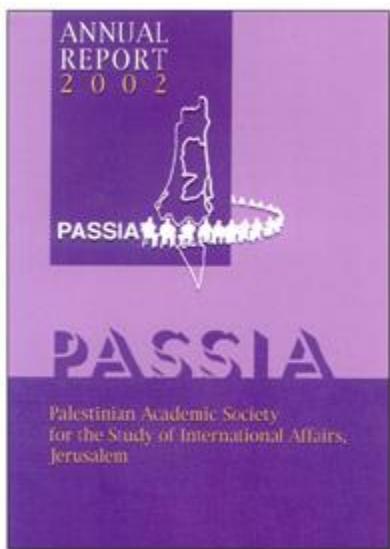


PASSIA ANNUAL REPORT 2002

The Year That Was

2002



All those who had hoped that 2002 would bring improvements to the lives and suffering of the Palestinians soon realized that their wishes would not materialize.

The first major event was a massive Israeli army attack on Gaza on 10 **January**, during which the Palestinian airport was destroyed along with over 70 residential homes, numerous roads and infrastructure facilities. Two days later, a raid of the Rafah port and refugee camp followed, leaving more destruction behind. Israel's assassination policy continued unabated with Fateh leader Ra'ed Al-Karmi from Tulkarem as the first target. By mid-January, the Likud bureau voted against supporting the eventual establishment of a Palestinian state and, a few days later, Israeli forces destroyed the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation building in Ramallah. At the end of the month, Prime Minister

Sharon made headlines when he told *Ma'ariv* that he regretted not having "eliminated" Arafat in Beirut during the 1982 invasion of Lebanon. Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Peres and PLC Speaker Abu Ala' met in New York to find a way to end the Intifada and move to political negotiations, but yielded no results. At the same time, the French government presented its new Mideast peace plan involving two "inseparable issues:" the recognition of an independent Palestinian state and new elections in Palestine. In Jerusalem, Israel pursued its house demolition policy, destroying over 10 buildings, including a house in the Muslim Quarter - marking the first time since 1967 that the WJM demolished a home in the Old City. On 27 January, a Palestinian woman blew herself up on Jaffa Road, killing one man and wounding dozens. Throughout January 39 Palestinians died at the hands of Israeli forces, while hundreds more were injured .

February began with Israeli forces assassinating five Palestinian activists in Rafah. On 17 February, a *New York Times* article by Thomas Friedman caused quite an uproar quoting Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah proposing "full withdrawal, in accord with UN Resolution 242, for full peace between Israel and the entire Arab world." Two days later, six Israeli soldiers were killed in a Palestinian attack, claimed by the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, on an army roadblock in Ein Arik near Ramallah. On 20 February, Israel launched massive reprisal raids throughout the territories, leaving at least 14 Palestinians dead and targeting President Arafat's Gaza headquarters for the first time. A day later, near Nablus, the PA arrested the three main suspects in the killing of Israeli Minister Ze'evi (17 October 2001), while PM Sharon addressed the nation, announcing a cabinet decision to set up "buffer zones" that would lead to a "security separation" between Israel and the Palestinians. A few days later, the Israeli security cabinet changed President Arafat's 'house arrest' to 'town arrest' and pulled back troops from his compound. In Jerusalem, house demolitions continued and, on 5 February, Mayor Olmert announced plans to demolish illegal houses "every week," saying that the PA was behind the illegal building in order to undermine Israeli sovereignty in the city. On 25 February, a shooting attack by a Palestinian gunman in Neve Ya'akov, which left one killed, triggered the construction by the WJM of a fence separating the settlement from Dahiet Al-Barid. Towards the end of the month, President Arafat endorsed the Saudi peace plan, and a Palestinian delegation, headed by Mohammed Dahlan and Jibril Rajoub, resumed security talks with an Israeli delegation, led by Shin Bet chief Avi Dichter. The month saw the killing of a total of 99 Palestinians and over 400 injured.



The talks initiated in late February between the Palestinian and Israeli delegations were suspended shortly after on 2 **March**, when Israeli military assaults on Palestinian refugee camps left 24 Palestinians killed. The next day, ten Israeli soldiers and settlers were killed by a lone Palestinian sniper at an Israeli roadblock near the Ofra settlement. In response, the Israeli security cabinet approved an operation to put constant military pressure on the PA and Palestinian activists. Over the

next few days, Israeli planes bombed PA facilities in the West Bank, including Al-Muqata'a compound in Ramallah and President Arafat's office building in Gaza City, and major operations were launched in Tulkarem and Ramallah, leaving over 60 people

killed and bringing international condemnation of Israel's use of heavy weaponry against Palestinians. On 13 March, the UNSC passed (14-0, with Syria abstaining) a resolution referring, for the first time, to a Palestinian state existing side by side with Israel. While US Mideast envoy Anthony Zinni tried in vain to calm the situation on the ground, Peace Now revealed that 34 new settlement sites had been established in the West Bank since the election of Prime Minister Sharon in February 2001, and the US added the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades to its list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations. On 25 March, a delegation of the International Parliament of Writers, meeting with President Arafat in Ramallah, compared Israeli policy in the territories to "Nazi" tactics, saying the situation in the Ramallah resembled "the spirit of Auschwitz" and that Israel was employing state terrorism. On 27 March, after a Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself up in a hotel in Netanya that killed 29 people, President Arafat stated he was ready to immediately implement an unconditional cease-fire. However, the Israeli cabinet decided to launch "Operation Defensive Shield," invading Ramallah and isolating him. By the end of the month, after 234 Palestinians had died and over 800 were injured, the UNSC passed Resolution 1402 calling for Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian cities. Meanwhile, the Arab summit in Beirut on 27-28 March approved the final draft of the Saudi peace initiative. While Ramallah, Bethlehem and Beit Jala were reoccupied by the Israeli army, a suicide bomber killed 14 Israelis in Haifa, causing Prime Minister Sharon to announce "We are at war," and Arafat "is the enemy of Israel and the entire free world." Throughout the month, Jerusalem was the scene of five suicide bombings and several Israeli raids on Palestinian institutions.

Early April saw the standoff between Israeli forces and approximately 400 Palestinians hiding in the Preventive Security



headquarters in Beitunia, which ended with their controversial surrender, for which Preventive Security head Jibril Rajoub was attacked by both PA officials and Hamas. When the curfew in Ramallah was finally lifted for a few hours, Palestinian doctors had the sad task of digging a mass grave in the parking lot of the hospital to bury 25 of the dead bodies that had been retrieved during this period. Meanwhile in Bethlehem, Israeli forces continued their siege on the Church of the Nativity where some 150 people took refuge. Jenin, Salfit and Nablus were also invaded and, during the ensuing days, the raids continued, bringing the month's casualties to 245 dead and over 500 injured. On 4 April, UNSC Resolution 1403 endorsed the Mideast mission of Secretary of State Powell to reach a ceasefire and demanded an Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian cities

"without delay." As fighting continued and over 2,000 Palestinians were detained, another suicide bomber blew himself up near Haifa, killing eight.



On 11 April, the last Palestinian gunmen surrendered in Jenin's devastated Refugee Camp. Later in the month, the UN decided to send a fact-finding team to investigate the events that had occurred, but it never materialized due to Israel's refusal to cooperate. American bias was once more confirmed when President Bush

publicly called Prime Minister Sharon "a man of peace." Palestinian resistance suffered a big blow when Fateh leader Marwan Barghouti was arrested in At-Tireh on 15 April. A week later, the trial (called a "farce" by the PFLP) against the four suspects accused of killing Israeli Tourism Minister Ze'evi began inside the Muqata'a compound and resulted in sentences ranging from 1-18 years. On 28 April, President Arafat accepted a US-brokered deal to end the siege of his headquarters - Israeli withdrawal from the area, in exchange for a US-British guarantee of continued imprisonment of the four Ze'evi killers, PFLP head Ahmed Sa'adat, and Karine A paymaster Fuad Shubaki in a Palestinian jail guarded by US and British monitors. At the end of the month, in response to an attack on Adora on 27 April, Israeli forces re-entered Hebron, killing at least ten Palestinians and arresting dozens others. In Jerusalem, for most of the month, Israeli police limited the age of those admitted to Al-Aqsa Mosque for Friday prayers to 40 and above. On 12 April, a female suicide bomber detonated a powerful charge near the Mahane Yehuda market, killing six and wounding 90 others. By mid-April, Israeli units temporarily took up positions in and imposed curfews on Abu Dis, Al-Izzariyya, Ras Al-Amud, and other Arab neighborhoods surrounding the city to search for wanted men. On 23 April, Israeli forces forcibly evicted approximately 50 Palestinians from two buildings near the Shimon Hazadik synagogue in Sheikh Jarrah to make way for Jewish settlers claiming ownership of the site.

At the beginning of **May**, Israeli troops pulled back from Ramallah after the PA turned over the six Palestinian prisoners to US and UK officials for detention in a Jericho jail. Soon after, a suicide attack killed 15 in a Rishon Letzion billiard hall. Incursions into Palestinian cities continued, bringing the number of Palestinian killed during the month to 52. On 10 May, a



deal to end the standoff at the Church of the Nativity was finally reached: 26 Palestinians were transferred to Gaza and 13 flown to Cyprus, from where they were sent to six EU nations later in the month. By mid-May, the World Bank estimated the damage to Palestinian infrastructure caused by 'Operation Defensive Shield' at over \$360 million. Meanwhile, President Arafat addressed the PLC in Ramallah, calling for PA reforms and elections, and Israeli Defense Minister Ben-Eliezer presented his two-state solution plan, including a "war on terror," "security separation" and a final-status agreement with a Palestinian state. Towards the end of the month, Israeli forces re-entered Tulkarem, Bethlehem and Qalqilya, while President Arafat finally signed the Basic Law, previously passed in 1997 by the PLC, to serve as the basis for a Palestinian constitution. In Jerusalem, at least five Palestinian homes fell victim to Israel's house demolition drive, while four Jewish settlers from the outlawed Kach group were arrested and charged with attempted murder for planning bomb attacks on Maqassed Hospital and a girls' elementary school on the Mount of Olives.

Throughout **June** the PA was busy with planning reforms. A first step was President Arafat's announcement of General Abdel Razeq Yahya as new overall head of the security forces. A suicide bombing on 5 June that killed 17 people at Megiddo junction near Afula prompted yet another Israeli invasion of Ramallah, this time blowing up several buildings in President Arafat's headquarters, which remained a main target for the Israeli army for most of the month. On 9 June, a reduced 21-member PA interim cabinet was announced, including five new members. On 21 June, Israeli forces killed four Palestinian civilians, including three children, when they fired tank shells into a Jenin street during a lifting of the curfew, and a few days later six Palestinians were killed in an assassination in Gaza, including Hamas leader Yasser Rizeq.



Meanwhile, the Israeli cabinet approved a "security concept," calling for a fence east of the Green Line and around Jerusalem, a buffer zone west of the Jordan, and the continued presence of IDF forces in the West Bank. On the international level, US President Bush delivered his long awaited speech on the Middle East on 24 June, withholding endorsement for a Palestinian state until terror stops and a new leadership

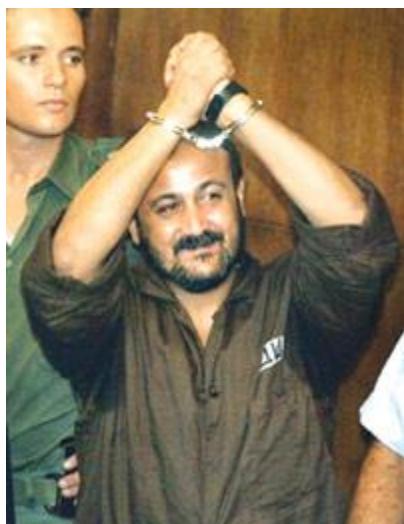
is elected. On 26 June, the PA published a 100-day plan for reforms, including elections. Towards the end of the month, Israeli forces invaded Hebron, blowing up the municipal and security headquarters, and leaving behind enormous damage. In Jerusalem, attention focused on Jabel Mukabber, where clashes erupted after Jewish extremist tried to establish a new settlement on Palestinian land located in the midst of a Palestinian neighborhood. In mid-June, US President Bush defered for another six months the moving of the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, but reiterated his commitment to making the transfer sometime in the future. Two suicide attacks in the city left 26 people dead and scores more wounded, and at the end of the month work on a security fence around the city began near the Gush Etzion settlement bloc. By the end of June, the Palestinian death toll for the month had reached 64, and nearly 300 people had been injured.

At the beginning of **July**, President Arafat fired numerous security officials, including West Bank Preventive Security head Jibril Rajoub, who was replaced by former Jenin governor Zuheir Manasra. In mid-July, ten Israelis were killed in an ambush on a bus around the Emmanuel settlement; and on 23 July, Israeli F-16 fighter jets bombed a building in Gaza City, killing Hamas leader Sheikh Salah Shehadeh, his wife, one of his children, and at least 14 others, including 10 children aged two months to 11 years. Over 150 were injured. Hamas vowed revenge, which came by the end of the month when a bomb placed at the Hebrew University Cafeteria exploded, killing nine people and injuring over 80. Later in the month, Prime Minister Sharon's security cabinet decided to order a relative of the Emmanuel settlement attacker be expelled to Gaza, marking the first



such expulsion since the outbreak of Intifada. Meanwhile in Jerusalem, Israeli authorities closed down Al-Quds University and the office of its President, Sari Nusseibeh, (for one week) saying the offices serve as a cover for PA operations in Jerusalem. This move was widely condemned by the international community, including the US. The total Palestinian death toll for this month was 43.

August began with a new round of collective punishment by Israel as occupying forces demolished nine homes of family members of suspects who had carried out, or were involved in, suicide attacks; and a new barrier was established at the intersection between Abu Dis and Shayah neighborhoods (Ras Al-Qubsa), cutting Al-Izzariyya into two parts. Nine people, mostly Israeli soldiers, were killed in a bomb attack on a bus near the Meron junction south of Safed. On 13 August, Haifa Mayor Amram Mitzna announced his candidacy for the Labor Party leadership. On 14 August, Marwan Barghouthi was indicted by a Tel Aviv Court. A few days later, Israel - led by Defense Minister Ben-Eliezer, and the PA - led by Interior Minister Abdel Razeq Al-Yahya and Mohammed Dahlan, reached a deal on "Gaza-Bethlehem first", under which Israeli forces would begin withdrawing from Bethlehem and parts of the Gaza Strip while the PA undertakes to prevent attacks on Israelis. Two days later, PA police were back on the streets of Bethlehem, though not for long. On 29 August, UN envoy Terje Roed-Larsen warned that Israel's military clampdown was causing an economic disaster in the territories that would breed "chronic violence," as unemployment in Gaza had reached 50% and poverty 70% of the population. At the end of the month, in yet another assassination, Israeli missiles killed Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades activist Rafat Daraghmeh and four others in Tubas, bringing the month's death toll to 51 Palestinians. In Jerusalem, four Palestinians from a Hamas cell in Silwan and Ras Al-Amud were arrested and accused of being behind several suicide attacks, including the bombings at the Moment Cafe and the Hebrew University cafeteria. Meanwhile, the Israel army prepared a plan for the defacto annexation of Rachel's Tomb to Jerusalem, in the context of constructing a security barrier around the city.



On 2 **September**, Israel's Supreme Court, in a landmark decision, ruled that Israel could expel relatives of Palestinian terror suspects from the West Bank to Gaza if it proves they pose a security threat. The first expellees were Kifah and Intisar Ajouri, brother and sister of Ahmed Ali Ajouri (behind a suicide attack on Tel Aviv's old central bus station), who were relocated to Gaza two days later, drawing international criticism.

On 5 September, a Tel Aviv court began the trial of Marwan Barghouthi who refused to recognize the court's authority to judge him, saying "The one who should be sitting here is the government of Israel." On the domestic level, the PA cabinet resigned en masse on 11 September, after it became apparent that a majority of PLC members would vote no-confidence in

the cabinet that was appointed by President Arafat in June. On 19 September, a suicide bomber blew himself up on a bus in Tel Aviv, killing six people. In response, Israel reimposed the blockade on President Arafat and demolished most of the Muqata'a, withdrawing after 11 days following US pressure. In Jerusalem, Israeli police closed the offices of Al-Quds University President Sari Nusseibeh, for the second time in three months, on the grounds that PA activities were allegedly hosted there. Throughout the month, 56 Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces, and over 300 were injured.

October began with US President Bush signing legislation requiring his Administration to identify Jerusalem as Israel's capital, which was widely criticized as hampering the peace process. The next major event was yet another Israeli missile attack on Khan Younis on 7 October, killing 14 Palestinians and wounding dozens more. Ten days later, Israeli shelling in Rafah killed eight Palestinians and left much damage behind.

After 14 Israelis were killed in a car explosion near Hadera on 21 October, Israeli troops launched 'Operation Vanguard' in Jenin, seizing houses and searching for wanted Palestinians. On a diplomatic level, Israel gave in to US pressure and released NIS 70 million, the last payment it agreed to hand over to the PA after President Arafat installed Salam Fayyad as Finance Minister. On 25 October, Sharon approved "in principle" the latest US 'roadmap for peace' presented by US envoy Burns, which called for dismantling Jewish settlement outposts, thorough PA reforms, and the creation of a Palestinian state by 2004-5. A day later, the Israeli army completed its withdrawal from most Palestinian-controlled areas of Hebron and handed security responsibility to the PA governor of Hebron. With regard to internal Palestinian affairs, the main event of the month was the PA-Hamas clashes in Gaza, which led to the establishment of a reconciliation committee to find a compromise to calm the situation. On 25 October, the PA expressed its reservations to the US 'road map' for peace, insisting on an immediate settlement freeze and international monitors. On 29 October, the PLC approved yet another new cabinet, this time with 19 members. The month ended with the Labor Party leaving the national unity government after Labor's demand that settlement funding be reallocated to the weaker sectors of society was turned down. During the month, Palestine mourned a total of 65 dead.





November saw more deaths on each side, beginning with the assassination of wanted Hamas activist Mohammed Sadr and his nephew in Nablus, and a suicide bombing in Kfar Sava that killed two Israelis. On 10 November, a Palestinian infiltrator into Kibbutz Metzer killed five people that in turn led to an Israeli incursion in Nablus and Tulkarem. Six days later, 12 Israeli soldiers and settlers

were killed in an ambush by Islamic Jihad activists in Hebron, prompting a sweeping military operation in the city, including reoccupation of the Palestinian-controlled areas and demolition of homes of people involved in recent attacks against Israel. On 21 November, a suicide bomber killed 11 people on a bus, triggering another extensive Israeli incursion, this time in Bethlehem and its camps. A day later, Israeli forces attacked Jenin camp, killing a Palestinian child and a British engineer working for the UN. Throughout the month at least 34 Palestinians were killed, over a third of who were under 18 years of age. Also in November, Amram Mitzna won the Labor Party primary elections; and Fateh - headed by Zakaria Al-Agha, and Hamas - headed by Musa Abu Marzuk, held a four-day summit, under Egyptian auspices and with Saudi involvement in Cairo, to discuss how to iron out tensions between them, strengthen the Intifada and halt suicide attacks in Israel. Moreover, Sari Nuseeibeh held a second round of talks with Ami Ayalon, ahead of the publication of a joint proposal to end the ongoing conflict. In Kenya, a suicide attack on a hotel left 12 people killed - including three Israelis, while missiles were fired at an Israeli airliner after taking off from Mombasa airport, though missing their target.

Throughout **December**, violence continued and eradicated all hopes that the coming new year would finally bring a better life. Israeli attacks focused on Tulkarem, Nablus, Jenin and the Gaza Strip, where on 6 December an invasion into Al-Bureij camp left ten Palestinians killed. On 11 Dec., Israeli forces killed five unarmed Palestinians from the Al-Astal family as they tried to enter Israel to search for work. Throughout the month dozens of houses and vast areas of agricultural land were destroyed by Israeli forces, leaving 66 Palestinians dead, among them many children. On the diplomatic stage, Israel and the PA - following heavy pressure from the US, agreed on a mechanism to ensure the transfer of future tax revenues collected by Israel on behalf of the PA, and a third draft of the 'road map'

peace plan was presented - this time with stronger language and sharpened demands for the Palestinians, including the stipulation that a Palestinian state could only be established "when the Palestinian people will have a leadership willing and able to establish a practicing democracy based on tolerance and liberty." On 22 December, the Palestinian cabinet postponed elections scheduled for 20 January 2003, until 100 days after Israeli troops withdraw from West Bank towns. Meanwhile, Israel began to establish "special security zones" a few hundred meters around West Bank settlements. Nevertheless, on 27 December, two Islamic Jihad activists entered the Otniel settlement and killed four settlers, prompting yet another Israeli onslaught on Hebron. During this month, Bethlehem saw the gloomiest Christmas in its history and, for the second year in a row, Israel banned President Arafat's attendance at the celebration. In Jerusalem, the four Hamas cell members convicted of carrying out the July bomb attack in the Hebrew University cafeteria were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 60 years to 35 life sentences.

By the end of the year, as the world focused on the pending war in Iraq, 1,068 Palestinians had been killed by Israeli forces during 2002, bringing the total number of Palestinians who have died since the beginning of the Intifada (29 September 2000) to 1,972.

