRC mbrs.** and wounding 1 bystander in one case, and wounding **Islamic Jihad spokesman Khadir Habib** and 3 bystanders in the other. Later, **Palestinians** fire **5 rockets** fr. Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries; in response, the **IDF** fires artillery shells at n. Gaza areas, carries out 2 air strikes on a n. Gaza access road, wounding 2 Palestinians. During the day, the **IDF** also conducts arrest raids in and around Jenin, in Nablus (reportedly finding a **Qassam rocket**, explosives in the search of a Hamas building). Late in the evening, the **IDF** makes air strikes on the Bayt Lahiya home of a **PRC** leader, injuring a relative, and on an **Islamic Jihad** charity in Rafah, causing damage but no injuries; conducts an air strike on an agricultural school in Bayt Hanun, injuring 1 Palestinian; launches 4 air strikes on open areas of n. Gaza, causing no damage; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Tulkarm and nr. Bethlehem, Hebron, Nablus, Ramallah. **Israel** approves construction of 200 new housing units in Ma'ale Adumim settlement and 40 in Ariel Brakha, Nokdim. A group of **AMB mbrs.** storms the **Fatah** headquarters in Gaza, demanding jobs; exchanges fire with another group of Fatah mbrs. who drive them away, leaving 3 wounded. (BBC, HA, IMEMC, JAZ, REU, YA 12/14; DS, JAZ, NYT, PCHR, PMC, WP, YA 12/15; PLO press release 12/21; PCHR 12/22)

15 DECEMBER

The **IDF** seals the West Bank; closes the Sufa, Qarni crossings into Gaza; imposes a closure on Tulkarm, barring most travel into and out of the area; raids the offices of Future Studies and Media in Hebron, confiscating computers; bulldozes 500 sq. m. of Palestinian land nr. Kiryat Arba settlement; conducts late night arrest raids, house searches nr. Hebron, Jenin, Tulkarm. **Palestinians** fire **4 rockets** towards Ashkelon, causing no damage or injuries; the **IDF** responds with 10 air strikes, 21 artillery rounds on the n. Gaza no-go zone, wounding 3 Palestinians. (IMEMC, JAZ, WP, YA 12/15; NYT 12/16; Israeli cabinet communiqué 12/18; PCHR 12/22; HA 1/13)

16 DECEMBER

Palestinians in n. Gaza, the **IDF** in s. Israel trade **mortar** and tank fire throughout the day (Palestinians firing some 11 mortars, the **IDF** some 27 shells), causing no damage or injuries. The **IDF** also launches air strikes on s. Gaza targeting Palestinians firing **rockets** into Israel; sends troops into Anabta, fires on residential areas, then fires on Palestinian stone-throwers who emerge to confront them; conducts arrest raids, house searches around Tulkarm and in Bayt Laqia nr. Ramallah, Hebron; begins bulldozing 345 d. of Palestinian land in Bayt Jala for construction of a new segment of the **separation**

wall nr. Bethlehem. The **AMB, Islamic Jihad** claim joint responsibility for a drive-by shooting nr. Hebron that kills 1 **Jewish settler**, wounds 2; the **IDF** detains 3 journalists in the area. A **Palestinian** dies of a beating he sustained fr. the **IDF** several days previously in East Jerusalem. (BBC, REU 12/16; HA, WP 12/17; HA, NYT 12/18; PLO press release 12/21; PCHR 12/22)

17 DECEMBER

Senior Abu Rish Brigades (ARB) leader Khalid Abu Sitta is killed, 3 bystanders are wounded when his car mysteriously explodes nr. Khan Yunis; ARB claims it is an assassination, but the **IDF** denies involvement. **Palestinians** fire 2 **mortars** fr. Gaza towards Israel, causing no damage or injuries. The **IDF** fires 3 missiles at a rocket launching site nr. Khan Yunis, causing no damage or injuries; fires a missile at the main Rafah–Khan Yunis road, creating large crater; fatally shoots a **PRC mbr.** laying a roadside bomb nr. Erez crossing; fatally shoots 1 **Palestinian**, wounds a 2d who attempts to sneak into Israel fr. Bayt Lahiya to find work; fires on, wounds a mentally handicapped Palestinian who strays close to the Israeli border nr. Khan Yunis; fires on residential areas of Kafr al-Labad nr. Tulkarm, wounding, arresting, evacuating to an Israeli hospital a member of the **PA security forces**; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Issawiyya, Tulkarm (shooting and wounding a wanted **Islamic Jihad** mbr.) and nr. Hebron, Jenin. In response to the **AMB–Islamic Jihad** drive-by shooting on 12/16, the **IDF** closes some 50 roads in Hebron with sand barriers, blocks the main northern and southern entrances to Hebron with cement barriers. **Jewish settlers** fr. Yitzhar cut down more than 150 Palestinian olive trees nr. Nablus. (BBC, HA, IMEMC, NYT 12/18; AFP 12/19; PLO press release 12/21; PCHR 12/22)

18 DECEMBER

The **IDF** conducts 11 air strikes and 6 mock air raids on n. Gaza (destroying a bridge nr. Bayt Hanun; hitting several main roads in Bayt Hanun, Bayt Lahiya, and Um al-Nasser; damaging several homes and injuring 6 Palestinian bystanders, including 3 children). Later, **Palestinians** fire a **rocket** fr. Gaza towards Ashkelon, causing no damage or injuries; the **IDF** threatens to cut off electricity to the Gaza Strip if rocket attacks continue. The **IDF** also tightens restrictions on Palestinian movement into and out of Qalqilya; bars a **Palestinian** heart attack victim fr. crossing a checkpoint into Tulkarm (still under closure; see 12/15) to reach a hospital, allowing him to die; conducts arrest raids in Balata r.c. (an **IDF** dog bites a 12-yr.-old and a 19-yr.-old Palestinian), Bayt Umar nr. Hebron, al-Bireh, Tulkarm (targeting the **AMB**). In Alar nr. Tulkarm, 2 Palestinian construction workers surprise an **IDF undercover unit** inside an unfinished house; the soldiers detain and beat the men, fire on other Palestinians who arrive on the scene, call in reinforcements to extract them. An **IDF** jeep hits, injures a 10-yr.-old Palestinian nr. Qalqilya. **Israel** issues tenders for the construction of 137 new housing units in Ariel and Karnei Shomron settlements. **Jewish settlers** fr. Matan nr. Qalqilya raze 110 d. of nearby Palestinian agricultural land. (AP, BBC, HA 12/18; WT, XIN, YA 12/19; HA, PLO press release 12/21; PCHR 12/22)

Sharon is hospitalized after suffering a mild stroke. Doctors say there will be no permanent damage; he will not be at any greater risk of another stroke, will stay in the hospital for "a few days" of observation. (JTA, NYT, WP, WT 12/19; NYT, WP, YA 12/20)

19 DECEMBER

Overnight and into the predawn hours, the **IDF** conducts at least 13 air strikes on n. Gaza, destroying a bridge outside Bayt Hanun, damaging roads, hitting a PA naval police building, injuring 2 officers. **Israel** allows the Palestinians to increase the hours of operation at the Rafah crossing fr. 4 hrs./day to 8 hrs./day. The **IDF** also exchanges fire with Palestinian gunmen in Nablus's old city, wounding 2 gunmen; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Bethlehem, Ramallah and in al-Khadir, Qabatya. An **IDF undercover unit** enters Burkin nr. Jenin, abducts, beats, detains a Palestinian. (IMEMC, PCHR 12/19; PCHR 12/22)

20 DECEMBER

The **IDF** shoots, wounds a 15-yr.-old Palestinian attempting to sneak into Israel fr. Dayr al-Balah to find work; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Hebron, Ramallah and in Azun nr. Qalqilya, Nablus, Qabatya, Yamun nr. Jenin; fires rubber-coated steel bullets at Palestinian stone-throwers who confront the troops, injuring 5, precipitating gunfire fr. Palestinian militants that leaves 1 IDF soldier wounded. A **Palestinian** detained by an **IDF undercover unit** on 12/19 is released at the entrance to Jenin. **Palestinians** fire 5 **rockets** fr. Gaza towards Sederot and an IDF base, causing no injuries; **IDF** artillery shells uninhabited areas of n. Gaza in response. **Jewish settlers** fr. Ma'on bulldoze 15 d. of Palestinian land abutting the settlement. Some **20 armed AMB mbrs.** demanding jobs in the security services, financial aid fr. the **PA** for 300 local AMB mbrs. occupy Bethlehem's municipal building overlooking Manger Square; the stand-off ends peacefully when the PA agrees to consider their demands, allows them to walk out. Some **2,000 Palestinians** rally outside the PC headquarters in Gaza City to express frustration over the **PA's** failure to control the security situation inside Gaza. (AFP, AP, BBC, YA 12/20; HA, IMEMC, NYT 12/21; PCHR 12/22; WT 12/24)

The **Israel Lands Administration** demolishes **3 Israeli Palestinian homes** in Lod (Lydda) for lack of permits; another 2,000 houses are threatened. (Arab Association for Human Rights press release 12/22)

21 DECEMBER

Two IDF undercover units riding in vehicles with Palestinian plates raid Jenin, fatally shoot **Izzeddin al-Qassam Brigades cmdr. Zayid Musa** in an apparent assassination; open fire on Palestinians who gather to protest the killing, wounding 5; the IDF conducts arrest raids, house searches in Alar, Qalqilya and nr. Bethlehem, Nablus, Ramallah. **Israel** warns that it may cut off Gaza's electricity supply if rocket attacks continue. In Gaza, the **principal and vice principal of the American International School** (1 Australian, 1 Dutch) are kidnapped, held for 8 hrs., released unharmed by

PFLP mbrs. seeking the release of PFLP leader Ahmad Saadat, who has been jailed by the PA at Israel's request since 4/02. (IMEMC 12/21; JAZ, NYT, PCHR 12/22, 12/29)

22 DECEMBER

Islamic Jihad mbrs. fire 2 **rockets** fr. n. Gaza towards an IDF base nr. Ashkelon, injuring 5 IDF soldiers; the **IDF** retaliates with artillery fire on the launch site, killing 1 **Palestinian** bystander in adjacent Jabaliya r.c.; **Israel** warns that it could send ground forces back into Gaza. The **IDF** also raids Nablus, assassinates **local PFLP cmdr. Bashar Hanani** (also reported as Bashar Khalani), **AMB mbrs. Ahmad Jayyusi and Anas Hamad**; shells areas northwest of Bayt Lahiya, wounding a farmer working his land; sends troops into Qabatya, fires on stone-throwing youths who confront them, wounding 5 Palestinians; raids, searches a building in Qiffin nr. Tulkarm, confiscating files fr. and sealing the offices of the Loans Association, Palestinian Peoples Party, Popular Campaign against the Wall, and Union of Agricultural Relief Comms.; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Bethlehem, Nablus, Ramallah and nr. Hebron, Jenin; uproots 200 Palestinian olive trees northwest of Hebron to erect a gate cutting al-Jaba village off fr. a nearby Jewish settlement. In the evening, the **Israeli security cabinet** approves new measures, known as **Operation Blue Skies**, aimed at curbing Palestinian rocket fire fr. Gaza, including using artillery, helicopter, and gunboat fire to enforce a new n. Gaza buffer zone; more stringent monitoring of the Gaza Strip by air; "other steps we have not taken until now," but does not immediately give orders for the **IDF** to implement the plan. (BBC, IMEMC, JTA, PCHR, PM, XIN, YA 12/22; BBC, HA, IMEMC, JTA, NYT, WP, WT 12/23; PCHR 12/29)

23 DECEMBER

The **IDF** conducts predawn arrest raids, house searches nr. Jenin and in Tubas, late-night arrest raids, house searches in Nablus and nr. Hebron, Ramallah. In Gaza, **10s of AMB mbrs.** hold a press conference to say that they would support postponing of elections if Israel bars East Jerusalem Palestinians fr. voting. (IMEMC, YA 12/23; IMEMC, NYT, WP 12/24; PCHR 12/29)

24 DECEMBER

The **IDF** conducts arrest raids, house searches in Ramallah. Late in the evening, the **IDF** raids Tubas nr. Jenin, patrols streets, stops and seizes a PA police car, arrests **3 PA policemen**; the PA joint liaison team intervenes to secure the policemen's release and the return of the car. The **AMB, Islamic Jihad** each fire a **rocket** fr. Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries. **Jewish settlers** fr. Yitzhar cut and damage more than 100 Palestinian olive trees nr. Nablus. **PA police** in Gaza City hold a group of armed **Hamas** mbrs. at a checkpoint, order them to surrender their weapons; the Hamas mbrs. open fire, wounding 2 policemen, and flee the scene; the **PA Interior Min.** issues a statement vowing to beat "with an iron fist all those who shed Palestinian blood and assault Palestinian security personnel." (HA, IMEMC 12/24; HA 12/25; PCHR 12/29)

The **Knesset** passes a law to compensate Jews who purchased property or held bank accounts in British Mandatory Palestine and whose property was seized by the State of Israel after 1948. Compensation is expected to run to \$220 m. Commenting on the passage of the measure, **MK Michael Melchior (Labor)** says "this is not a question of money but of ethics and morality for the Jewish state." (AFP 12/24)

25 DECEMBER

Sharon, returning to work a wk. after suffering a mild stroke, orders the IDF to implement **Operation Blue Skies** to enforce a no-go zone in n. Gaza by all means possible without re-entering the Strip in order to prevent rocket fire, stating that the operation will be open ended; the IDF takes no immediate action, however. The **U.S.** says (12/28) that it approves the decision, seeing it "in the context of [the PA's] failure to address the security situation"; that the PA should take "effective measures against such acts [i.e., rocket fire] so that the measures Israel is taking are not necessary." During the day, the **IDF** extends the 12/15 general closure on the West Bank and Gaza until 1/3 because of Hanukah; seals the Erez crossing (closed to most Palestinians since 12/16) to VIP and humanitarian cases; sends troops into Anabta, fires live ammunition at stone-throwing youths who confront them, wounding 1; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Hebron. Late in the evening, the **IDF** launches an air strike on a **Fatah** office in Bayt Lahiya, destroying it and cutting electricity to the area; conducts 2 air strikes on a bridge southwest of Bayt Lahiya, also damaging several nearby homes; conducts 3 air strikes on open areas in n. Gaza, causing no injuries. **Jewish settlers** fr. Elon Moreh cut down 120 Palestinian olive trees in Burin, nr. Nablus. In Gaza City, **Hamas mbrs.** detonate an explosive device outside the home of **PA police official Abu Wa'il Saada**, causing damage but no injuries; Saada family mbrs. exchange fire with the Hamas mbrs., causing no injuries. (AFP, IMEMC, Israeli cabinet communiqué, NYT, WT 12/25; HA, YA 12/26; CSM, PCHR, PMC 12/29)

26 DECEMBER

The **IDF** conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Nablus and in Aida r.c., Ramallah (surrounding 2 mosques and stopping Palestinians for ID checks as they head to morning prayers); occupies a house under construction nr. Tulkarm as an IDF post; fires on residential areas of Nablus, wounding 2 Palestinians. **Palestinians** fire 2 **rockets** fr. Gaza towards Ashkelon (causing damage but no injuries), 2 towards Sederot (causing no damage or injuries); the **IDF** responds with artillery fire on n. Gaza. The **AMB, Islamic Jihad, PRCs** issue a statement that they plan to carry out joint attacks on Israeli targets if Israel goes ahead with plans to enforce a no-go area in n. Gaza. **Israel** issues tenders for construction of 150 new settlement housing units in Beitar Ilit and 78 in Efrat, both nr. Jerusalem. (IMEMC 12/26; JTA, REU, WT, XIN 12/27; PCHR 12/29)

27 DECEMBER

The **IDF** conducts air strikes to destroy 2 vacant **AMB** buildings in n. Gaza; fires 3 shells at the eastern border of Gaza nr. al-Maghazi r.c., causing no injuries; demolishes

a **Palestinian home** in Bayt Hanina outside East Jerusalem for being constructed without permits; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Bethlehem, Jenin, Nablus; completes a section of the **separation wall** btwn. Qalandia checkpoint s. of Ramallah and the al-Ram and Dahiyat al-Barid area nr. Jerusalem. Nr. Tulkarm, 2 Palestinian teenagers throw Molotov cocktails at an IDF patrol, causing no injuries; 1 is shot, wounded by the IDF. Some **20 AMB gunmen** occupy the n. Gaza governor's office, Education Min. offices, and a shari`a court for several hrs., demanding jobs in the PA security forces; some **400 Palestinians**, including **AMB mbrs.**, hold a similar protest outside the Fatah headquarters in Bethlehem. The **Jewish "hilltop youth" settlers** set up 13 new unauthorized outposts nr. existing settlements in the Bethlehem, Hebron, Jericho, Nablus, Qalqilya, and Ramallah areas. (HA, IMEMC, JAZ, REU, YA 12/27; DS, HA, IMEMC, NYT 12/28; PCHR 12/29)

28 DECEMBER

The **IDF** carries out at least 8 predawn air strikes on the n. Gaza no-go zone (causing no casualties) and a predawn air strike on al-Mughraqa s. of Gaza City (tearing up a main street, damaging water and phone networks, but causing no casualties). Early in the day, the **IDF** warns of the imminent launch of **Operation Blue Skies**, dropping leaflets on n. Gaza that warn residents to stay away fr. the border area and the sites of vacated n. Gaza settlements, saying that anyone in the zone after 6:00 P.M. local time risks being shot; maps on the leaflets show the no-go zone as roughly corresponding to the n. Gaza settlement areas evacuated under disengagement, though also including areas 1.5 miles into Gaza housing some 100,000 Palestinians, whom the IDF recommends evacuate for "a limited period of time"; reportedly no Palestinians leave. Shortly before the deadline, **AMB mbrs.** fire 4 **rockets** at Sederot and a nearby IDF base, causing no damage or injuries; the **IDF** begins several hrs. of artillery fire (at least 25 strikes), fire fr. helicopters on the n. Gaza zone (wounding 1 Palestinian militant, 1 teenage bystander) and mock air raids breaking the sound barrier over the Strip, marking the start of the operation. Late in the evening, the **IDF** conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Bethlehem, Hebron. **AMB mbrs.** angry over the Fatah party list submitted today for the 1/25 elections (see Quarterly Update) seize election offices in 5 towns in Gaza, wage shoot-outs with the **PA police**, leaving 1 Gaza City policeman wounded. In Rafah, **Palestinian gunmen** kidnap a **British aid worker, her parents**; immediately begin negotiating with the **PA** for their release. (AFP, IMEMC, Israeli FMin. press release, JAZ, NYT, XIN 12/28; DS, IMEMC, JTA, NYT, PCHR, PMC, WP, WT, YA 12/29)

29 DECEMBER

An **Islamic Jihad suicide bomber** fr. al-Til detonates a device at a checkpoint nr. Tulkarm, killing **1 IDF soldier, 2 Palestinians** and wounding 3 IDF soldiers, 7 Palestinians. A **Palestinian** stabs, injures an Israeli in the Atarot industrial zone nr. Jerusalem, flees. The **IDF** seals Qalqilya, Tulkarm; continues to shell the n. Gaza no-go zone, targeting 6 main access roads; sends troops into Jenin town and r.c., patrolling streets, firing on residential areas, occupying several homes as observation posts, then raiding and searching the **PA General Intelligence** headquarters; conducts arrest raids,

house searches in Balata r.c. (firing on residential areas, wounding 2 Palestinians), al-Til and nr. Hebron, Jenin, Ramallah; begins to bulldoze Palestinian land east of Shavei Shomron settlement nr. Nablus to install a fence around the settlement. **Jewish settlers** fr. Kiryat Arba vandalize Palestinian homes, steal chickens in Hebron. Mbrs. of a **Palestinian clan** angry over the arrest of a relative on drug and auto theft charges storm a **PA police** station in Gaza City, exchange gunfire with police, leaving 1 **PA policeman, 1 gunman** dead. **Unidentified Palestinian gunmen** fire on Abbas's Gaza City home, causing no injuries; Abbas is not there. (HA, IMEMC, JAZ, YA 12/29; HA, IMEMC, NYT, WP, WT 12/30; PCHR 1/5)