

2015 and 2016 in Review

The years 2015 and 2016 were by and large a continuation of the previous years with continued violence; excessive use of force by Israeli soldiers and police; an increase in attacks by Jewish extremists and settlers against Palestinians, their property, and their holy places, particularly Al-Aqsa Mosque; ongoing impunity for Israelis who assault Palestinians; enduring demolitions of Palestinian homes and structures; thousands of Palestinians, including children, imprisoned by Israel and abused in custody; increasing settlement growth; and continued restrictions on Palestinian development and strangulation of its economy.

The Year That Was: 2015

JANUARY

Jan. 1: The Government of Palestine lodges a declaration under article 12(3) of the Rome Statute accepting the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC) over alleged crimes committed "in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, since June 13, 2014".

Jan. 2: Palestine accedes to the Rome Statute by depositing its instrument of accession with the UN Secretary-General.

Jan. 11: French President Francois Hollande and leaders including Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Mahmoud Abbas marched at the front of a mammoth procession of solidarity and defiance after attacks in the French capital that claimed 17 lives, which began near where gunmen killed 12 people at satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo.

Jan. 16: ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda opens a preliminary investigation into possible war crimes committed against Palestinians, including during last year's Gaza war.

Jan. 21: 23-year-old Hamza Muhammad Hasan Matrouk from Tulkarem refugee camp attacks passengers with a knife on a bus in Tel Aviv on Wednesday wounding at least 12 people before being shot and injured by a passing prison officer.

Jan. 30: Israel publishes tenders for 450 new settlement units in the West Bank, including 114 units in a new site known as East Migron. The move is harshly criticized by the US and UK.

FEBRUARY

February 2: William Schabas, Chair of the UN Independent Commission of Inquiry on the 2014 Gaza conflict as established pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution S-21/1, submits his resignation following an official complaint from Israel on January 30 accusing him of "clear and documented bias against Israel."

February 5: UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announces Nickolay Mladenov of Bulgaria as his new Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and his Personal Representative to the PLO/PA.

February 7: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas issues a presidential decree creating a 32-member committee, headed by chief negotiator Saeb Erekat, to identify and oversee cases to lodge with the ICC and prepare the necessary documents and records.

MARCH

March 4: The Israeli right-wing Likud Party holds that a 2009 speech by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at Bar-Ilan University, in which he had expressed support for a Palestinian State, was “simply not relevant” any longer.

March 17: Netanyahu's Likud Party wins a surprise victory in Israel's early elections. In response, the PA said it will speed up its process of prosecuting Israel at the ICC, while international voices, including the British Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg and US President Obama told Netanyahu that their countries would reassess their approach to Israeli-Palestinian peace if he did not backtrack from remarks regarding two-State solution.

March 24: US President Obama expresses doubts about the prospect of a peace agreement under PM Netanyahu.

March 27: French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius announces that France intends to introduce a Security Council resolution that could present a negotiating framework to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

March 31: Press reports suggest that the US may push a renewed discussion of the Arab (Saudi) initiative.

APRIL

April 1: The State of Palestine formally gains membership of the ICC with the aim of pursuing Israelis for war crimes.

April 2: The Israeli army arrests PLC member Khalida Jarrar (PFLP) at her home in Ramallah for disobeying an Israeli order restricting her movement in the West Bank.

April 6: Marking the 67th anniversary of the Deir Yassin massacre, the League of Arab States issues a statement calling for international intervention to stop Israeli crimes against Palestinians and to implement the decisions regarding the two-State solution, also stressing the importance of activating the Arab Peace Initiative.

April 13: Aida, a coalition of over 40 international aid agencies, releases the report “Charting a New Course: Overcoming the stalemate in Gaza”, urging the international community to take substantial steps to end the misery of Palestinians in Gaza.

April 14: The Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories Yoav Mordechai says that Israel will allow Palestinian doctors from the Bethlehem and Hebron districts to enter Jerusalem in their vehicles for the first time in 15 years.

April 28: Qatar and Turkey put forward a new proposal for a long-term ceasefire between Israel and Hamas via the Turkish and Qatari ambassadors in Ankara and Gaza. The basic plan, dubbed “Tahdhit Ala’amar” (Ceasefire for Reconstruction) will include a five-year moratorium on hostilities between the two sides. Turkey’s input to the plan will be to create a floating harbour off Gaza’s coast.

MAY

May 13: The Vatican formally recognizes the State of Palestine.

May 17: In Rome, Pope Francis declares as saints two 19th Century Palestinian nuns – Marie Alphonsine Ghattas of Jerusalem who had dedicated her life to the poor and Mariam Bawardy of Galilee known as the Patron to Prisoners – marking the first time Palestinian nuns are canonized.

- Yesh Din says a report that 85.3% of investigative files against Israeli [settlers] who harm Palestinians in the West Bank are closed due to the failure to locate suspects or insufficient evidence, and just 1.9% of complaints to the Israeli police by Palestinians result in a conviction.

May 27: The Quartet announces that Tony Blair will step down as the Quartet’s Representative.

- Israeli President Reuven Rivlin says he is not opposed to negotiations with Hamas, and that Israel and the Palestinians have a shared interest in improving the quality of life for residents in the Gaza Strip.

JUNE

June 9: Israel's High Court of Justice rejects a petition to reinstate planning authority in Area C of the West Bank to local Palestinians, ruling that the petition did not prove that Palestinians in Area C were discriminated against when compared with the "Israeli population" there.

June 18: Jewish extremists torch the Church of the Multiplication at Tabgha on the Sea of Galilee.

June 22: The Report of the UN Independent Commission of Inquiry on the 2014 Gaza conflict suggests that possible war crimes were committed by both sides.

June 24: UNDP Special Representative Valent says it would likely take 30 years to rebuild the extensive damage from the 2014 war in Gaza.

June 26: The State of Palestine signs a historic accord with the Vatican enshrining Palestine's special status as the birthplace of Christianity and the cradle of the monotheistic religions.

JULY

July 13: Saeb Erekat takes office as PLO Secretary-General, replacing the dismissed Yasser Abed Rabbo.

July 20: The Knesset passes a new law punishing stone-throwers with up to 20 years imprisonment.

July 24: Peace Now reports about advanced Israeli plans for the development of 1,065 housing units in eight different settlements throughout East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

July 30: The PA announces a reshuffle of the Palestinian cabinet, a decision Hamas labelled a "coup".

- The Israeli Knesset approves a law allowing prisoners on hunger strike to be force-fed.

July 31: A settler arson attack in Duma village near Nablus, leaves 18-month old Ali Saad Dawabsha dead and his four-year old brother, his mother and father, seriously injured. The parents later succumb to their wounds.

AUGUST

August 8: According to an UNRWA study the infant mortality rate in Gaza has risen for the first time in five decades; while in 2008, the number of babies dying before the age of one was 20.2 per 1,000 live births, it was 22.4 in 2013.

August 13: The Israeli Foreign Ministry has warned the EU against funding building projects in "Area C" of the West Bank.

August 13: President Abbas issues a decree ordering the closure of the Palestinian Peace Coalition (PPC), which promotes along with Israeli activists the Geneva Initiative. PPC Chairman is Yasser Abed Rabbo, who was the PLO Secretary-General until being dismissed from the post by President Abbas last month. The PPC's assets and property in Ramallah are said to be transferred to the Information Ministry.

August 21: Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal confirms that his organization and Israel were engaged in negotiations over a long-term truce via several mediators.

August 22: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas resigns as head of the PLO Executive Committee, followed by a majority of the Committee members.

SEPTEMBER

September 2: The Knesset passes with 45-14 a controversial counterterrorism bill, which significantly increases the government's authority, expands the definition of what constitutes a terrorist organization, and raises the maximum sentence for terrorism-related offences to 30 years in prison.

September 8: The Palestine football team plays a World Cup qualifier at home for the first time, holding the United Arab Emirates to a goalless draw in the Faisal Husseini stadium in Ar-Ram.

September 8: The UNGA votes with 119 to 8 (including Australia, Israel and the US) and 45 abstentions, to allow the flags of Palestine and the Vatican - both having observer status - to be raised at the UN.

September 30: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas tells the UNGA that Palestine is a State occupied by Israel and no longer bound by the 1993 Oslo Accords, as violations and Israeli settlement activity take place on a daily basis.

- At a ceremony at the UN headquarters in New York, the Palestinian flag is raised for the first time.

OCTOBER

October 9: Six Palestinians are killed and 145 others injured when Israeli military forces open fire on a demonstration by the Gaza border fence near Khan Younis.

October 11: The Palestinian Ministry of Health reports that Israeli forces have shot over 1,300 Palestinians with live and rubber-coated bullets since the beginning of the month.

October 13: The League of Arab States holds an emergency meeting in Cairo to discuss the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people, land, and holy sites.

October 16: Palestinians set parts of the Joseph's Tomb complex in Nablus on fire.

October 21: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu causes a worldwide outrage when he tells the 37th World Zionist Congress that the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Haj Amin Al-Husseini, who met with Hitler in 1941, was to be blamed for the Holocaust, saying "He [the mufti] flew to Berlin. Hitler didn't want to exterminate the Jews at the time, he wanted to expel the Jews. And Haj Amin Al-Husseini went to Hitler and said, 'If you expel them, they'll all come here.' 'So what should I do with them?' he asked. He said, 'Burn them.'"

- The UNESCO Executive Board adopts a resolution in which it strongly condemns Israeli aggressions and illegal measures restricting Muslims' freedom of worship at al-Aqsa Mosque and requests the Occupying Power to respect the pre-1967 *status quo*.

October 24: During a meeting with US Secretary of State John Kerry in Amman, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas demands "international protection" for the occupied Palestinian territory against "terrorist" acts by Israeli settlers, Israel's "extrajudicial executions," and punitive demolitions of homes.

October 28: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas addresses the international community at a Special Meeting of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva and urges the UNSC to establish a special regime for the international protection for the Palestinian people.

NOVEMBER

November 1: By a vote of 51:17 the Knesset passes in second and third (final) readings a temporary law making three years in prison the minimum penalty for dangerous rock-throwing, and depriving anyone convicted of rock-throwing from the benefits of the National Insurance Institute (NII) while in prison. If a child is convicted, the child's parents will not receive NII benefits while the child serves the sentence.

November 4: In Ramallah, the PLO Executive Committee approves a new political programme that could redefine the Palestinians' ties with Israel.

November 9: Israel's civilian planning committee for construction in the West Bank gives a green light to some 2,200 new housing units within existing settlements and retroactively recognizes two outposts, in a bid to pre-empt legal attempts by Palestinians and rights groups to see the sites evacuated.

November 11: The EU issues new guidelines for labelling products from illegal Israeli settlements.

November 16: Israel's security cabinet outlaws the Islamic Movement's northern branch in Israel in what Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says was a bid to end "dangerous incitement."

November 20: Jonathan Pollard is released on parole after serving a 30-year life sentence in the US for spying for Israel.

November 29: Israel says it will suspend diplomatic contacts with EU bodies involved in the "diplomatic process with the Palestinians", following the EU decision to label goods produced in Israel's illegal settlements.

DECEMBER

December 1: Israel reportedly plans to ask countries with whom it has friendly ties and who want Israeli cooperation to change their anti-Israel voting patterns at the UN.

December 2: Head of the Quartet Office in the Middle East, Kito de Boer, says that one million new jobs would be needed in Palestine during the next 15 years.

December 3: Addressing foreign journalists, Israeli President Rivlin said that the solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict is the establishment of a confederation with defined borders and land swaps but one army.

- The BDS movement announces a victory as the UNHCR office in Jordan confirmed to journalists that it no longer does business with the British private security firm G4S.

December 6: PFLP and PLC member Khalida Jarrar, who was arrested in April, is sentenced to 15 months in jail at the Ofer military court, *inter alia* for encouraging attacks against Israel and violating a travel ban.

- Hamas rejected calls to let the Palestinian Authority reassert control on the Gaza side of the Rafah border crossing with Egypt.

December 9: During a meeting with Israeli President Reuven Rivlin at the White House, President Barack Obama says that the US will keep working towards Middle East peace despite slim chances for near-term success.

December 13: During a conference organized by *Haaretz* and the New Israel Fund in New York, PLO Secretary-General Saeb Erekat calls on Israel "not to give up" on the two-state solution. He said the reality being created on the ground will not create a single binational Jewish-Palestinian state but "one state, two systems," which he described as "an apartheid state."

- Palestine announced that it was submitting its instrument of accession to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

December 17: Amid a widespread campaign to clamp down on left-wing groups, Israel has banned the activist group Breaking the Silence from speaking in schools or to groups of soldiers.

- Israel and Turkey have reached a preliminary agreement to normalize relations, including the return of ambassadors, after Turkey agreed to drop charges against Israeli officers in the deaths of Turkish activists aboard a ship in 2010, and Israel will establish a fund for the victims' families.

December 18: UN Special Rapporteur Forst expressed grave concerns that human rights defenders are being subjected to physical attacks, harassment, arrest and detention, and death threats.

December 22: The Parliament of Greece unanimously votes in favor of recognizing the State of Palestine as an independent state. The vote is attended by visiting President Abbas and Greek Prime Minister Tsipras.

December 29: The PA Detainees and Ex-Detainees Committee said that Israel had detained 2,179 in 2015.

December 30: OCHA says 170 Palestinians and 26 Israelis have been killed in 2015 in attacks and clashes.

The Year that Was 2016

JANUARY

January 2: The Holy See announces that its 2012 recognition of Palestine has come into effect.

January 4: UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Makarim Wibisono, submits his resignation to the President of the Human Rights Council, effective as of March 31, 2016, expressing deep regret that Israel failed to grant him access to the OPT throughout his mandate.

January 10: Palestinian Minister of Religious Affairs Yousef Ide'es states that Israeli authorities and settlers have committed over 1,336 violations against Muslim and Christian holy sites in the OPT in 2015.

January 13: Following Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom's calls for an Israeli investigation into extrajudicial executions of Palestinians, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs summons Sweden's Ambassador to Israel Carl Magnus Nesser to convey its "rage" and states that officials from Sweden are currently unwelcome in Israel.

January 18: In its Conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process, the Council of the EU reiterates the EU's "strong opposition to Israel's settlement policy" and its commitment "to ensure that - in line with international law - all agreements between the State of Israel and the EU must unequivocally and explicitly indicate their inapplicability to the territories occupied by Israel in 1967", adding that this "does not constitute a boycott of Israel which the EU strongly opposes."

January 24: After almost two years, Israel approves 153 new settlement homes in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, marking the end of an informal building freeze.

January 26: During a open debate on the situation in the Middle East at the UNSC, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon notes that settlement activities raised questions about Israel's commitment to a two-State solution.

January 29: French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius says France would recognize a Palestinian State if it fails to revive Israeli-Palestinian peace talks at an international conference in favour of the two-State solution.

FEBRUARY

February 2: Israel passes a law allowing police to stop and frisk suspects without probable cause in an attempt to target minorities and Arabs.

February 8: Fatah and Hamas reach an agreement at national reconciliation talks in Doha and for which both leaderships must now give their final approvals.

February 10: At a special Knesset debate on the two-State solution, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu states that, in the current political reality, Israel has no choice but to continue its control over the West Bank. Opposition leader Isaac Herzog believes that it is possible to achieve security by separating Israel from the Palestinians.

February 14: Peace Now reports that Israel has authorized 350 new housing units and broke ground on around 1,800 in 2015.

- Israeli Education Minister Naftali Bennett calls for the annexation of Area C in the West Bank, while giving the Palestinians "autonomy on steroids" in Areas A and B.

February 26: Palestinian prisoner Muhammad Al-Qiq ends his 94-day hunger strike after his lawyer reaches a deal with Israeli authorities, according to which he would be released on 21 May.

MARCH

March 1: World Bank statistics indicate that Gaza has the highest rate of unemployment in the world.

March 2: Addressing the 16th session of the Fatah Revolutionary Council in Ramallah, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas reaffirms support for the French Peace Initiative to convene an international peace conference.

- Israel's High Court rules that Israel has to return 1,700 dunums of land to private Palestinian landowners in Area C of the West Bank, which had been taken through military seizure orders between 1978 and 1984, but was never used (except for two small army bases that were abandoned in the 1990s).

March 8: A bill is formally submitted to the Israeli Knesset by Israeli Transportation and Intelligence Minister Yisrael Katz (Likud) to deport the family members of Palestinian assailants who were killed by Israel since October 2015.

March 9: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas is reported to have turned down a peace initiative put forward by US Vice-President Joe Biden in Ramallah. The deal offered a freeze on settlement construction and a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem in exchange for the recognition of Israel as a Jewish State and the relinquishment of a Palestinian right of return to Israeli territories.

March 13: US Secretary of State John Kerry says the US was discussing ways to help preserve the two-State solution.

March 14: Palestine is awarded full membership in the Permanent Court of Arbitration by a vote of 57:9 and 24 abstentions.

March 16: COGAT confirms that Israel has expropriated a large stretch of land near Jericho, declaring as State land some 2,342 dunums of Palestinian land in the Jordan Valley.

March 23: In response to Israel's decision to stop admitting to East Jerusalem Palestinian-made produce from the West Bank, the PA orders a boycott of five Israeli food-makers, barring Palestinian vendors from buying from Tnuva, Strauss Group Ltd., Tara, Soglowek, and Tapuzina.

March 24: After allegedly stabbing an Israeli soldier in the Tel Rumeida area of Hebron's Old City, Abdel Fattah Al-Sharif and Ramzi Aziz Al-Qasrawi, both 21, are killed "execution-style" with shots to their heads after lying already injured on the ground.

- During a visit to Argentina, US President Obama says he did not expect a breakthrough on an Israeli-Palestinian deal while he is in office.

- Nickolay Mladenov, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, unveils a plan by the Quartet to produce a report to help create a political environment for both sides to resume peace negotiations.

- In a landmark victory for the Palestinian leadership, the UN Human Rights Council passes four resolutions: Res. A/HRC/31/L.36 reaffirms the inalienable, permanent and unqualified right of the Palestinian people to self-determination; Res. A/HRC/31/L.37 demands that Israel cease all practices and actions that violate the human rights of the Palestinian people or the character, status, and demographic composition of the OPT including in and around East Jerusalem; A/HRC/31/L.38 requests the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to review the implementation of recommendations on ensuring accountability and justice for all violations of international law in the OPT; and A/HRC/31/L.39 demands that Israel immediately cease and reverse all settlement activities, and requests the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to investigate the settlements' implications on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people and to produce a database of all companies doing business in Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

March 30: An official 15-member PA delegation offers their condolences to the family of Munir Ammar, the head of the Israeli Civil Administration in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, who died in a plane crash. The move is condemned by many Palestinians.

APRIL

April 11: HRW reports that Israeli forces abuse detained Palestinian children, "routinely" interrogate them without the presence of their parents, subjected them to unnecessary force during arrest and detention, and hold them in unsafe conditions.

April 13: Peace Now reports that the Israeli government has given the green light to another 267 settlement homes, bringing the total number of new units approved this year to 941, almost tripling the number compared to the same period of the previous year.

April 14: The new US Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015 accuse Israel of "excessive use of force" against Palestinians amounting to a violation of human rights, and highlight numerous allegations of Israeli rights abuses, including the arbitrary arrest and torture of Palestinians, as well as restrictions on their freedom of movement and speech.

April 15: After a one-month freeze by Israeli authorities, visits of Gazans above the age of 60 to Al-Aqsa Mosque resume with some 200 attending Friday prayers.

- The 13th OIC summit in Istanbul ends with a joint resolution reaffirming the right of Palestinians to self-determination, the right of return for Palestinian refugees, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital.

April 21: Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad Maliki states that a push for the adoption of a UNSC resolution demanding that Israel put an end to settlement expansion will be put on hold to focus on the French Peace Initiative.

April 23: Israeli authorities deliver confiscation notices for 5,000 dunums of private land to the Palestinian village of Jalud.

April 25: Leaders of the Knesset "Land of Israel" caucus submit 10 separate bills calling for an annexation of different settlement blocs making up most of Area C of the West Bank, and applying Israeli law, judiciary, and administration to them.

April 28: The UN releases figures revealing a four-fold increase from last year in the rate of Israeli demolitions of Palestinian homes and structures that have left a record-high 808 Palestinians displaced since the start of 2016.

- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu officially rejects the French Peace Initiative to convene an international peace conference, ahead of a summit planned for May 30 in Paris.

MAY

May 19: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appoints ultra-nationalist right-wing politician Avigdor Lieberman as Foreign Minister. Palestinians say the move confirms Israel's favouring extremism.

May 23: After rejecting the French Peace Initiative, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu offers instead to hold direct talks in Paris with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

May 28: The League of Arab States says it backs France's Middle East Peace Initiative and all international efforts to clinch an Israeli-Palestinian peace accord.

- Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas calls for NATO forces to replace Israeli soldiers in the West Bank as part of any peace deal that leads to the creation of a two-State solution.

JUNE

June 3: France hosts an international meeting to forge a strategy for restarting Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. Representatives from 26 nations, including U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry but excluding Israelis, participate and warn time is running out on two-state solution. Summit ends with vague call to work on a package of economic and security incentives and a international call by year's end.

June 6: EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Federica Mogherini tells a UNSC briefing that the "possibility of a secure state of Israel and a viable state of Palestine living side by side is fading

away," adding that "together with the perspective of the two states, peace would also get beyond reach."

June 8: A shooting attack in the Sarona Market in Tel Aviv leaves four Israelis killed and 10 wounded. The suspected attackers - cousins Mohammad Ahmad Makhamreh and Khalid Mohammad Makhamreh from Yatta - are injured and detained. Israel suspends all permits given to Palestinian for Ramadan. Later that night, Israeli forces close off and raid their hometown.

June 17: The Israeli government announces plans to build a concrete wall along the border with the Gaza Strip.

June 20: The EU's 28 Foreign Ministers endorse the French initiative.

June 26: Israel and Turkey reached a reconciliation agreement that ends the bilateral crisis.

June 27: The State of Palestine has ratified the 2010 Kampala amendments to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which criminalize the use of certain kinds of weapons in non-international conflicts, whose use was already forbidden in international conflicts, as well as defining the crime of 'aggression (e.g., invading or bombing another state, blockading its ports or coastlines; using armed bands, groups, irregulars or mercenaries against it, violating a status of forces agreement).

- The Palestinian Central Elections Commission (CEC) has started preparing for local council elections in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip to be held on Oct. 8

JULY

July 1: The Quartet issues a report on the situation on the ground focusing on major threats to achieving a negotiated peace and offering recommendations to advance the two-state solution. UN Sec.-Gen. Ban Ki-moon underscores the report stating "there is a strong need for affirmative steps to reverse negative trends on the ground."

July 10: Egypt's Foreign Minister Shoukry meets Israeli PM Netanyahu in Israel to discuss reviving peace efforts with Palestine.

July 11: The Knesset passes the controversial "NGO" or "transparency bill" into law with a vote of 57:48, following a contentious six-hour plenary debate. Human rights groups and opposition members condemn the legislation.

July 25: Palestinian Foreign Minister Al-Malki urges the Arab League to help the PA to sue the UK over the Balfour Declaration of 1917.

AUGUST

Aug. 1: The "Youth Bill," which will allow Israeli authorities to imprison minors convicted of serious crimes such as murder, attempted murder or manslaughter even if they are under the age of 14, passes its second and third readings in the Knesset plenum.

Aug. 14: President Abbas appeals to Israeli Arab leaders to help broker a new reconciliation deal between Fatah and Hamas.

Aug. 17: Palestinian political parties begin registering candidates for municipal elections.

Aug. 24: After reaching an agreement with Israeli authorities to end his administrative detention at a specific date Palestinian prisoner Bilal Kayid suspends his hunger strike after 71 days of protest against being placed in administrative detention on the day he was scheduled to be released from prison after serving over 14 years.

Aug. 31: Israel's Civil Administration approves the advancement of plans for 463 new housing units in West Bank settlements.

September

Sept. 1: The annual “Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people” finds that the Palestinian economy would double if freed from Israeli control.

Sept. 4: The PA and Israel sign a memorandum of understanding, allowing the PA to exclusively handle its international postal services with the rest of the world from now on through the Allenby Bridge crossing.

Sept. 8: Israel begins working on a massive concrete wall along the border with the Gaza Strip.

- A Palestinian court postpones municipal elections set for 8 October.

Sept. 22: At the UN, President Abbas calls on Israel to completely and unequivocally accept the Arab Peace Initiative and on the UN to provide protection to the Palestinian people from Israeli acts of aggression.

Sept. 28: Former Israeli President Shimon Peres passes away at age 93.

October

Oct. 2: The electrical grid in the State of Palestine will be under Palestinian responsibility.

Oct. 3: The Palestinian Supreme Court in Ramallah rules that municipal elections scheduled for 8 October would be held in the West Bank, but not in Gaza because its courts are “illegal”.

Oct. 5: The Palestinian election committee cancels the upcoming local elections and all ongoing preparations.

- The “Women’s Boat to Gaza”, carrying 13 civil society activists with the goal to break the Israeli blockade, is intercepted by the Israeli Navy and towed to Ashdod port.

Oct. 14: The UN Security Council holds special session on Israeli settlements as ‘obstacle to peace’; the US representative to the session stated that the US is “deeply concerned and strongly opposes settlements which are corrosive to peace”, adding that Israeli activities in the West Bank, primarily settlement construction, “creates a one state reality on the ground.” Russia’s envoy warned that without two-state solution, threat to Israel will grow.

November

Nov. 16: The Knesset approves a preliminary reading of a controversial “formalization bill” which would notably retroactively legalize an Israeli outpost slated for evacuation.

Nov. 30: At the Fatah party’s 7th Congress in Ramallah, attended by some 1,322 members, President Abbas delivers a lengthy speech on the future of Palestine after being reappointed as Chairman.

December

Dec. 1: The Israeli Ministry of Transportation has ordered that Israeli Dan bus company stop broadcasting announcements in Arabic in its new bus line in Beersheba, many Jews had complained to the municipality.

Dec. 5: The so-called ‘formalization’ bill passes a preliminary reading in the Knesset with a vote of 60:49. It would see thousands of dunums of private Palestinian land seized and dozens of illegal Israeli outposts retroactively legalized, and is seen as paving the way to annexing the West Bank.