CHRONOLOGY

16 NOVEMBER 2003–15 FEBRUARY 2004

COMPILED BY MICHELE K. ESPOSITO

This section is part eighty-one of a chronology begun in JPS 13, no. 3 (Spring 1984). Chronology dates reflect Eastern Standard Time. 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) raids Rafah refugee camp (r.c.), surrounds the home of Bassam Abu Libdeh (whom the IDF believes is responsible for digging and renting out smugglers’ tunnels to Egypt), opens fire on Abu Libdeh and 2 unarmed men who attempt to flee, killing 1, arresting Abu Libdeh, 4 others; 4 IDF soldiers are wounded by a roadside bomb, 5 Palestinian homes are demolished during the raid. (VOP 11/16 in WNC 11/18; NYT 11/17; PR 11/19; PCHR 11/20)

17 NOVEMBER

The IDF makes a predawn raid on Tulkarm, sparking an exchange of gunfire that leaves 1 Hamas mbr. dead, arresting 3 Palestinians, including local Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) leader Nayif Jaradat; pulls bulldozers out of Bureij r.c., ending a 4-day operation that leveled 55 dunams (4 dunams = 1 acre) of Palestinian land. (HA, XIN 11/17; VOP 11/17 in WNC 11/19; NYT 11/18; PCHR 11/20)

Israeli PM Ariel Sharon meets secretly in Rome with U.S. National Security Council Middle East adviser Elliott Abrams, reportedly briefs Abrams on his plans for unilateral actions in the occupied territories. (HA, VOI 11/22 in WNC 11/25; HA, MM 11/24; WP 11/26) (see Quarterly Update)

19 NOVEMBER

The IDF continues operations in Rafah, bulldozing 2 shops, 2 greenhouses; fires on residential areas of Gaza City; conducts house searches, arrest raids in villages around Ramallah, in Salft. An IDF soldier dies of injuries received in the 9/9 Rishon Letzion suicide bombing, bringing that toll to 9. The Palestinian Authority (PA) Preventive Security Forces (PSF) arrests 1 of its own officers in connection with the fatal shooting of 2 IDF soldiers on 11/18. Palestinians fire 3 mortars at a Jewish settlement in Gaza, causing light damage, no injuries. (JP, MM 11/19; VOI, YA 11/19 in WNC 11/21; PCHR, WP 11/20; PCHR 12/4)

A joint task force comprising the Jewish Agency, Israeli government, IDF...
announces plans to invest tens of millions of dollars in a project to bring Jewish Diaspora youths (ages 18–26) to Israel for yr.-long visits aimed at "reinforcing Jewish identity and Zionist feelings in the Diaspora." The goal is to bring 20% of Jewish Diaspora youths to Israel by 2010, in hopes that 30% of those would eventually immigrate. (HA 11/19)

20 NOVEMBER

The IDF fatally shoots a Palestinian who strays too close to Netzarin settlement; bulldozes 3 dunams of land in al-Mughraqa; demolishes a Palestinian home nr. Hebron. Palestinians detonate a roadside bomb nr. an IDF vehicle, damaging it but causing no injuries; fire on an IDF position outside the Gush Katif bloc in Gaza, causing no damage or injuries; fire on a Jewish settler vehicle nr. Hebron, damaging it but causing no injuries. (VOI, YA 11/20 in WNC 11/22; PCHR 12/4)

21 NOVEMBER

The IDF fires on residential areas of Khan Yunis, Nablus; conducts arrest raids nr. Nablus. On the last Friday of Ramadan, Muslims across the Middle East hold Jerusalem Day rallies in support of the Palestinian claim to Jerusalem. In Tehran, 10,000s of Iranians demonstrate; some 10,000 rally in Bahrain; 1,000s rally in Beirut. Iraqis in Baghdad, Najaf hold rallies for the 1st time in yrs., chanting "Sharon is God's enemy! America is God's enemy!" and "No to America!"; in the West Bank, Gaza 1,000s of Palestinians protest against the Geneva Accord. (HA 11/21; IRNA, VIRI 11/21 in WNC 11/25; NYT 11/22; PCHR 12/4)

22 NOVEMBER

The IDF sends armored vehicles, a bulldozer into Jenin, opens fire on stone-throwing youths, killing an 11-yr.-old Palestinian boy; fatally shoots a Palestinian who strays into a closed military zone by the n. border fence in Gaza; conducts searches, arrest raids in Jenin, Ramallah. AMB gunmen fr. Jenin fire on an Israeli security vehicle at a separation wall construction site nr. Abu Dis, killing 2 Israeli security guards. (AFP, HA 11/22; VOP 11/22 in WNC 11/25; HA, NYT, WP, WT 11/23; LAW, PCHR 12/4)

23 NOVEMBER

The IDF transfers 3 West Bank Palestinian administrative detainees to Gaza for 2 yrs. for their involvement in Palestinian violence (see Quarterly Update); fires on residential areas of Khan Yunis; bulldozes 39 dunams of land in al-Bureij r.c. The PSF raids a mosque in Aida r.c. nr. Bethlehem, arresting Hamas mbrs.; thought to be plotting a suicide bombing. Shin Bet arrests Palestinian hospital worker and chemist Rashid al-Nimr, cousin of PLO Exec. Comm. mbr. Faruq al-Qaddumi, on charges of selling Hamas 6 containers of hydrogen peroxide for use in building bombs, transporting the chemicals by ambulance, evading the IDF by hiding in hospitals. (JP 11/25 in WNC 11/27; LAW, PCHR 12/4; JP 12/11 in WNC 12/13)

24 NOVEMBER

The IDF conducts arrest raids in Tubas; fires on residential areas of Khan Yunis; bulldozes 39 dunams of land in al-Bureij r.c. The PSF raids a mosque in Aida r.c. nr. Bethlehem, arresting Hamas mbrs. On the last Friday of Ramadan, Muslims across the Middle East hold Jerusalem Day rallies in support of the Palestinian claim to Jerusalem. In Tehran, 10,000s of Iranians demonstrate; some 10,000 rally in Bahrain; 1,000s rally in Beirut. Iraqis in Baghdad, Najaf hold rallies for the 1st time in yrs., chanting "Sharon is God's enemy! America is God's enemy!" and "No to America!"; in the West Bank, Gaza 1,000s of Palestinians protest against the Geneva Accord. (HA 11/21; IRNA, VIRI 11/21 in WNC 11/25; NYT 11/22; PCHR 12/4)

25 NOVEMBER

The IDF conducts house searches, arrest raids in Hebron, Jenin; bulldozes 14 dunams of land in al-Qarara nr. Khan Yunis; conducts arrest raids in villages around Hebron. Q'alqilya. Unidentified gunmen believed to be Palestinian fire on the car of Nablus mayor and PC mbr. Ghassan al-Shak'a (Fatah) in an apparent attempt to assassinate him, leaving him unharmed but killing his brother. (al-Jazeera 11/25; PR 12/3; PCHR 12/4; PR 12/10; MEI 1/9)

In a mtg. in Washington with U.S. National Security Adviser (NSA) Condoleezza Rice, Sharon's chief of staff Dov Weisglass reportedly lays out a 2-stage plan drafted by Sharon for U.S. Pres. George W. Bush's approval that ultimately foresaw the fall of PA PM Ahmad Qurai's government, the end of the road map, and Israel's unilateral declaration of borders;
taking 60% of the West Bank. (MM 11/28, 12/1, 12/5) (see Quarterly Update)

26 NOVEMBER

The IDF fatally shoots a 9-yr.-old Palestinian boy nr. Rafah; fatally shoots 3 Palestinians, all fr. the same family, who stray too close to a Jewish settlement nr. Rafah, en route to an Id al-Fitr celebration (the IDF admits on 11/27 that the men were innocent passersby); fatally shoots a 5th Palestinian in Hebron; conducts arrest raids in Jalazun r.c., Jenin. (HA 11/26; MM, PCHR, WP 11/27; VOP 11/26, IDF Radio, VOP 11/27 in WNC 11/29; NYT 11/28; LAW, PCHR 12/4)

27 NOVEMBER

The IDF fires on residential areas of Jenin, Rafah; blows up a Palestinian home in Hebron. (LAW, PCHR 12/4)

28 NOVEMBER

The IDF fatally shoots an unarmed PSF officer who enters a closed military zone to bring out a mentally handicapped Palestinian who had mistakenly entered the area; the IDF acknowledges the officer was shot in error. The IDF also fires on residential areas of Khan Yunis. (VOP 11/28 in WNC 12/2; WP 11/29; LAW, PCHR 12/4)

29 NOVEMBER

The IDF demolishes 3 Palestinian homes in Rafah; bulldozes 200 Palestinian olive trees in East Jerusalem, clearing the land for Jewish settlement expansion; conducts arrest raids in Ramallah. (PR 12/3; LAW, PCHR 12/4)

30 NOVEMBER

The IDF conducts searches, arrest raids in Balata r.c., al-Bireh, Jenin, al-Amari r.c.; fires on stone-throwing Palestinians in Balata r.c., Jenin. An Islamic Jihad mbr. is killed when his car mysteriously explodes in s. Gaza in what may be an assassination. A leaflet signed by the AMB denounces the Geneva Accord, threatening Palestinians who took part in its drafting. At the Rafah-Egypt border crossing, some 200 Palestinians harass some 50 Palestinian drafters of the Geneva Accord en route to the Geneva Accord unveiling in Switzerland, hitting and kicking several drafters, causing no serious injuries. (Daily Star, JP, NYT 12/1; LAW, PCHR 12/4; PR 12/10)

In Amman, King Abdullah of Jordan receives Qurait', agrees to transmit to Bush a series of PA ideas for restarting road map implementation when he visits Washington on 12/4. (VOP 11/30 in WNC 12/2; MEI 12/19)

1 DECEMBER

Before dawn, the IDF launches a major raid on al-Amari r.c. in Ramallah that lasts 16 hrs., sending in nearly 100 armored vehicles supported by helicopters to attack Hamas targets; the IDF warns the PA before entering Ramallah, promises that no operations will take place nr. PA head Yasir Arafat's headquarters. During the raid 3 Hamas mbrs. and an 11-yr.-old Palestinian boy are killed, 29 Hamas mbrs. are arrested, 9 youths who throw stones at troops are wounded, 2 Palestinian homes (1 in al-Amari r.c., 1 in Ramallah) are demolished. The IDF also conducts arrest raids in Jenin, Qalqilya, Ramallah r.c., and villages around Nablus. Israel begins construction of a new Jewish settlement neighborhood in East Jerusalem called Golden View. (AP, JP, MM, NYT 12/1; VOI, VOP, YA 12/1 in WNC 12/3; NYT, WP 12/2; LAW, PCHR 12/4; MEI 12/5)


In an extensive New York Times interview, Syrian pres. Bashar al-Asad urges the U.S. to support the resumption of Israeli-Syrian peace talks. The U.S. brushes off the overture. (NYT 12/1; VOI, YA 12/1 in WNC 12/3; SANA 12/1, 12/2 in WNC 11/6; MM, WT 12/2; MM 12/3; MA 12/3 in WNC 12/4; MM 12/4; THWR 12/5, THWR, Tisriin 12/6 in
2 DECEMBER

The IDF fatally shoots a Palestinian outside Ramallah who throws a Molotov cocktail at soldiers; fatally shoots a 2d Palestinian in an exchange of fire in Jenin; fires on residential areas of Nablus, Rafah, Ramallah; demolishes 2 Palestinian homes in Jenin, 1 in East Jerusalem, 1 in Rafah; conducts arrest raids in Jenin, Nablus. Israel approves construction of 1,720 new housing units in West Bank, Gaza Jewish settlements, raising to 2,819 the number of units approved since the road map was announced. (MM 12/2; NYT, PR, WP 12/3; LAW, PCHR 12/4)

Israel says it would only seriously consider resuming peace talks with Syria if Damascus “renounces terror” (including halting all aid to Hizballah and Palestinian groups) and agrees to resume talks “without preconditions” (i.e., without starting talks fr. the point at which they left off in 3/00). (HA 12/2) (see 12/1, Quarterly Update)

3 DECEMBER

The IDF removes 3 roadblocks outside Ramallah; shoots, wounds 2 Palestinians in Balata r.c.; blows up a Palestinian home nr. Hebron. (MM 12/3; LAW, MM, PCHR 12/4; PCHR 12/11)

4 DECEMBER

The IDF fires on residential areas of Khan Yunis; conducts arrest raids in Nablus, Qabatya, Tulkarm; searches houses in Hebron. Palestinians fire a mortar at a Jewish settlement in Gaza, causing no damage or injuries. (VOI, YA 12/8 in WNC 12/10; PCHR 12/11)

Palestinian factions reopen cease-fire talks in Cairo under Egyptian auspices. (MM 12/4; MENA, VOP, XIN 12/4 in WNC 12/6; WP, WT 12/6; MEI 12/19) (see Quarterly Update)

5 DECEMBER

For the 1st time in more than a yr., the IDF allows Palestinian store owners in Hebron to open their shops, clean their store-fronts. The IDF also fatally shoots 2 Hamas mbrs., laying a roadside bomb in Gaza; fatally shoots a Palestinian baggage handler at the Rafah crossing to Egypt, mistakenly believing he was attacking when he ran to help someone with their luggage; transfers 12 West Bank Palestinian administrative detainees to Gaza (see Quarterly Update); shells residential areas of Khan Yunis, partially destroying 1 Palestinian home. (NYT, REU 12/6; NYT 12/8; PCHR 12/11)

6 DECEMBER

The IDF erects a new observation tower in Abasan on the e. border of the Gaza Strip nr. Khan Yunis; reinforces a 2d observation tower in nearby Khuza’a; conducts arrest raids s. of Hebron. (PCHR 12/11)

7 DECEMBER

The IDF erects a new military post in Shaykh Ajlin s. of Gaza City; bulldozes 3 dunams of land nr. Khan Yunis; conducts arrest raids in Balata, Nablus, Qabatya, Tulkarm; searches houses in Hebron. Palestinians fire a mortar at Gaza’s Gadid settlement, causing no damage or injuries. (VOP, YA 12/8 in WNC 12/10; PCHR 12/11)

Palestinian factions end a round of cease-fire talks in Cairo, with the factions refusing to adopt a unilateral cease-fire but expressing a “general readiness” for a comprehensive cease-fire involving Israel. (MENA, QA, VOP, al-Zaman [London] 12/8 in WNC 12/10; AYM 12/8, al-Quds 12/9 in WNC 12/11; MM, WP 12/9; MM 12/10; QA 12/11 in WNC 12/16; QA 12/12, AYM, SA 12/14 in WNC 12/16; al-Quds 12/18 in WNC 12/23; MEI 12/19) (see Quarterly Update)
The UN General Assembly (UNGA) passes a nonbinding resolution calling on the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at the Hague to issue an advisory opinion on the legality of Israel’s separation wall. (HA 12/8; ITAR-TASS, VOP 12/8 in WNC 12/10; HA, MM, WP 12/9; JP 12/9 in WNC 12/10; PR 12/10; THWR 12/12 in WNC 1/16; MEI 12/19) (see Quarterly Update)

9 DECEMBER

The IDF captures an alleged Palestinian suicide bomber en route to stage an attack; fatally shoots a stone-throwing Palestinian youth in Qalandia; uncovers, destroys a smugglers’ tunnel to Egypt in Rafah; fires on residential areas of Rafah. In Hebron, 3 Hamas mbrs. are killed in a mysterious explosion; the IDF claims they were preparing a bomb, Hamas claims they were assassinated. Palestinians toss grenades at an IDF patrol in Rafah, causing no damage or injuries. Jewish settlers fr. Hagay settlement in Hebron seize 10 dunams of land belonging to the Palestinian village of Rihiya. (JTA 12/9; VOP, YA 12/9 in WNC 12/11; HA 12/10; PR 12/10; VOP 12/10 in WNC 12/12; PCHR 12/11)

10 DECEMBER

The IDF blows up a 2d smugglers’ tunnel to Egypt in Rafah (see 12/9), demolishing a Palestinian home; fires on residential areas of Birzeit, Brazil r.c. Israeli police say that in recent days, they have arrested 9 East Jerusalem Palestinians on suspicion of putting together a Haram al-Sharif/ Temple Mount security patrol financed by the PA. Jewish settlers unilaterally evacuate 1 unauthorized settlement outpost in the central West Bank; the IDF says it has received orders to dismantle another 5. An Israeli military court exonerates for lack of evidence PA General Intelligence officer Musa Shahin, who was placed in administrative detention in 7/02 for allegedly firing on 2 IDF posts. (HA 12/10; al-Quds 12/10 in WNC 12/16; PCHR 12/11)

Islamic Jihad says that it could agree to the establishment of a Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders “on a temporary basis.” (VOP 12/10 in WNC 12/12)

A 2-day donors’ Ad Hoc Liaison Comm. mtg. opens in Rome. (AP, MM 12/10; AFP, VOP 12/10 in WNC 12/12; MM, NYT 12/11; VOP 12/11 in WNC 12/13; Jerusalem Times 12/18) (see Quarterly Update)

11 DECEMBER

The IDF sends 20 tanks, troops into Rafah to arrest senior Islamic Jihad mbr. Khalid Qadi, sparking a gun battle that leaves 6 Palestinians dead (including 2 Hamas mbrs., 3 bystanders, 1 medic evacuating the wounded), 20 injured; the IDF captures Qadi, demolishes his plus 8 other Palestinian homes. The IDF also issues orders barring Israeli citizens fr. entering Palestinian villages in area B (technically, parts of the West Bank under PA civil and Israeli security control) as of 12/21; demolishes another Palestinian home nr. Hebron; places a curfew on Jenin, fires on residential areas. (MM, NYT, WP 12/11; VOP 12/11 in WNC 12/13; PRCS 12/12; VOP, YA 12/12 in WNC 12/16; PR 12/17; PCHR 12/18; MEI 12/19)

12 DECEMBER

The IDF removes sand barriers blocking the main road linking Hebron to Bethlehem that have been in place since the start of the intifada in 9/00, replacing them with a single iron gate and observation tower to control Palestinian traffic; fires on residential areas of Jenin (where a curfew is still in place), Wadi Gaza (on the e. border of the Strip). A group of Jewish settlers attempts to visit Joseph’s Tomb in Nablus but comes under fire fr. AMB, Islamic Jihad gunmen, who wound 7; the IDF arrests another 8 settlers for illegally entering a Palestinian area without its knowledge. Jewish settlers also fence off 1,750 dunams of Palestinian land outside Ramallah, belonging to Turmus ‘Ayya village, fire guns at Palestinians who attempt to reach their olive groves on the land. (AP, HA, BBC 12/12; VOP, YA 12/12 in WNC 12/16; PR 12/17; PCHR 12/18)

Bush signs the Syria Accountability Act, which recommends immediate sanctions on Syria. (WT 12/12; SANA, Syrian Arab Television Network 12/13, THWR 12/14 in WNC 1/16; JT, MENA 12/14 in WNC 12/16; al-Dustur 12/14 in WNC 12/17; THWR 12/14 in WNC 1/17; MM 12/16) (see Doc. D1, Quarterly Update)

13 DECEMBER

The IDF tightens restrictions on Palestinian movement around Nablus, Tulkarm; shuts the only entry point to Qalqilya; opens fire on a taxi in Nablus that reportedly fails to stop for a checkpoint, killing 1 Palestinian student en route to al-Najah University in...
Nablus; shells, fires on residential areas of Khan Yunis. The IDF reports that Palestinians have fired more than 20 mortars at Gush Katif since 12/12, causing light damage, no injuries. (AP 12/13; VOP 12/13 in WNC 12/16; NYT 12/16; PR 12/17; PCHR 12/18; HA 12/20)

14 DECEMBER
The IDF places a closure on al-Khadir village nr. Bethlehem; erects a new checkpoint outside Jenin; conducts arrest raids nr. Ramallah, fatally shooting wanted Islamic Jihad mbr. Riyadh Fakhri Khalifa, wounding and arresting 2 other wanted men; fires on residential areas of Khan Yunis. Late in the evening, the IDF fires on 6 Palestinian laborers attempting to sneak across the Gaza border into Israel, killing 2, arresting 1. (PRCS 12/14; VOP 12/14 in WNC 12/16; PCHR 12/16; PR 12/17; PCHR 12/18)

15 DECEMBER
Overnight and early this morning, the IDF demolishes 22 Palestinian homes in Khan Yunis that allegedly provided cover for mortar attacks, leaving 178 Palestinians (25 families) homeless; another 6 Palestinian homes housing 40 Palestinians (6 families) are heavily damaged. The IDF also erects several new roadblocks in the Jenin area; fires on residential areas of Brazil r.c., Hebron, Nablus. The IDF also removes 1 uninhabited unauthorized settlement outpost nr. Nablus, scuffling with Jewish settlers who attempt to block the move. (BBC, PCHR 12/15; NYT 12/16; PR 12/17; PCHR 12/18)

16 DECEMBER
Israel says it will bar Arafat fr. attending Christmas celebrations in Bethlehem for the 3d straight yr. The IDF imposes a curfew on, raids Balata r.c., firing on stone-throwing youths who confront the troops, killing a nearby Palestinian child, wounding at least 10; sends troops into Halhul nr. Hebron as school lets out, firing on stone-throwing Palestinian children, wounding 1, arresting 1, damaging a clearly marked press vehicle driven by an AP cameraman, who says soldiers deliberately opened fire on him with live ammunition; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Hebron, in Tulkarm; demolishes a PSF post in Dayr al-Balah. (NYT, PR., WP 12/17; PCHR 12/18; WP 12/22)

After the U.S. capture of Iraqi pres. Saddam Hussein on 12/14, Israel acknowledges that in 1992 it aborted a plan to assassinate Hussein after 5 IDF soldiers were killed on 11/5/92 in a training exercise practicing the operation. (MM 12/16; WT 12/17)

17 DECEMBER
The IDF fires on residential areas of Rafah, killing a 16-yr.-old Palestinian; bars an ambulance fr. crossing a checkpoint to reach a hospital, allowing an ailing Palestinian to die; conducts house-to-house searches in Balata r.c. (PCHR 12/18)

18 DECEMBER
The IDF makes a major raid into Nablus in a campaign against the “developing terrorist infrastructure” there, killing 4 Palestinians, including senior PFLP mbrs. Jibril Awwad and Firas Haneni, Hamas mbr. Majdi Bahish in what appear to be assassinations, wounding 2. (VOI, VOP, YA 12/18 in WNC 12/20; WP 12/19; PR 12/24; PCHR 12/25)

In a major policy address given to the annual Herzliya Conference on Israeli strength and security, Sharon threatens that if Palestinians do not show progress on the road map soon, he would end negotiations and unilaterally define Israel’s “security lines,” taking large areas of the West Bank, keeping all of Jerusalem, and removing a number of Jewish settlements. He vows that such steps “will be fully coordinated with the United States.” (AP, HA, MM, NYT, REU 12/18; HA, MM, NYT, WP, WT 12/19; ITAR-TASS, MA, al-Quds; YA 12/19, al-Quds12/20, HA, MA, YA 12/21 in WNC 12/20; NYT, WP 12/20; AYM 12/21 in WNC 12/24, 12/25; PR 12/24; Forward 12/26; MM 1/6; MEI 1/9) (see Doc. C1, Quarterly Update)

19 DECEMBER
The IDF demolishes a Palestinian home and 3 greenhouses, bulldozes 3 dunams of land in Rafah; conducts arrest raids in Balata r.c., Beitunia; fires on residential areas of Ramallah. (VOP 12/19 in WNC 12/20; HA, PRCS 12/20; VOP 12/20 in WNC 12/23; PCHR 12/25)

The ICJ agrees to give an advisory opinion on the separation wall. Invites interested parties to submit any relevant information...
on the wall in writing by 1/30, in preparation for oral testimony and hearings beginning 2/23. (ICJ press release 12/19) (see 12/8, Quarterly Update)

20 DECEMBER

The IDF continues operations in Balata r.c. for the 5th day, firing on residential areas and stone-throwing youths (wounding 5), demolishing a Palestinian home; conducts arrest raids nr. Bethlehem; fires on residential areas of Khan Yunis. Palestinians fire a mortar at Gush Katif settlement in Gaza, causing no damage or injuries. (PM 12/20; YA 12/21 in WNC 12/23; PR 1/7; PCHR 12/25)

21 DECEMBER

The IDF conducts an overnight raid of Nablus, detaining a regional Hamas spokesman Adnan Asfur; continues house-to-house searches in Balata r.c. for the 6th day, during which a 5-yr.-old Palestinian playing in his yard is killed by stray gunfire, a 53-yr.-old Palestinian dies fr. tear gas inhalation during a raid on his home; begins implementing an order to raze 3,000 dunums of land in and around Tarqumiyya nr. Hebron for Jewish settlement infrastructure; bulldozes 14 dunams of land in Wadi al-Silqa nr. Dayr al-Balah. A Palestinian teen dies of injuries received on 12/16. 13 reservists of the IDF elite commando unit Sayaret Matkal sign an open letter to Sharon refusing to serve in the occupied territories, stating, "We have long ago crossed the line between fighting a just cause and oppressing another people." (PM 12/22; HA, VOI, VOP 12/22 in WNC 12/24; BBC, HA, NYT, WP, WT 12/23; VOP 12/23 in WNC 12/25; WP 12/24; PCHR 12/25; HA 1/8)

22 DECEMBER

Overnight, the IDF conducts arrest raids in Hebron; raids Jenin, searching homes, firing on residential areas. During the day, the IDF delays a Palestinian woman in labor at an Nablus checkpoint for over 1 hr., causing the death of her twins; imposes a curfew on parts of Hebron; fires on residential areas of Khan Yunis, Nablus; fires on Palestinians waiting to cross the Abu Huli checkpoint nr. Dayr al-Balah, wounding 5; fires on UNRWA workers repairing waterlines nr. Khan Yunis, wounding 3; conducts arrest raids nr. Ramallah, bringing to 22 the number of alleged Hamas mbrs. arrested in the area over the past wk. In the evening, 2 AMB gunmen ambush, fatally shoot 2 IDF soldiers nr. Dayr al-Balah before being shot dead; 5 Palestinian bystanders are wounded by the IDF return fire. Shortly afterward, the IDF demolishes 7 Palestinian homes, bulldozes 37 dunams of land in nearby Wadi al-Silqa; sends tanks, troops into Rafah to search for smugglers' tunnels, clashing with residents, leaving 2 Palestinians dead. Palestinian gunmen also ambush 2 Jewish settler vehicles traveling fr. Kiryat Arba settlement to Cave of the Patriarchs/Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron, wounding an Israeli border patrol officer escorting the settlers, escape unharmed. A Palestinian dies of injuries received last wk. (PM 12/22; HA, VOI, VOP 12/22 in WNC 12/24; BBC, HA, NYT, WP, WT 12/23; VOP 12/23 in WNC 12/25; WP 12/24; PCHR 12/25; PRCS, WP, WT 12/24)

23 DECEMBER

The IDF continues operations in Rafah, fatally shooting 8 Palestinians (including 2-3 armed Palestinians), wounding up to 41, destroying 23 Palestinian homes (leaving 765 Palestinians homeless), heavily damaging 16 homes and 2 UNRWA centers, occupying several tall buildings as observation posts, uncovering and demolishing 1 smugglers' tunnel. The IDF also intensifies operations in Balata r.c. (ongoing for 8 days), expands crackdown to all of Nablus, imposing a 24-hr. curfew, demolishing 1 Palestinian home, dividing the city in half with roadblocks. Palestinians fire 2 Qassam rockets at Nisanit settlement, lightly injuring 2 settlers, damaging a building; 1 at Sederot inside Israel, causing no damage or injuries. (AFP, BBC, HA, NYT, PCHR, PRCS 12/23; VOP 12/23 in WNC 12/25; NYT, PR, WP, WT 12/24; PCHR, WT 12/25; PR 1/7)

24 DECEMBER

The IDF pulls troops out of Nablus but continues operations in Balata r.c.; demolishes a 3-story apartment building in Rafah; fires on Palestinians attempting to circumvent roadblocks around Bayt Furik nr. Nablus, wounding 1; fires on Palestinian teenagers on their way to school in Hebron, wounding 2; searches buildings in Khan Yunis; bulldozes 50 dunams of land nr. Abu Huli
checkpoint in central Gaza. A Palestinian is killed in Nablus when his car mysteriously explodes; the IDF alleges he was transporting a car bomb. A Palestinian dies of injuries received in Rafah on 12/23. (PM 12/24; NYT, PCHR 12/25)

25 DECEMBER

The IDF assassinates a senior Islamic Jihad military leader, Muklid Humayid, firing a missile at his car as he drives in Gaza City, also killing another Islamic Jihad mbr., traveling with him, 3 Palestinian bystanders, wounding 15. Soon after, a PFLP suicide bomber detonates a device at a bus stop in Tel Aviv, killing 4 IDF soldiers, 1 Israeli civilian, wounding 15 Israelis; the PFLP says the attack is in retaliation for the IDF assassination of 2 PFLP mbrs. on 12/18. The IDF also sends troops back into Nablus, imposing a 24-hr. curfew; bars all vehicular traffic between the occupied territories and Israel; conducts arrest raids in Jenin, Wadi al-Silqa; fires on residential areas of Khan Yunis; bulldozes 1 Palestinian home and 3 dunams of land in Dayr al-Balah, 4 dunams of land in Khan Yunis; bulldozes 1 Palestinian home and 3 dunams of land in Dayr al-Balah, the funeral for Islamic Jihad’s military leader, Muklid Humayid, also sends troops back into Nablus, making the incursion begun on 12/18 (now dubbed Operation Still Water) the largest into the city in over a yr., firing on stone-throwing youths, killing 1 Palestinian, wounding 17; closes all roads leading to Tulkarm; erects a number of new roadblocks at entrances to villages around Tulkarm; tightens existing checkpoints, erects 3 new ones around Jenin; demolishes a Palestinian home in Balata r.c.; bulldozes 85 dunams of olive groves east of al-Bureij r.c.; fires on residential areas of Khan Yunis, wounding a Palestinian toddler in her home; conducts arrest raids in Dayr al-Balah. The IDF also bars 2 bus-loads of international peace activists fr. reaching a 2d day of separation wall protests (see 12/26) in Qalqilya, where 1,000s of Palestinians demonstrate, throw stones at IDF troops. Jewish settlers place mobile homes on the 2 sites of unauthorized settlement outposts previously removed by the IDF nr. Hebron. (NYT, WP, WT 12/28; PM 12/29; PCHR 1/1)

26 DECEMBER

Israel says it will retaliate for the 12/25 PFLP suicide bombing but will not hit Hamas targets, since Hamas has refrained fr. attacks inside Israel for several mos. (see Quarterly Update). The IDF demolishes the bomber’s family home in Bayt Furik within hrs. The IDF also fires live ammunition at some 200 Israeli, Palestinian, international peace activists staging a nonviolent protest along the separation wall nr. Qalqilya, wounding 1 Israeli (who had just finished 3 yrs. IDF service), 1 American; fires tear gas at another group of protesters at the separation wall west of Ramallah; fires on a funeral process in nr. Khan Yunis (wounding 5 boys, ages 11–18), residential areas of Rafah; conducts arrest raids nr. Khan Yunis; bulldozes 8 dunams of land in al-Qarara. In Gaza, 10,000s of Palestinians attend the funeral for Islamic Jihad’s Humayid, assassinated by the IDF on 12/25. A Palestinian dies of injuries received on 12/25. (WT 12/27; JTA, NYT, PRCS, WP, WT 12/28; CSM 12/29; PCHR, WJW 1/1; MM 1/5; BBC 1/6; JPI 1/8; MEI 1/9)

27 DECEMBER

The IDF sends additional tanks, troops into Nablus, making the incursion begun on 12/18 (now dubbed Operation Still Water) the largest into the city in over a yr., firing on stone-throwing youths, killing 1 Palestinian, wounding 17; closes all roads leading to Tulkarm; erects a number of new roadblocks at entrances to villages around Tulkarm; tightens existing checkpoints, erects 3 new ones around Jenin; demolishes a Palestinian home in Balata r.c.; bulldozes 85 dunams of olive groves east of al-Bureij r.c.; fires on residential areas of Khan Yunis, wounding a Palestinian toddler in her home; conducts arrest raids in Dayr al-Balah. The IDF also bars 2 bus-loads of international peace activists fr. reaching a 2d day of separation wall protests (see 12/26) in Qalqilya, where 1,000s of Palestinians demonstrate, throw stones at IDF troops. Jewish settlers place mobile homes on the 2 sites of unauthorized settlement outposts previously removed by the IDF nr. Hebron. (NYT, WP, WT 12/28; PM 12/29; PCHR 1/1)

28 DECEMBER

The IDF fires tank shells at 3 Palestinians firing mortars at Gaza’s Netzarin settlement in Gaza, killing them; the mortars cause no damage or injuries. The IDF also conducts arrest raids nr. Hebron, Qalqilya; demolishes a Palestinian home in Balata r.c., several structures at an UNRWA school in Dayr al-Balah. IDF chief of staff Lt. Gen. Moshe Ya’alon visits the hospitalized Israeli peace activist wounded by IDF fire on 12/26, says soldiers apparently did not know Israelis were among the demonstrators, promises a full investigation. Some 1,000 Palestinians in villages around Ramallah hold nonviolent demonstrations against the separation wall. Nr. Hebron, 5 Jewish settlers severely beat a Palestinian. (NYT, PM, WP 12/29; VOI, YA 12/29 in WNC 12/31; PCHR 1/1; MM 1/5; MEI 1/9)

29 DECEMBER

The IDF pulls troops out of Nablus, lifts the 24-hr. curfew after a wk. of operations, during which 10s of Palestinians were detained; fires on residential areas of Khan Yunis, hitting an 8-yr.-old Palestinian in the chest with live ammunition; conducts arrest raids in and around Hebron, in Rafah. Israeli
authorities demolish 7 Israeli Arab homes, a mosque in unrecognized villages in the Negev. Young Fatah mbrs. in Rafah waylay, essentially kidnap Arafat aide Ramzi Khoury, Gaza governor Muhammad al-Kidwa at the border crossing as they return fr. Cairo; take them on a forced 4 hr. tour of the recent IDF destruction in Rafah, protesting the PA’s failure to provide for 1,000s of homeless Palestinians. Jewish settlers attack Palestinians, Palestinian houses in Hebron. (WT 12/30; PCHR 1/1; MEI 1/9; HA 1/13)

30 DECEMBER

The IDF attempts to assassinate senior Hamas military leader Jamal Jarrah, firing 2 missiles at his car as he drives in Gaza City, wounding 1 of his passengers, 10 bystanders; the attack marks Israel’s 1st targeting of a Hamas figure since 10/20 and comes soon after the IDF’s 12/26 declaration that it would not target the group. The IDF fires on farmers nr. Morag settlement (killing 1 Palestinian), Palestinian workers laying a sewage channel (seriously wounding 1), Palestinians passing nr. Dayr al-Balah and Rafah (injuring 3); bulldozes 25 dunams of land nr. Dayr al-Balah; conducts house-to-house searches in Nablus, arrest raids in Jenin. A Jewish settler driving nr. Hebron hits, injures a 5-yr.-old Palestinian boy. (HA 12/30; NYT, PCHR, WP , WT 12/31; PCHR 1/1)

1 JANUARY

The IDF fires on Palestinian youths breaking curfew, throwing stones at troops in Nablus, killing a 16-yr.-old Palestinian; fires on residential areas of al-Qarara; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Hebron; imposes a curfew on, reinforces troops in al-Khadir village nr. Hebron; bulldozes 3 dunams of land in al-Qarara, additional land nr. Dayr al-Balah and Gaza City. In Nablus, 2 IDF soldiers are wounded by a roadside bomb. (NYT 1/2; LAW 1/8; PCHR 1/9)

2 JANUARY

After completing a stretch of the separation wall cutting off Jenin fr. Israel, the IDF removes the closure on Jenin, withdraws troops inside the city for the 1st time since 8/03, redeploy troops that have been encircling the city for most of the past 3 yrs. The IDF also fatally shoots a Palestinian allegedly attempting to lay a roadside bomb outside a Gaza settlement; fires on stone-throwing Palestinians in Nablus; bulldozes a Palestinian home in Hebron; places a curfew on, conducts arrest raids in Dayr al-Balah, Hebron, Jenin, Tulkarm; imposes a curfew on, digs trenches across the entrances to Bayt Umar village nr. Hebron. (WP 1/3; WP, WT 1/4; LAW 1/8; PCHR 1/9)

3 JANUARY

The IDF sends armored personnel carriers (APCs) back into Nablus, fatally shooting a 15-yr.-old Palestinian on the roof of his home, fatally shooting 2 stone-throwing youths who challenge the APCs, later directing sniper fire on the funeral procession of the 1st youth, killing a 4th Palestinian (1 of the pallbearers). The IDF also sends a small contingent of troops back into Jenin, reimposes several roadblocks around the city that were lifted on 1/2; bulldozes 5 Palestinian homes and 23 dunams of olive trees in al-Qarara, 16 dunams of olive trees nr. al-Bureij r.c.; conducts arrest raids in al-Qarara, Qalqilya; fires on Israeli, Palestinian, foreign peace activists staging a nonviolent demonstration against the separation wall in the northern West Bank, injuring 1 Israeli, arresting 28 foreigners. (REU 1/3; VOP 1/3 in WNC 1/6; NYT, PCHR, WP, WT 1/4; PR 1/7; LAW 1/8; MEI, PCHR 1/9)
4 JANUARY

The IDF begins requiring all visitors to Gaza and the PA-controlled areas of the West Bank (areas A) to obtain prior written permission for travel from the Civil Admin. or face the chance that they may be prosecuted, denied reentry into Israel, or deported; allows Palestinian workers in Gaza over age 28 to apply for work visas in Israel (previously workers had to be over age 35). The IDF also ends 4 days of bulldozing near Dayr al-Balah, during which 8 Palestinian homes, 12 dunams of land were razed; fires on residential areas near Hebron; fires on Palestinian, foreign peace activists staging a nonviolent demonstration against the separation wall near Ramallah, injuring 18. Sharon orders the removal of another 2 uninhabited unauthorized settlement outposts; settlers immediately appeal to the High Court. (WP, WT 1/5; MM 1/6; PR 1/7; PCHR 1/9; PR 1/14; PCHR 1/22)

5 JANUARY

The IDF continues patrols in Nablus, fires on stone-throwing youths, killing 1 Palestinian; demolishes 2 smugglers' tunnels, 2 Palestinian homes in Rafah; bulldozes 6 Palestinian homes, 46 dunams of land in al-Qarara; demolishes a Palestinian home in Hebron, 1 Khan Yunis; seals 2 Palestinian homes in Wadi al-Silqa. A Jewish settler driving nr. Qalandia checkpoint hits 2 Palestinians, killing 1. The IDF issues confiscation orders for 1,559 dunams of land in Beitunia w. of Ramallah for construction of the separation wall. Palestinians fire an antitank rocket at an IDF patrol in Rafah, causing no damage or injuries. (YA 1/5 in WNC 1/7; NYT 1/6; PR 1/7; PCHR 1/9; PR 1/14; PCHR 1/22)

6 JANUARY

The IDF withdraws troops to the outskirts of Nablus, ending Operation Still Water, during which a total of 10 Palestinian homes were destroyed; demolishes 2 Palestinian homes in Dayr al-Balah, 1 in Rafah; bulldozes 53 dunams of land nr. Dayr al-Balah; fences off 120 dunams of land, 2 Palestinian homes along a settler bypass road nr. Wadi al-Silqa; conducts arrest raids in Jenin. (PR 1/7; JP, VOP 1/7 in WNC 1/9; PCHR 1/9)

7 JANUARY

IDF soldiers on missions to arrest wanted Palestinians fatally shoot 2 AMB mbrs. in Nablus, 1 Hamas mbr. in Tulkarm in what may be assassinations. IDF troops guarding a Jewish settlement in Gaza fire on residential areas of Rafah, fatally shooting a Palestinian inside his home. The IDF also conducts arrest raids in Nablus and nearby 'Ayn Bayt al-Ma' r.c. (MM, REU, PRCS 1/7; JP, VOI 1/9 in WNC 1/13; al-Majallah [London] 1/11 in WNC 1/21) (see 12/10)

Hamas spiritual leader Shaykh Ahmad Yassin says that Hamas could accept a "temporary peace" or renewable "long-term truce" with Israel in exchange for creation of a Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders. (HA, MM 1/9; JP, VOI 1/9 in WNC 1/13; al-Majallah [London] 1/11 in WNC 1/21) (see 12/10)

8 JANUARY

IDF undercover troops fatally shoot AMB mbr. As'ad Falah Khaliliyya in an apparent assassination in Jenin. The IDF also stages arrest raids in Qalqilya, in and around Ramallah; demolishes 2 Palestinian homes in Rafah. In Gaza, 5 armed, masked Fatah mbrs. detain, beat an al-Arabiyya TV correspondent. (REU, PCHR 1/8; HA 1/9; HA, PR 1/14; PCHR 1/15)

9 JANUARY

The IDF sends troops into Jenin r.c. and town just days after redeploying fr. both, conducting arrest raids (targeting the AMB, Islamic Jihad), clashing with Palestinians; troops pull out by the end of the day. The IDF also fires on residential areas of Rafah, wounding a 14-yr.-old Palestinian in her home; conducts house searches, arrest raids in Wadi al-Silqa, Nablus, Qabatya. Israel reportedly approves changes to the route of the separation wall, so that it will run w. of Azun, Baqa'a al-Sharqiyya, Khirbat Jabar, and several homes in Tulkarm, all of which were previously slated to be cut off fr. the east; begins work on stretches of the wall outside Hebron and in the Jordan Valley nr. Tubas. (AP, HA 1/9; VOI, VOP 1/9 in WNC 1/13; PCHR 1/15)

10 JANUARY

The IDF fires on residential areas and the main market of Balata r.c. (wounding 4) and
on residential areas of Bayt Rima nr. Ramallah, Khan Yunis; conducts house searches, arrest raids in Kafr 'Ayn nr. Ramallah, Yamun nr. Jenin. (PCHR 1/15)

11 JANUARY

The IDF intercepts a Palestinian suicide bomber (the 16-yr.-old brother of a 15-yr.-old killed by the IDF on 1/3) nr. Nablus; to avoid capture, the bomber detonates his device, killing only himself; no group claims responsibility. The IDF fires on stone-throwing Palestinian youths in Beita nr. Nablus, killing 1 Palestinian bystander. In Tel Aviv, 100,000 right-wing Israeli protesters (many affiliated with the settler movement) protest against rumored plans by Sharon to uproot Jewish settlements as part of a unilateral disengagement fr. the occupied territories. (AFP, HA, MM 1/11; NYT 1/12; VOP 1/11 in WNC 1/13; MM 1/13; NYT, PR 1/14; YA 1/14 in WNC 1/16; PCHR 1/15; JPI 1/23)

Right-wing settler activist Baruch Marzel announces a new Israeli political party, the Jewish National Front, which advocates the “transfer” of Arab communities to “new locations east of the Jordan River” and pledges “to ensure the immigration of 2 million Jews and the emigration of 2 million Arabs” in the coming yrs. Marzel says that the only group to submit a formal objection to the new party was the Jewish National Front, which argues that the goals of the 2 parties were too similar. (Itim News Service 1/11)

12 JANUARY

The IDF raids Tulkarm r.c., rounding up all inhabitants of 1 section of the camp for questioning, detaining 230 Palestinian men, allowing women and children to go after 10 hrs.; sends APCs into Rafah, shelling residential areas, wounding 3, demolishing 1 Palestinian home and 2 stores, severely damaging 5 homes; demolishes another Palestinian home nr. Hebron; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Anabta nr. Tulkarm, Asira nr. Nablus, Jaba’ nr. Jenin, Kubar nr. Ramallah, Nablus, Qalqilya, Tarqumiyya and Yatta nr. Hebron. Israel completes a section of separation wall cutting off Abu Dis fr. Jerusalem. Palestinians report that the IDF has bulldozed 24 dunams of agricultural land outside Hebron since 1/9, for construction of the wall. (ISM press release 1/12; WT 1/13; PCHR 1/15; WP 2/10)

Sharon makes a statement to the Knesset reiterating his intention to disengage unilaterally fr. the occupied territories if the Palestinians do not make concessions soon. The Knesset endorses Sharon’s statement by a vote of 51-39. (AFP 1/12; MM 1/13; PR 1/14) (see Quarterly Update)

13 JANUARY

The IDF sends troops back into Rafah, demolishing 2 Palestinian homes, heavily damaging a 3d; conducts arrest raids, surrounding a hospital, in Salfit nr. Nablus; fires on residential areas of Bayt Dajan nr. Nablus, Khan Yunis. An AMB gunman fires on a Jewish settler vehicle driving nr. Talmon settlement n. of Ramallah, killing 1 Jewish settler, wounding 2. The IDF bars 386 Palestinians fr. leaving Fr. Rafah for Saudi Arabia to perform the Haj, citing security concerns. ISM volunteer Tom Hurndall, shot by the IDF in Rafah on 4/11/03 and left in a coma, dies in London. (PCHR 1/13; AFP, BBC, HA, MM, PR, WP 1/14; PCHR 1/15; JPI 1/17)

14 JANUARY

A female Palestinian suicide bomber (mother of 2 small children) detonates a device at the Erez crossing, killing 3 IDF soldiers, 1 Israeli security officer, wounding 12; Hamas’s Shaykh Yasin claims responsibility for the attack, saying it was a joint operation with the AMB, noting Hamas’s 1st use of a female bomber, vowing to escalate attacks. Israel seals Gaza, sends home 4,000 Gazan laborers working in the Erez industrial zone. The IDF raids Budrus nr. Ramallah, detaining Ayid and Na’im Morrar, the coordinators of the nonviolent protest group Popular Comm. Against the Wall, which stages rallies against the separation wall; places a curfew on Tulkarm r.c., demolishes 3 Palestinian homes there; raids a nursery in Hebron, confiscating files, demolishing furniture. Palestinians fire 2 Qassam rockets at Erez industrial zone, a mortar at a Jewish settlement in Gaza, causing no damage or injuries in either incident. (AFP, BBC, HA, MM, PRCS 1/14; MNR, VOI, VOP, YA 1/14 in WNC 1/16; MM, NYT, WP, WT 1/15; QA 1/15, AYM 1/17 in WNC 1/21; HA 1/19; WT 1/20; MM, PCHR 1/22; JPI, MEI 1/23)

The World Zionist Organization (WZO) begins offering young Israeli couples up to $9,000/yr. to move to the
unauthorized settlement outpost of Givat Salit in northern Jordan Valley. (YA 1/14) (see Settlement Monitor)

15 JANUARY

The IDF imposes a curfew on Araba w. of Jenin, Far’un s. of Tulkarm; fires on residential areas of Araba; completely demolishes 7 Palestinian homes, partially demolishes 1 nr. Kefar Darom settlement outside Dayr al-Balah; bulldozes homes in Rafah previously severely damaged by IDF fire, severing a water main serving the western half of the city; conducts arrest raids and house searches in Hebron, Nablus, Ramallah. Israeli Environmental Authority planes spray 1,000 dunams of Palestinian agricultural land in Yatta s. of Hebron with incendiary chemicals, destroying the crops. (VOI 1/16 in WNC 1/21; PCHR 1/22)

16 JANUARY

The IDF completely demolishes 3 Palestinian homes, bulldozes 9 dunams of land outside Rafah, along the settler bypass road linking Gush Katif and Morag settlements; completely demolishes 6 Palestinian homes in Rafah (seriously damaging 2 others), 1 in Khan Yunis; fires on residential areas of Khan Yunis, Nablus. (PM 1/16; VOP 1/61 in WNC 1/21; LAW , PCHR 1/22)

In Haifa, an Israeli Arab finds a bomb placed nr. his car, disarms it. This is the 5th such incident in Haifa in 30 mos.; earlier explosions left 2 Israeli Arabs injured. The Israeli government issues an order banning the press fr. discussing a letter sent to the Israeli daily Ma’ariv, claiming responsibility for some of the incidents. MK Issam Makhoul alleges that a Jewish extremist group wrote the letter. (HA 1/27)

17 JANUARY

The IDF closes all entrances to Jenin town and r.c., erects more checkpoints around the town; erects new temporary checkpoints outside 5 villages outside Qalqilya; imposes a curfew on al-Til nr. Nablus, demolishes 1 Palestinian home; blows up 3 Palestinian homes in Rafah; fires on Palestinian vehicles, stone-throwing youths in and around Nablus, in Ramallah; conduct arrest raids, house searches in Hebron; notifies bedouin families w. of Salfit that they must leave the area to make room for the separation wall. (LAW, PCHR 1/22)

18 JANUARY

Israel reopens the Erez crossing, allowing 3,600 Palestinian laborers to reach their jobs in the Erez industrial zone and Israel. The IDF raids a mosque in Hebron, detaining worshippers for 2 hrs.; erects new temporary checkpoints around Tulkarm; closes entrances to Salfit; conducts arrest raids, completely demolishes 1 Palestinian home in Yatta, partially demolishes 3 in Rafah; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Anabta, Askar r.c., Dayr al-Balah, Nablus. (WT 1/19; PCHR 1/20; LAW, PCHR 1/22)

19 JANUARY

The IDF issues confiscation orders for 700 dunams of Palestinian land (including 10 Palestinian homes) in Dayr al-Balah nr. Kefar Darom settlement; for no apparent reason, fires on Palestinians waiting to go through the Erez crossing, wounding 25; fires on residential areas of Rafah, seriously injuring 1 woman outside her home; fires on, seriously wounds a deaf-mute Palestinian woman who strays too close to the separation wall nr. Qalqilya; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Hebron, Nablus, Qalqilya, Tulkarm. (PCHR 1/20; VOI, VOP, YA 1/20 in WNC 1/22; LAW, PCHR 1/22)

The IDF sends a bulldozer into Lebanese territory to clear mines laid by Hizballah along the de facto border. Hizballah shells the bulldozer when it crosses the demarcation fence into Lebanon, killing 1 IDF soldier, wounding 2. (HA 1/19; LBC, MNR 1/19 in WNC 1/21; HA, MM, NYT, WP, WT 1/20; IDF Radio, MNR 1/20 in WNC 1/22; MM 1/21; IRNA 1/21 in WNC 1/23; MM 1/22, 1/23; NYT 1/29) (see Quarterly Update)

20 JANUARY

The IDF sends troops into Rafah to search for smugglers’ tunnels, completely demolishes 22 Palestinian homes, a mosque along the Rafah border with Egypt, heavily damages another 16 homes, leaving 400 Palestinians homeless; raids 2 Palestinian charities in Ramallah, confiscating computers, files; fires stun grenades, tear gas into a high school in Nablus; fires on residential areas of Rafah, wounding 3. The IDF also expels a West Bank Palestinian administrative detainee to Gaza (see Quarterly Update); conducts arrest raids, house searches in and around Askar r.c., Bethlehem, Hebron, Nablus, Salfit, Ramallah;
bulldozes 5 dunams of land in Bayt Lahia, 2 dunams nr. Kefar Darom; arrests 4 herders nr. Bayt Hanun. IDF soldiers scuffle with Jewish settlers who protest the removal of a synagogue built by supporters of deceased right-wing Rabbi Meir Kahane, the only permanent structure at the unauthorized settlement outpost of West Tapuach; soldiers do not attempt to remove trailer homes at the site. Palestinians fire 3 mortars at a Jewish settlement in Gaza, causing no damage or injuries. (AP, HA, MM, PCHR, PRCS 1/20; NYT, PR, WP 1/21; LAW, MM, PCHR 1/22; JPI 1/30)

Israel retaliates for Hizballah’s 1/19 shelling of an IDF bulldozer inside Lebanon by sending warplanes to strike Hizballah targets in s. Lebanon. In Washington, U.S. Secy. of State Colin Powell accuse Hizballah of deliberately taking action to escalate hostilities with Israel. (HA 1/20; LBC, MNR 1/20 in WNC 1/22; NYT, PR, WP 1/21; WJW 1/22; MNR 1/22 in WNC 1/24) (see Quarterly Update)

21 JANUARY

The IDF continues operations in Rafah, firing on stone-throwing youths, shelling residential areas of Rafah, killing a Palestinian woman in her garden, wounding her 13-yr.-old nephew; opens fire on farmers working their fields nr. Khan Yunis, wounding 2; seizes a Palestinian home in East Jerusalem; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Nablus, Rafah, Tulkarm r.c.; begins construction of the separation wall around Kiryat Arba settlement in Hebron, bulldozing a grove of 100 trees. (PM 1/21; HA, LAW, PCHR 1/22; PR 1/28)

The WZO urges every Jewish family in the diaspora to buy $50 worth of Israeli products/mo. to help stimulate the Israeli economy, create 20,000 Israeli jobs. (JP 1/21)

22 JANUARY

The IDF pulls out of Rafah after 2 days, having found no smugglers’ tunnels; conducts arrest raids, fires on stone-throwing Palestinians, blows up a 5-story apartment building in Nablus; demolishes 5 buildings under construction nr. Tulkarm; conducts arrest raids nr. Khan Yunis. The IDF also fires on a group of Palestinian boys that strays too close to the Gaza border fence while hunting for birds, killing an 11-yr.-old Palestinian, wounding 2 (ages 12, 16); IDF officials say they cannot confirm the death, but state that soldiers do not issue a warning call or fire warning shots at Palestinians approaching the fence and that “terrorists sometimes [have] dispatched children to test Israeli defenses.” (HA 1/22; VOP 1/22 in WNC 1/24; HA, NYT 1/23; PR 1/28; LAW, PCHR 1/29)

Sharon’s chief of staff Weisglass meets with NSA Rice in Washington for further discussions on Sharon’s unilateral disengagement plan. (HA, MM 1/22; WP 1/23; JTA 1/26; HA 1/29) (see Quarterly Update)

23 JANUARY

The IDF conducts arrest raids in Jenin, Nablus, Tulkarm; fires on residential areas in Rafah. (PCHR 1/29)

24 JANUARY

The IDF fatally shoots 2 alleged AMB mbrs., both unarmed, who enter a closed military zone in Gaza; sets up 4 new checkpoints on the main road to Qalqilya; fires on residential areas of Rafah; conducts arrest raids in Amun, Khan Yunins. In Hebron, Jewish settlers, Palestinians clash, leaving 3 settlers, 2 Palestinians wounded. Palestinians fire 2 antitank missiles at an IDF patrol nr. Rafah, causing no damage or injuries. (VOI, VOP, YA 1/24 in WNC 1/27; HA, NYT 1/25; PR 1/28; PCHR 1/29)

After 3 yrs. of negotiations via a German mediator, Israel, Hizballah conclude a prisoner swap deal under which Israel will release 401 Palestinian security prisoners, 29 Arab prisoners (including Lebanon’s Shaykh ‘Abd al-Karim Obel and Mustafa Dirani), the bodies of 59 Lebanese fighters in exchange for captured IDF Col. Elhanan Tennenbaum (res.) and 110 Lebanese fight-
men before releasing all residents, withdrawing; conducts a similar but smaller operation in Burqa village nr. Nablus, rounding up residents, firing on homes, arresting 1 man. The **Israel Defense Forces (IDF)** also evacuates signs around Qalqilya warning that "any Israeli who enters" the city will be fined $780; imposes a curfew on, conducts arrest raids in al-'Arub r.c., Nablus; bulldozes 2 dunams of land in Khan Yunis. **Palestinian homes** are attacked; damage or injuries. The **rockets** in recent wks., sparking clashes that leave **1,</p>

27 JANUARY

The **IDF** conducts house searches, arrest raids in Bayt Hanun, Nablus, al-Qarara; bulldozes 67 dunams of land in Dayr al-Balah, 39 dunams in al-Qarara, 7 dunams in Wadi al-Silqa. (VOP 1/26 in WNC 1/28; PCHR 1/29)

28 JANUARY

The **IDF** makes a major predawn raid into Gaza City, targeting Palestinians who have stepped up attacks on Netzarim settlement in recent wks., sparking clashes that leave **5 Palestinian gunmen** (4 Islamic Jihad mbrs., 1 Hamas mbr.), **4 Palestinian bystanders** dead, 7 Palestinians (including an ambulance driver) wounded; **Hamas** fires 2 **Qassam rockets** at Netzarim in response, causing no damage or injuries. The **IDF** also demolishes **3 Palestinian homes** nr. Hebron, 1 in al-Qarara; searches homes, bulldozes 1 dunam of land in al-Qarara. In coordination with the **IDF**, **Palestine Security Forces (PSF)** officers resume patrols in West Bank cities. (MM, PCHR 1/28; VOP 1/28 in WNC 1/30; BBC, HA, LA, NYT, PCHR, WP, WT 1/29; WP 2/11; PCHR 2/12)

29 JANUARY

A **Palestinian suicide bomber** detonates a device on a crowded bus nr. Sharon's **official residence** in West Jerusalem, killing **10 Israelis**, wounding 44. The bomber, whom the PA confirms was a **Bethlehem** **Palestinian (AMB)** officer fr. Aida r.c., leaves 2 suicide notes claiming the attack in the name of the **AMB, Hamas**; the AMB initially claims responsibility, Hamas does so after the 2nd letter is released; the groups do not claim joint responsibility, as they have done in the past, raising questions as to who really staged the attack. **Sharon and Mofaz** say Israel will not routinely seal the territories in the wake of the bombing, so as to not aggravate Palestinians' hardship; will specifically target militant groups. The **IDF** tightens checkpoints around Hebron; conducts house searches, arrest raids in Hebron, Jenin, Nablus. **Hebron Jewish settlers** attack Palestinians in nearby Yatta, forcing **9 Palestinian families** out of their cave dwellings and mud houses; Hebron settlers reportedly seek to expropriate more than 37,000 dunams in the area for settlement expansion. In a plea agmt., an **Israeli court** sentences to 15 mos. in jail **Havat Maon settlers Yitzhak Paz and Matityahu Shvu**, arrested on 7/17/03 for transporting explosives, plotting a major bombing of a Palestinian school, carrying out 2 bombings at Palestinian schools that resulted in no deaths. (BBC, HA, MM 1/29; MM, NYT, WP, WT 1/30; MM 2/3; WJW 2/5; JPI 2/6; [London] 2/8 in WNC 2/18; PCHR 2/12; JPI 2/13)

Israel, **Hizballah** begin to implement the 1st stage of their 2-stage prisoner swap. (BBC, HA, MM, NYT, WJW, WP, WT 1/29; HA, MM, NYT, WP, WT 1/30; MM 2/2; JPI, MEI 2/6; JPI 2/13) (see 1/24, Quarterly Update)
areas of Brazil r.c. (BBC, HA, MM 1/30; NYT, WP, WT 1/31; LAW, PCHR 2/12)

Hizballah, Israel complete implementation of the 1st phase of their prisoner release, open contacts via Germany on the 2d phase. (MEI 2/6) (see Quarterly Update)

31 JANUARY

The IDF demolishes 9 Palestinian homes nr. Ramallah; bulldozes 11 dunams of land nr. Khan Yunis; fires on residential areas of Rafah. (PCHR 2/8, 2/12)

1 FEBRUARY

The IDF makes a rare raid into Jericho, fatally shooting wanted AMB mbr. Shadi Jaradat in what may be an assassination, wounding several Palestinians, arresting 5, demolishing 3 Palestinian homes. (NYT, WP 2/2; PCHR 2/8, 2/12, 2/19)

2 FEBRUARY

Despite Israel's pledge (1/29) not to seal the occupied territories in the wake of the Jerusalem bombing, Israeli-Arabs seeking to enter Gaza with pre-arranged permits to celebrate Id al-Adha report that the IDF is blocking all entry to the Strip. The IDF assassinates senior Islamic Jihad mbr. Yasir Abu Aysh, firing missiles at his family's home in Rafah, also killing Islamic Jihad mbr. Hussein Abu Aysh (Yasir's brother), AMB Rafah leader Majdi Khatib, Hamas mbr. Baha' Judah, wounding 3; Yasir Abu Aysh, who reportedly has been in hiding since he lost both legs and an arm in a mysterious explosion in 2002, had come out of seclusion to visit his family for Id al-Adha. The IDF also raids Aida r.c. in search of Bethlehem Izzeddin al-Qassam Brigades head Muhammad Abu Odeh, who fires on IDF soldiers, wounding 4, before being shot dead; the IDF then blows up his family home. In Ramallah, 2-3 armed AMB mbrs. reportedly storm the offices of al-Dar newspaper and al-Quds TV, destroying equipment, computers, archives. (HA, NYT, WP, WT 2/3; JP 2/8 in WNC 2/10; Independent 2/9; PCHR 2/12)

Sharon says that he has given orders to plan for the "relocation" of 17 of 20 Jewish settlements in Gaza and 3 Jewish settlements in the West Bank over the next 2 yrs., with "the assumption that in the future there will be no Jews in Gaza." (BBC, HA, MM 2/2; AP, MM, NYT, WP, WT 2/3; VOP 2/3 in WNC 2/5; NYT 2/4; WJW 2/5; JT, al-Ra'i 2/8 in WNC 2/10; AYM 2/8 in WNC 2/19; PR 2/11; CSM 2/12; JPI 2/13; AYM 2/17 in WNC 2/20; MEI 2/20) (see 11/23, Quarterly Update)

3 FEBRUARY

IDF soldiers stationed at Gaza's Gadid settlement fire on Palestinian farmers working their fields, wounding 1. (PCHR 2/12)

4 FEBRUARY

The IDF conducts arrest raids in Bethlehem (seriously injuring 1 Palestinian arrested), Tubas (targeting the AMB); fires on residential areas of Rafah. In Gaza City, 4 PSF mbrs. storm PA police headquarters in an attempt to assassinate Gaza PSF head Ghazi Jabali; Jabali escapes unhurt, 1 PSF officer is killed, 11 PSF officers and bodyguards are wounded. (HA, WT 2/5; MM, NYT, WP, WT 2/6; PCHR 2/12)

5 FEBRUARY

The IDF assassinates Hamas mbr. Nasir Abu Shuka with an exploding cell phone in Bureij r.c.; fatally shoots a PFLP mbr. who throws a grenade at an IDF patrol in Rafah; fatally shoots a Palestinian youth nr. Netzarim settlement; demolishes a Palestinian home nr. Jenin, 1 nr. Ramallah; conducts arrest raids, house searches in 'Aza r.c., Balata r.c., Bayt Sahur, Bethlehem, Hebron, Jenin, Nablus; bulldozes 45 dunams of land in Wadi al-Silqa. In Gaza, an AMB mbr. is killed by friendly fire during an attempted AMB ambush of an IDF patrol. Palestinians also fire an antitank rocket at an IDF patrol nr. Gaza's Neve Dekalim settlement, causing no damage or injuries. (HA 2/5; WP 2/6; VOP 2/6 in WNC 2/10; PCHR 2/8, 2/12)

6 FEBRUARY

IDF undercover units traveling in cars with Palestinian license plates raid Askar r.c., arrest 4 Palestinians. The IDF also begins (without forewarning) requiring special licenses for trucks crossing through al-Hamra checkpoint in the n. Jordan Valley, Tayasir checkpoint outside Jenin; fires on residential areas in Rafah, nr. Tulkarm; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Bethlehem, Hebron; orders the confiscation of 220 dunums of Dayr al-Balah land that the IDF has already bulldozed; begins construction of a new"
settler bypass road nr. Tulkarm. Palestinians fire 2 antitank rockets at an IDF convoy in Rafah, wounding 2 soldiers; fire 2 Qassam rockets, 1 causing heavy damage to a greenhouse in a Gaza settlement, 1 landing outside Sederot, causing no damage or injuries. (HA 2/8; PCHR 2/12)

7 FEBRUARY

The IDF assassinates an Islamic Jihad military cmdr. Aziz Shami, firing a missile at his car as he drives through Gaza City, also killing a 12-yr.-old Palestinian walking to school, wounding 2 passengers in Shami’s car, 7 bystanders on the street. The IDF also fires on a group of Palestinians allegedly attempting to infiltrate Israel fr. Gaza nr. Bu-reij r.c., mortally wounding a Palestinian teenager, allowing him to bleed to death. Palestinians detonate a roadside bomb nr. an IDF convoy in Gaza, causing no damage or injuries. Hebron Jewish settlers attack local Palestinians with iron bars (seriously injuring 1), break the windows of 4 Palestinian homes to deter them fr. using a road linking al-Ibrahimi Mosque/Tomb of the Patriarchs and Kiryat Arba settlement. (PCHR 2/7; VOP 2/7, MENA, VOP 2/8 in WNC 2/10; HA, NYT, WP, WT 2/8; PR 2/11; PCHR 2/12)

The PA hastily convenes a military tribunal to arraign 4 Palestinians in connection with the 10/15/03 Erez roadside bombing that killed 4 American security officers, charging them with possessing explosives and weapons, planting mines nr. the area of the bombing, but not charging them with the specific bombing that led to those deaths. (JP 2/7; HA, NYT, WP, WT 2/8; al-Quds 2/11 in WNC 2/13) (see Quarterly Update)

More than 350 Fatah mbrs. resign to protest corruption, mismanagement, lack of political direction within the movement. (REU 2/7; NYT, WP, WT 2/8; VOP 2/8 in WNC 2/10; MM 2/9, 2/10; NYT, WJW 2/12; SA 2/13 in WNC 2/18) (see Doc. B)

8 FEBRUARY

The IDF raids the Rafah home of PFLP military cmdr. Ashraf Abu Libdeh, fatally shooting him in what may be an assassination, also firing on the surrounding area, wounding 21 bystanders, including 9 children, 2 women. In Silwan, East Jerusalem, 16 Jewish settler families under heavy Israeli police guard take over 16 Palestinian homes they claim to have purchased fr. residents, doubling Silwan’s settler population; settlers have taken over a total of 50 homes, schools, archeological sites in the area. An ailing 8-yr.-old Palestinian boy fr. Habla village dies en route to the hospital when no IDF soldiers are present to allow his passage through the separation wall to reach a Qalqilya hospital 3 km away, forcing his ambulance to drive 30 km around the wall to reach the hospital. The Sharon admin. announces it will shorten the planned route of the separation wall to reduce the hardship on Palestinians, gain U.S. support for the project. (Globes, MA 2/8; VOP 2/8 in WNC 2/10; HA, WP, WT 2/9; VOP 2/9 in WNC 2/11; WP 2/10; PR 2/11; PCHR 2/12)

9 FEBRUARY

IDF undercover units driving a car with Palestinian license plates raid Balata r.c., open fire on wanted PFLP mbr. Samir Khudaysh without warning, seriously wounding, then arresting him. The IDF also fires on a group of armed Palestinians nr. Jenin, killing 1 Palestinian, wounding 2; surrounding, fires tear gas into a secondary school nr. Hebron; occupies a Palestinian apartment building nr. Jenin as a military post, expelling the 32 residents; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Bethlehem, Nablus, Tulkarm r.c. and nr. Hebron, Ramallah; raids, searches dorms at al-Najah University in Nablus, arresting 3 students; arrests 6 Palestinian fishermen off the coast of Gaza for fishing in a prohibited area. The IDF, accompanied by Hebron Jewish settlers, raid Khirbat Janba, outside Hebron; search the caves and mud houses of 36 Palestinian families (around 350 people), order them to leave the area (see 1/29). (PCHR 2/12)

10 FEBRUARY

The IDF bulldozes a Palestinian home in Silwan, East Jerusalem; raids, fires on residential areas of Budrus village nr. Ramallah; bulldozes 4 dunams of land in Wadi al-Silqa; conducts arrest raids in ‘Aida r.c. (VOP 2/10 in WNC 2/12; PCHR 2/12)

11 FEBRUARY

The IDF stages a major raid on Gaza City (reportedly in response to recent attacks on nearby Jewish settlements that caused no injuries), sparking an intense exchange of gunfire with Hamas, Islamic
Jihad gunmen, leaving 12 Palestinians (5 Hamas members, 2 Islamic Jihad members, 2 PSF officers, 3 bystanders) dead and 60 (33 of them children) wounded; no IDF soldiers are injured. In an apparent assassination during the raid, the IDF surrounds the home of wanted Hamas mbr. Ashraf Abu Hassanain; orders his family to evacuate; shoots into the home, killing Abu Hassanain and 2 other Hamas members; blows up the home atop their bodies. In response, Palestinians fire 2 mortars at Karnei settlement, 2 Qassam rockets toward Sderot, causing no damage or injuries. The IDF also stages a major incursion into Rafah, fatally shooting 3 Palestinians, wounding 24 Palestinian homes and 3 schools; fires on residential areas of Khan Yunis, seriously wounding a 9-yr.-old Palestinian inside his home; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Bayt Sahur, in Tulkarm, nr. Nablus; demolishes a Palestinian home in Wadi al-Silqa. Later in the day, 1,000s of Palestinians attend the funeral for 1 of the Hamas members killed today, senior military cmdr. Hani Abu Shukayla, who had survived 2 previous Israeli assassination attempts. An IDF warplane malfunctions, crashes outside Hebron, causing no damage or injuries; the pilot ejects safely. (BBC, HA, MM, PR 2/11; IDF Radio, VOI, VOP, YA 2/11 in WNC 2/13; MM, NYT, PCHR, WP, WT 2/12; al-Hayat al-Jadida, al-Quds, VOP 2/14 in WNC 2/18; PR 2/18; PCHR 2/19)

12 FEBRUARY

In an apparent assassination, IDF undercover units raid Qarawat Bani Zaid nr. Ramallah, chase and mortally wound wanted Hamas mbr. Samir Arar, barring ambulances fr. reaching him for 2 hrs., allowing him to bleed to death. The IDF also shells a group of Palestinian boys playing too close to the Rafah-Egypt border fence, killing a 12-yr.-old Palestinian boy, wounding an 11-yr.-old; conducts arrest raids, house searches in Aida r.c., Bethlehem; imposes curfews on 5 villages nr. Bethlehem. A Palestinian dies of injuries received during the 2/1 IDF raid on Jericho. (PM 2/12; VOP 2/13 in WNC 2/18; PR 2/18; PCHR 2/19)

Powell says that the U.S. is taking Sharon's plan for unilateral disengagement seriously, will send senior officials to Israel next w.k. to discuss it further. (NYT 2/13; al-Quds, VOP 2/14 in WNC 2/18) (see Quarterly Update)

13 FEBRUARY

The IDF raids Qabatiya in search of a suspected car bomber, opens fire on a car driving in the vicinity, killing an innocent Palestinian; fires on, wounds, detains 2 Palestinians who stray too close to the Green Line southwest of Hebron; fires on residential areas of Tubas; conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Hebron, Nablus. Unidentified assailants believed to be Palestinian set fire to the car of the Palestinian newspaper al-Hayat al-Jadida's Gaza bureau chief. (VOP 2/13 in WNC 2/18; NYT 2/14; PR 2/18; PCHR 2/19)

14 FEBRUARY

The IDF blows up a Palestinian home nr. Jenin; bulldozes a 150 m stretch of land inside a Khan Yunis cemetery, destroying the property boundary wall, several gravesites; conducts arrest raids nr. Jenin; tightens roadblocks around Ramallah, Nablus. In Bethlehem, a Palestinian child grazing animals is injured when he accidentally triggers unexploded IDF ordnance. (PCHR 2/19)

15 FEBRUARY

The IDF conducts arrest raids, house searches nr. Jenin; issues confiscation orders for a 15-dunam plot of land adjacent to Negohot settlement nr. Hebron. Some 200 Palestinian journalists temporarily occupy the PC building in Gaza to protest several recent mysterious attacks on reporters (e.g., 1/8, 2/2, 2/13). (VOP 2/15 in WNC 2/18; WP 2/16; PR 2/18; PCHR, WJW 2/19)
Palestinians wait to cross an IDF checkpoint outside Nablus, 21 January. (AFP/Jaafar Ashtiyeh)