



16 May–15 August 2006

by

CHRONOLOGY

16 MAY–15 AUGUST 2006

COMPILED BY MICHELE K. ESPOSITO This section is part eighty-four of a chronology begun in JPS 13, no. 3 (Spring 1984). Chronology dates reflect Eastern Time (ET). 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 MAY

As the quarter opens, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) continue Operation Southern Arrow, with heavy shelling and air strikes on Gaza in response to Palestinian rocket fire (at a rate of 10 Israeli strikes per 1 Palestinian rocket attack) and tight restrictions on Gaza's crossings (see Quarterly Update for details). The IDF also continues to separate the n. and s. West Bank by closing (since 4/21) the Zatar checkpoint s. of Nablus and to restrict movement into and out of the n. Jordan Valley. Meanwhile, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza continue to suffer severe economic shortages due to the U.S.- and Israeli-led economic sanctions on the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority (PA) that have prevented the PA from paying government workers' salaries for 2 mos. Today, the IDF patrols in `Araba nr. Jenin, firing on residential areas; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Bethlehem, Nablus. Islamic Jihad fires its 2d Grad rocket fr. Gaza toward Ashqelon, damaging a poultry farm but causing no injuries (see 3/28, 4/21). A Hamas mbr. is killed in a drive-by shooting in Gaza City; no group claims responsibility. (MM 5/16; NYT, PCHR 5/18)

17 MAY

The IDF opens the Qarni crossing (closed 5/13) for exports only but closes the Sufa crossing; sends undercover units in a car with Palestinian license plates into Nablus in a predawn raid, besieging a Palestinian house, fatally shooting 2 Islamic Jihad mbrs. in an hrs.-long exchange of gunfire, wounding and arresting a 3d, and causing a 78-yr.-old Palestinian bystander to suffer a fatal heart attack, occupying a home as an observation post; conducts arrest raids, house searches in `Ayn Bayt al-Ma' refugee camp (r.c.) nr. Nablus, Jenin town and r.c. and nr. Bethlehem, Hebron, Ramallah. The PA Interior Min. begins deploying Interior M Said Siyam's new 3,000-mbr. volunteer security force, the Executive Support Force (ESF), in Gaza. The ESF is made up of members of the Palestinian resistance (largely from Hamas,

around one-sixth from the Popular Resistance Comms. [PRCs]). For the 2d day, a Hamas mbr. is killed in a drive-by shooting in Gaza City; no group claims responsibility. In Ramallah, 100s of government workers protest the PA's failure to pay wages. Discount Bank, the last Israeli bank doing business with the PA, announces that it will sever its ties with Palestinian banks in 3–6 mos. (HA, MM, Palestine Media Center 5/17; JP, MM, NYT, PCHR, WP, WT 5/18; HA, NYT 5/19; HJ, MA 5/20 in WNC 5/21; PCHR 5/25)

18 MAY

The IDF conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Bethlehem, Jenin, Nablus, and Tulkarm, firing on residential areas. Palestinians fire 6 rockets fr. Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries. Unidentified Palestinians fire on a Jewish settler vehicle nr. Tapuach settlement, injuring 2 Jewish settlers. In Tulkarm, Fatah gunmen surround a building where PA Dep. PM Nasir al-Sha'ir (Change and Reform) is meeting with the Tulkarm governor, forcing the mtg. to end, and Sha'ir to leave under police escort. Some 2,000 Fatah mbrs. parade through Gaza City in a show of force in reaction to the deployment of the Interior Min.'s predominantly Hamas ESF. The National and Islamic Higher Comm. for the Follow-up of the Intifada (NIHC) sponsors a rally in Gaza calling for the immediate dissolution of the new ESF, activation of the PA security forces to prevent lawlessness, and holding of national unity talks. Late in the evening, Hamas, Fatah gunmen exchange fire outside the Palestinian Council (PC) building in Gaza City, leaving 2 Fatah mbrs., 1 Hamas mbr. wounded. (HA, MM, XIN 5/18; MM 5/19; HJ 5/20 in WNC 5/21; PCHR 5/25)

19 MAY

The IDF conducts major arrest raids, house searches in and around Nablus (searching a mosque, firing on residential areas, seriously wounding 1 Palestinian); also conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Jenin, Ramallah. In Gaza City, PA police, Fatah mbrs. exchange fire with ESF forces, leaving 2 police officers, 1 Fatah mbr., 1 Hamas mbr. wounded. Palestinian customs officials detain Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri as he enters Gaza at the Rafah crossing after EU monitors discover he is trying to smuggle in \$815,000 in Euros, confiscate the money; anyone entering Gaza must declare sums over \$2,000. (IMEMC, MM, WP, XIN 5/19; HA, JAZ, NYT, WP, WT 5/20; PCHR 5/25)

20 MAY

The IDF makes an air strike on a moving car in Gaza, assassinating senior Islamic Jihad military cmdr. Muhammad Dadu, killing 3 bystanders and wounding 4; patrols in Balata r.c. late in the evening, fatally shooting a Palestinian woman who comes to her window to observe events; conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Tulkarm town and r.c., nr. Hebron, Jenin. Meanwhile, a bomb explodes at the PA General Intelligence Service (GIS) offices in Gaza, seriously wounding GIS chief Tariq Abu Rajab in an apparent assassination attempt, killing his bodyguard, wounding 8 others (unidentified gunmen shot, wounded a

bodyguard outside Abu Rajab's home on 5/14); PA security forces taking the wounded to the hospital fire fr. the windows of their cars to clear the streets; mbrs. of the ESF, believing themselves under attack, fire toward the convoy, causing no injuries. No group takes responsibility for the bombing; PA PM Ismail Haniyeh calls for an investigation. In response to the attempt on Abu Rajab's life, a group calling itself the Fatah Protection Unit demands that PA Pres. Mahmud Abbas dismiss the Hamas-led government and call new elections, that the Interior Min. disband the ESF. Unidentified Palestinian gunmen fire on the home of Interior Min. spokesman Khalid Abu Hilal, causing damage but no injuries. (JAZ, PNN 5/20; MENA, PSCT, VOI 5/20 in WNC 5/21; NYT, WP, WT 5/21; AFP, Daily Star, HA, MM 5/22; PCHR 5/25)

21 MAY

The IDF opens Gaza's Sufa commercial crossing (closed since 5/17); shells Bayt Hanun, Bayt Lahiya, injuring a 12-yr.-old Palestinian; sends troops into Hebron to surround the Polytechnic University campus, firing percussion grenades, tear gas and arresting 7 students; sends undercover units into Tamun nr. Jenin in a car with Palestinian license plates to arrest 3 Palestinians; sends troops into Tubas nr. Jenin, firing on stone-throwing youths who confront them; patrols in, fires on residential areas of Nablus; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Tulkarm and nr. Hebron, Jenin, Nablus. Israeli DM Amir Peretz authorizes the expansion of the "jurisdictional area" of 4 West Bank Jewish settlements, often the prelude to construction of new settlement neighborhoods: Givat Ze'ev nr. Jerusalem (to be expanded by 60 dunum [d.; 4 d. = 1 acre]); Beitar Illit nr. Bethlehem (to be expanded by 400 d.); Oranit, just over the Green Line nr. Kefar Saba; Maskiyot, in the Jordan Valley, where Israel plans to relocate the 40 settlers evacuated fr. Shirat Hayam settlement in Gaza. Jewish settlers fr. Ma'on nr. Hebron attack Palestinian school children being escorted to school by the IDF, injuring 2. PA security forces find, dismantle a 150-lb roadside bomb planted along the motorcade route of Internal Security Service dir. gen. Rashid Abu Shibak, who was appointed by Abbas to the new position on 4/6 in a bid to wrest control of the security forces away fr. Interior M Siyam; no group takes responsibility, but Fatah officials hint that Hamas is to blame, note that the PRCs have previously fired on his home. In reaction, 100s of Fatah mbrs. rally in Gaza City in support of the PA security forces, offering to volunteer their services to counterbalance Siyam's new volunteer force. Overnight, a previously unknown group calling itself the al-Qa`ida Organization of the State of Palestine claims responsibility for the 5/20 attack on Abu Rajab in a statement on the Internet. (MM, NYT 5/22; OCHA 5/24; see also MA 5/20 in WNC 5/21; PCHR, PNN 5/25)

22 MAY

The IDF detains Change and Reform PC mbrs. Khalid Abu `Arafa, Ahmad Abu Atun, Muhammad Abu Tir for participating in a public demonstration at the Haram al-Sharif/ Temple Mount on 5/19 to urge people to donate money to the PA government, bars them fr. entering the holy site for 2 wks.; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Nablus and nr.

Bethlehem, Hebron, Jenin, Ramallah. The High Court of Israel also approves a segment of the separation wall in Ramallah that will isolate at least 3,900 d. of Palestinian land and uproot 1,100 olive trees. Fatah and Hamas activists, mbrs. of the predominately Hamas ESF and the predominantly Fatah PA Preventive Security Forces (PSF) exchange fire nr. the PC headquarters in Gaza City, killing the Jordanian amb.'s driver, wounding 11 Palestinians in the crossfire; it is unclear who shot first and why. Fatah, Hamas gunmen (not mbrs. of the security forces) also clash in Khan Yunis, leaving 1 Fatah mbr. dead; Hamas says the incident was sparked by Fatah mbrs. attempting to kidnap 2 of its men, whereas Fatah says it began when Hamas mbrs. ambushed a Fatah vehicle. (AFP, HA 5/22; AFP, NYT, WP, WT 5/23; PCHR 5/25)

23 MAY

The IDF sends bulldozers 300 m into central Gaza to level land along the border; sends troops into Nablus, firing tear gas at Palestinian children on their way home fr. school; sends troops into Tulkarm to search a car, confiscate a computer; patrols in Kafr Dan nr. Jenin; conducts arrest raids in and around Hebron and Ramallah (capturing Izzeddine al-Qassam Brigades West Bank head Ibrahim Hamid), in Jericho, and nr. Qalqilya. An Israeli court rejects an appeal by East Jerusalem Palestinians challenging the route of the separation wall around Ma'ale Adumim, determining that the DMin. has given "adequate consideration of the barrier's impact on residents while balancing the security needs of Israeli citizens." (AFP, MM 5/23; NYT, WP, WT 5/24; PCHR 5/25)

24 MAY

The IDF sends undercover units into Ramallah's central shopping district, where they arrest Islamic Jihad's Qalqilya military leader Muhammad Shubaki; when the unit is confronted by armed militants and stone-throwing protesters, the IDF sends in uniformed reinforcements that clash with the Palestinians, leaving 1 PA General Intelligence officer, 3 bystanders dead, at least 35 Palestinians and 1 IDF soldier wounded. The IDF also sends bulldozers, tanks, jeeps 200 m inside the Gaza border nr. Bureij r.c. to level land for ongoing construction of a cement wall along the n. Gaza border; raids the municipal offices in Maithalun nr. Jenin, removes the Palestinian flag fr. the building, fires tear gas; patrols in Farkha nr. Nablus (firing on residential areas), Kafr Dan; conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Nablus, in Bethlehem, and nr. Hebron, Jenin. In central Gaza, PSF chief for central Gaza Nabil Hudud dies when a bomb rigged to his car explodes; no group claims responsibility; Fatah and Hamas gunmen, however, exchange fire outside Gaza's Shifa Hospital after Hudud's body is brought in. In Khan Yunis, unidentified gunmen kidnap, shoot 3 Hamas mbrs., killing 1; no group claims responsibility; Hamas accuses the PA security forces. (AFP, Guardian, HA, NYT, PCHR, Palestine Monitor [Internet], WP 5/25; OCHA, PCHR 6/1)

25 MAY

The IDF continues bulldozing operations begun on 5/24, just inside the Gaza border nr. Bureij r.c.; sends troops into Tulkarm to raid the Social Sport Club, confiscating computers, files, photos and sealing the venue; conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Nablus and nr. Hebron, Tulkarm. In response to the IDF killing of 4 Palestinians in Ramallah on 4/24, al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (AMB) mbrs. fire 2 rockets fr. Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries. Fatah and PA security forces exchange fire with Hamas mbrs. following the funeral for Hudud in Gaza City, leaving 1 PA security officer dead, several wounded. (XIN 5/25; WP 5/26; OCHA, PCHR 6/1)

26 MAY

The IDF shuts Gaza's Sufa commercial crossing for 2 days; shells n. Gaza, killing a Palestinian farmer, wounding a 2d Palestinian in Bayt Lahiya; conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Nablus, nr. Qalqilya, and in Hebron, Qabatya, and Yamun nr. Jenin. In n. Gaza, 3 Palestinian teenagers are killed, 3 Palestinians are wounded when they accidentally detonate unexploded IDF ordnance. A Palestinian dies of injuries he received when the IDF fired on his car nr. Nablus on 4/15. (WP, WT 5/27; OCHA, PCHR 6/1)

In Sidon, Lebanon, senior Islamic Jihad official Mahmud Majzub, his brother are killed when a bomb in their car explodes. Israel denies responsibility. (MM 5/26; NYT 5/27; MM 5/30; SFR 6/21)

27 MAY

The IDF send undercover units into Qiffin nr. Tulkarm, firing on residential areas; patrols in Bayt Ta'mar nr. Bethlehem; conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Nablus. In Jerusalem's Old City, 2 East Jerusalem Palestinians stab, lightly wound an Israeli. (WP, WT 5/28; PCHR 6/1; HA 7/4)

28 MAY

The IDF reopens Gaza's Sufa crossing; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Hebron and nr. Bethlehem, Tulkarm. (OCHA, PCHR 6/1)

Unidentified militants in s. Lebanon (thought to be Hizballah mbrs. retaliating on behalf of Islamic Jihad for the suspected Israeli assassination of a senior Islamic Jihad mbr. on 5/26) fire Katyusha rockets across the border at an IDF post, seriously injuring 1 IDF soldier. The IDF makes air strikes on 2 Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) posts, on a weapons depot nr. the Syrian border in the Biqa` Valley and in s. Beirut, killing 1 PFLP-GC mbr., wounding at least 5. Later, Hizballah fires mortars, rockets toward at least 10 IDF outposts on the n. Israel border, wounding 1 IDF soldier; the IDF fires artillery, conducts air strikes on Hizballah targets in s. Lebanon, killing at least 1 Hizballah mbr., wounding 2 civilians; Hizballah fires several rockets into n. Israel, causing no damage or injuries. The UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) brokers a cease-fire. (IFM, NYT, WP, WT

5/29; MM 5/30; NYT 6/1; MM 6/2)

29 MAY

During the day, the IDF sends undercover units in a car with Palestinian license plates into Qalqilya to arrest 3 Palestinians; patrols in Aida r.c. nr. Bethlehem; issues military orders seizing 30 d. of Palestinian agricultural land nr. Hebron. Late in the evening, the IDF for the 1st time since the Gaza disengagement makes a major ground incursion into n. Gaza to prevent rocket fire, sending undercover troops to ambush and kill 3 Islamic Jihad mbrs. nr. the fmr. settlement of Dugit, immediately withdrawing to Israel afterward; minutes after the withdrawal an IDF helicopter fires missiles on the same area, wounding 4 Palestinian medics, 2 journalists covering the incident; soon after, helicopters fire on the area a 2d time, killing a PA security officer checking the area, wounding a bystander. The IDF also conducts late night arrest raids, house searches in al-Bireh (searching the home of Change and Reform mbr. and PC dep. secy. `Aziz Kayid, confiscating computer disks) and nr. Bethlehem, Qalqilya; sends undercover units into Balata r.c. (exchanging fire with wanted Palestinians, killing 1 Palestinian, wounding 4) and Qabatya (firing on 4 wanted Palestinians without warning, assassinating Islamic Jihad mbr. Tariq Zakarna, wounding 3). (MM, NYT, WT 5/30; PCHR 6/1)

CHRONOLOGY SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS AFP (Agence France-Presse, Paris) AP (Associated Press [Internet]) BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation World Service [Internet]) CSM (Christian Science Monitor, Boston) HA (Ha'aretz [Internet], Tel Aviv) HJ (al-Hayat al-Jadida, Ramallah) IFM (Israeli Foreign Ministry, Jerusalem) IMEMC (International Middle East Media Center) ITV (Israel Television Network, Jerusalem) JAZ (al-Jazeera Satellite Channel Television, Doha) JP (Jerusalem Post [Internet], Jerusalem) MA (Ma'ariv, Tel Aviv)

MENA (Middle East News Agency, Cairo) MEZ (al-Mezan Center for Human Rights, Jabaliya) MM (Mideast Mirror, London) OCHA ([United Nations] Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Weekly Briefing Notes, Jerusalem) OSC (Open Source Center, [Internet]) NYT (New York Times, New York) PCHR (Palestinian Center for Human Rights, Gaza) PNN (Palestine News Network, Ramallah) PSCT (Palestine Satellite Channel Television, Gaza) REU (Reuters [Internet]) SFR (al-Safir, Beirut) UNIS (United Nations Information Service, Geneva) VOI (Voice of Israel, Jerusalem) VOP (Voice of Palestine, Jericho) WNC (World News Connection [Internet], Washington) WP (Washington Post, Washington) WT (Washington

Times, Washington) XIN (Xinhua–New China News Agency, Beijing) YA (Yedi'ot Aharonot, Tel Aviv)

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