16 NOVEMBER

As the quarter opens, Israel maintains its strict siege of Gaza, imposed following Hamas’s 6/07 takeover of Gaza and tightened dramatically in 1/08 to allow no exports and only the bare minimum of humanitarian imports. A 6-mo. Gaza cease-fire, in place since 6/19, technically remains in effect, although significant cross-border exchanges resumed on 11/4. Israel has sealed Gaza borders completely since 11/5, allowing in an average of 5 containers/day of humanitarian aid, whereas the UN estimates that 500/day are needed to sustain the basic human needs of the 1.5 m. population. Today, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) makes an air strike on Gaza City targeting a group of Popular Resistance Comm. (PRC) mbrs. preparing to fire a rocket into Israel, killing 4 PRC mbrs. (The IDF reports that in the past 48 hrs., Palestinians have fired 20 rockets and mortars, including 2 Grad-type rockets, into Israel, causing no damage or injuries.) In the West Bank, the IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in and around Hebron and Nablus, and nr. Bethlehem, Jenin. Israel’s High Court orders Jewish settlers to evacuate the illegal outpost of Beit Shalom, in the al-Rajabi building in the Wadi al-Nassara area of Hebron, or face eviction, also declaring the State of Israel the temporary custodian of the building until ownership disputes are resolved; settlers ignored a 10/29 High Court order demanding they vacate the building within 24 hrs. (NYT 11/17; OCHA 11/19; PCHR 11/20; OCHA 11/27)

17 NOVEMBER

Israel allows into Gaza 30 trucks carrying food and medicine for UNRWA, a limited amount of diesel fuel for Gaza’s electricity plant. The IDF fires on a group of armed Palestinians nr. Bayt Lahiya, wounding 2. Palestinians fire 11 rockets, 1 mortar fr. Gaza into Israel, causing some damage but no injuries. In the West Bank, the IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in and around Nablus, in Bayt Umar and al-Fawar refugee camp (r.c.) nr. Hebron. (JP, WP 11/18; OCHA 11/19; PCHR 11/20; JP 1/22; HA 11/23)

18 NOVEMBER

Israel reseals crossings into Gaza, citing continued Palestinian mortar and rocket fire. Palestinian rocket fire immediately falls to near zero. The IDF sends tanks into s. Gaza to disable roadside bombs planted along the border, trading fire with Palestinian gunmen, causing no reported injuries. The Israeli navy intercepts and confiscates 3 Palestinian fishing boats carrying fishermen and international peace activists, detaining passengers and crew (all are released on 11/19). Egyptian security forces demolish 20 smuggling tunnels on the Rafah border. In the West Bank, the IDF demolishes a Palestinian home in Issawiyya nr. East Jerusalem; conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in and around Hebron and Nablus, and nr. Bethlehem, Jenin. Israel’s High Court orders Jewish settlers to evacuate the illegal outpost of Beit Shalom, in the al-Rajabi building in the Wadi al-Nassara area of Hebron, or face eviction, also declaring the State of Israel the temporary custodian of the building until ownership disputes are resolved; settlers ignored a 10/29 High Court order demanding they vacate the building within 24 hrs. (NYT 11/17; OCHA 11/19; PCHR 11/20; OCHA 11/27)

19 NOVEMBER

In the West Bank, the IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in and around Tulkarm, nr. Tubas. Jewish settlers fr. Beit Shalom vandalize a nearby...
Palestinian home. Jewish settlers close a road nr. Ramallah to Palestinian traffic, stone Palestinian vehicles. (PCHR 11/20; OCHA 11/26; PCHR 11/27)

20 NOVEMBER

In Gaza, UNRWA suspends its program of cash distributions to the 100,000 poorest refugees (intended to enable them to supplement their basic food ration with fresh vegetables and other vital household supplies) because there are no Israeli shekels circulating in Gaza due to Israel’s 8/08 ban on exporting currency to Gaza’s banks and hoarding by Gazans. In the West Bank, the IDF conducts late-night house searches in and around Balata r.c. and Nablus, nr. Qalqilya; occupies 4 Palestinian homes in the Wadi al-Nassara area of Hebron, restricts Palestinian movement in the neighborhood while Jewish settlers fr. Kiryat Arba hold a celebration. (OCHA, PCHR 11/20; PCHR 11/27)

21 NOVEMBER

In the West Bank, the IDF fires rubber-coated steel bullets, tear gas, percussion grenades at Palestinians holding a nonviolent protest against settlements at the evacuated settlement site of Homesh nr. Jenin (wounding 5); conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in and around Nablus, nr. Bethlehem, Hebron; fires rubber-coated steel bullets, tear gas, percussion grenades at Palestinian, Israeli, international peace activists taking part in nonviolent demonstrations against the separation wall in Bil’in (10s suffer tear gas inhalation), Jayyus nr. Qalqilya (10s suffer tear gas inhalation; a Palestinian Council mbr. and PLO Exec. Comm. mbr. are detained for questioning), and Ni’lin (injuring 1). In East Jerusalem, Israeli police raid and halt a cultural event at a theater in the city organized by the Jerusalemite Youth Parliament and several local NGOs and schools, stating that it was a political event connected to the Palestinian Authority (PA), which the organizers deny. (PCHR 11/27)

22 NOVEMBER

The IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches nr. Bethlehem, Jenin. Jewish settlers dress in Magen David Adom (Israeli Red Cross) uniforms and, guarded by Israeli security forces, raid, seize a Palestinian home in the Aqbat al-Saraya quarter of the Old Town of East Jerusalem; the Palestinian family has lived in the home since 1931. A Palestinian who suffered a severe heart attack during an 11/9 IDF raid on his East Jerusalem home dies. (PCHR 11/27)

23 NOVEMBER

The IDF conducts a late-night arrest raid in Bethlehem. An Israeli court orders settlers to evacuate the East Jerusalem home seized on 11/22; Israeli police remove the settlers but seal the second floor of the home pending a 12/2 court date to hear the settlers’ case Jewish settlers fr. Kiryat Arba vandalize Palestinian homes nr. the al-Ibrahimi Mosque/Tomb of the Patriarchs. (PCHR 11/27)

24 NOVEMBER

Israel allows 32 truckloads of humanitarian aid, limited fuel imports, and some currency imports into Gaza but maintains a ban on foreign journalists (ban now in place for more than 2 wks.). The Foreign Press Association appeals to Israel’s High Court to overturn the ban. Despite receiving fuel, Gaza’s power plant cannot resume operation, because its turbine batteries have died from prolonged lack of use and Israel continues to bar the import of maintenance equipment. Palestinians fire 1 rocket fr. Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries. In the West Bank, the IDF demolishes a Palestinian home in Azariyya; patrols in, fires on residential areas of Jenin town and r.c., causing no injuries; conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches, ID checks in Qalandia r.c. nr. Ramallah. Jewish settlers fr. Beit Shalom vandalize, heavily damage at least 5 Palestinian cars. The Israeli government reaches a deal with the 45 Jewish settler families in the unauthorized outpost of Migron (among the largest unauthorized outposts) near Hebron to relocate closer to the existing authorized Jewish settlement of Adam; the families will be permitted to stay in Migron until new housing is constructed, a process expected to take years. (WP 11/25; OCHA 11/26; PCHR 11/27)

25 NOVEMBER

Israel reseals Gaza’s borders a day after reopening them, citing 1 Palestinian rocket fired into Israel today, causing no damage or injuries. The UN Office for the
Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that Palestinians have fired 20 rockets, mortars toward Israel since 11/19, with 5 exploding at the launch site, most landing in Sderot, none causing injuries. In the West Bank, the IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in Hebron and Qalandia r.c., nr. Bethlehem. (WP 11/26; OCHA 11/26; PCHR 11/27)

26 NOVEMBER

In Gaza, Palestinian workers replace the Gaza power plant’s damaged batteries with modified car batteries, allowing the plant to resume operation (see 11/24). In the West Bank, the IDF fires on Palestinians protesting outside Qalandia r.c. against recent IDF arrests there, seriously wounding 1 teenager; conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in Nablus and Balata r.c., in and around Tulkarm r.c., and in villages around Hebron, Nablus, and Ramallah (raids within each area are synchronized). Jewish settlers vandalize a Palestinian ambulance nr. Salit. Jewish settlers fr. Beit Shalom and Kiryat Arba attack a 61-yr.-old Palestinian woman, vandalize several homes; the IDF observes but does not intervene. (OCHA 11/26; PCHR, WT 11/27; PCHR 12/4)

27 NOVEMBER

Israel allows entry to Gaza of 18 tons of chlorine to disinfect drinking water, an amount sufficient to purify Gaza’s water supply for 8 days; Gaza’s water authority had requested 220 tons. In the West Bank, the IDF conducts synchronized, late-night house searches on several villages nr. Jenin (no arrests are reported). As rumors spread that the IDF is preparing to evict settlers fr. Beit Shalom, Jewish settlers fr. Kiryat Arba and Beit Shalom carry out a series of attacks on nearby Palestinian neighborhoods, vandalizing homes, attacking 2 funeral processions, moderately injuring 2 Palestinians; the IDF observes but does not intervene. (OCHA 11/27; OCHA 12/3; PCHR 12/4)

28 NOVEMBER

IDF troops along the s. Gaza border e. of Khan Yunis fire on a group of armed Palestinians inside Gaza, causing no injuries; troops then cross into Gaza, exchange fire with armed Palestinians, wounding 4. PRC mbrs., then fire 11 mortars fr. Gaza toward the IDF military post at Nahal Oz crossing; 3 mortars hit the base, wounding 6 IDF soldiers, 1 critically. In the West Bank, the IDF conducts an evening raid on an Internet café nr. Jenin, checking IDs and searching the premises but making no arrests; conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches nr. Hebron, Jerusalem, Qalqilya, Tulkarm; conducts synchronized, late-night house searches in Tubas and neighboring al-Fara’ r.c., and in 8 villages s. of Jenin, making no arrests; fires rubber-coated steel bullets, tear gas, percussion grenades at Palestinian, Israeli, international peace activists taking part in nonviolent demonstrations against the separation wall in Bil’in (injuring 1 Japanese activist), Jayyus nr. Qalqilya (injuring 2 Palestinians), and Ni’lin (injuring 2 Danish activists, 1 Palestinian teenager). Jewish settlers fr. Kiryat Arba and Beit Shalom attack Palestinians, vandalize property in nearby Palestinian areas, seriously injuring 4 Palestinians, including a 6-yr.-old boy. Later, IDF troops close the area, take up positions on surrounding rooftops, escort 5 busloads of settlers from other parts of the West Bank into the area to “defend” the illegal Beit Shalom outpost. In the evening, the settlers rampage through Palestinian areas, burning cars, slashing tires, breaking windows of cars and homes, destroying water tanks; the IDF does not intervene. (NYT 11/29; OCHA 12/3; PCHR 12/4)

29 NOVEMBER

Egypt opens its side of the Rafah crossing to allow select Palestinian pilgrims to exit Gaza to perform the Hajj, but Hamas officials bar their exit because they were chosen by the PA in the West Bank without consultation with Hamas authorities in Gaza; Hamas has provided Saudi Arabia with its own proposed list of pilgrims fr. Gaza, but Saudi Arabia, supporting PA PM Mahmoud Abbas, refuses to grant them entry permits, so Egypt has barred their transit. For the 1st time since 1973, no Gazans will be able to perform the Hajj.

The IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches nr. Jenin; conducts synchronized, late-night house searches in village nr. Nablus, with no arrests reported. Throughout the day, Jewish settlers continue (see 11/27, 11/28) to attack Palestinians and their property in Hebron; 1 Palestinian teenager is shot in the shoulder by an IDF soldier, 12 other Palestinians (including 2 children) and a B’Tselem field worker

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documenting the violence are beaten and injured by settlers wielding iron bars; 20 Palestinian homes are damaged. (WT 12/3; NYT, PCHR 12/4)

30 NOVEMBER

The Israeli cabinet approves the release of some 250 Palestinian prisoners as a gesture to Abbas, marking the 'Id al-Adha holiday; no specific release date is set. IDF troops bulldoze land in s. Gaza to clear lines of sight along the border e. of Abasan. Gaza's power plant shuts down after 4 days of operation for lack of fuel (see 11/26). In the West Bank, the IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches nr. Ramallah, Tulkarm. (IFM 11/30; OCHA 12/3; PCHR 12/4)

1 DECEMBER

The Israeli navy turns back a Libyan freighter carrying 3,000 tons of humanitarian aid attempting to breach Israel's blockade of Gaza. In the West Bank, the IDF sends an undercover unit into Nablus to ambush and assassinate al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (AMB) mbr. Muhammad Abu Thira' while he is in PA security force (PASF) custody in a PASF vehicle being transported fr. his home to a PASF facility where he would stay overnight, as part of the process to be granted amnesty by Israel. IDF also conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in and around Jenin town and r.c., nr. Bethlehem; conducts separate, synchronized late-night house searches in 4 villages nr. Jenin, without making any arrests. The IDF guards buses bringing 100s of Jewish settlers to Hebron to "defend" Beit Shalom. After dark, settlers rampage through Palestinian neighborhoods, attempt to seize a Palestinian home, heavily damaging others. Jewish settlers fr. Shilo nr. Ramallah protesting the government order to evacuate Beit Shalom rampage through the villages of Turmusayya and Sinjil, slashing tires, vandalizing homes and a mosque, spraying graffiti saying "Death to Arabs" and "Muhammad is a Pig." (NYT, WT 12/2; WJW, PCHR 12/4)

2 DECEMBER

Hamas mbrs. fire 8 mortars fr. Gaza toward Israel, 6 of which land inside Israel, causing no damage or injuries. In response, the IDF makes an air strike on 1 mortar-launching site, killing 2 Palestinian teenagers nearby, wounding 2 children. OCHA reports that in addition to mortar fire, Palestinians have fired 6 rockets fr. Gaza toward Israel between 11/27 and 12/2, causing no injuries. Israeli border police arrest Israeli reporter Amira Hass as she leaves Gaza through the Erez crossing, charging her with violating the government ban on Israelis entering Gaza. Hass, who entered Gaza on 10/29 on a boat carrying solidarity activists (see Chronology in JPS 150), was then expelled by Hamas officials who disapproved of her coverage of events in the Strip; she is released pending a hearing. In the West Bank, the IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches nr. Bethlehem, Jenin. For a 6th straight day, 100s of Jewish settlers riot in Hebron to protest the orders to evacuate Beit Shalom, attacking Palestinians on the street, vandalizing Palestinian homes, damaging cars, and harassing IDF troops; the IDF fires tear gas, percussion grenades at Palestinians who attempt to stop the settlers, injuring 3. In 2 other West Bank locations, Jewish settlers protesting the planned eviction set fire to Palestinian stocks of animal feed, slash tires. (HA 12/2; NYT, WP, WT 12/3; WT, PCHR 12/4)

3 DECEMBER

In Gaza, OCHA reports that since 11/27, Israel has increased from 5 to 11 the number of truckloads of humanitarian aid allowed entry to Gaza per day. In the West Bank, the IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches nr. Ramallah. The IDF also demolishes an addition to a Palestinian home in East Jerusalem. For a 7th day, 100s of Jewish settlers riot in Hebron, setting fire to Palestinian stores, beating Palestinians, vandalizing homes; the IDF bars journalists, human rights activists fr. entering the area. Jewish settlers uproot 5 Palestinian olive trees nr. Ramallah. (OCHA 12/3; PCHR 12/4; PCHR 12/18)

4 DECEMBER

OCHA urgently appeals to Israel to expand "the list of imports into Gaza . . . to include vital spare parts for maintenance and operation of the power plant, water and sanitation utilities, and other critical infrastructure and basic services for the civilian population" so as to prevent further deterioration of humanitarian conditions
in Gaza. Gaza banks close, fearing runs on cash. (Israel has again barred entry of cash to the Strip; see 11/24.) The Israeli government informs the High Court that it will lift a month-old ban on allowing journalists into Gaza, but takes no steps to do so. In the West Bank, the IDF conducts late-night house searches nr. Nablus. Some 600 Israeli police and soldiers use rubber batons, percussion grenades, tear gas to evict 200 Jewish settlers fr. Beit Shalom, leaving 30 settlers and 3 soldiers injured, sparking settler violence against Palestinians across the West Bank. In Hebron, settlers rampage through Palestinian areas, burn 5 homes, set fires to olive groves, write racist graffiti, seriously damage other homes, cars, and cemeteries; at least 16 Palestinians are injured, including 2 who are shot and seriously wounded by a settler. During the rampage, the IDF declares the area a closed military zone, bars access to firemen and ambulances (settlers attack one fire engine), and takes no steps to halt settler rioting. Jewish settlers fr. Eli and Shilo settlements nr. Ramallah block the main Ramallah–Nablus road to Palestinian traffic, stone Palestinian cars; the IDF observes but does not intervene. Other Jewish settlers break car windows, write anti-Muslim graffiti on Palestinian homes in several villages e. of Qalqilya. (OCHA 12/4; NYT, WP, WT 12/5; WP 12/8; PCHR 12/18)

5 DECEMBER

Late in the evening, the IDF makes an air strike on a group of Palestinian resistance mbrs. nr. Gaza’s Jabalia r.c., wounding 1. In the West Bank, the IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in Jenin town and r.c.; fires rubber-coated steel bullets, percussion grenades at Palestinian, Israeli, international peace activists taking part in nonviolent demonstrations against the separation wall in Bil’in (injuring 2 Palestinians, including a 10-yr.-old child). In Hebron, Jewish settlers rampage through Palestinian areas for a 9th day, burning 1 Palestinian home, vandalizing a number of homes and water tanks, attacking Palestinians. At the weekly cabinet session, acting Israeli PM Ehud Olmert calls the settler attacks a “pogrom” against Palestinians, orders Israeli police to end their “intolerable leniency” toward violent settlers. (BBC 12/7; WP 12/8; PCHR 12/18)

6 DECEMBER

The IDF raids, searches a Palestinian home in East Jerusalem’s Ras al-Amud neighborhood, confiscating a computer and arresting a 21-yr.-old woman. Major Jewish settler violence in Palestinian areas of Hebron takes place for a 10th day, with settlers setting fire to 1 Palestinian home, vandalizing a number of homes and water tanks, attacking Palestinians. At the weekly cabinet session, acting Israeli PM Ehud Olmert calls the settler attacks a “pogrom” against Palestinians, orders Israeli police to end their “intolerable leniency” toward violent settlers. (BBC 12/7; WP 12/8; PCHR 12/18)

7 DECEMBER

The IDF conducts late-night house searches nr. Salfit. In keeping with Olmert’s 12/6 call, the IDF clamps down on Jewish settlers in Hebron, preventing them from continuing attacks on Palestinian areas. (PCHR 12/18)

8 DECEMBER

The IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in Tulkarm. (PCHR 12/18)

9 DECEMBER

Israel allows 70 truckloads of food and medicine, some cooking gas into Gaza. In the West Bank, the IDF patrols in Marda village nr. Salfit in the morning, beating 2 Palestinian men; conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches nr. Tulkarm, Nablus (heavily damaging a home in Burma village when they set off percussion grenades inside). (WJW 12/11; PCHR 12/18)

10 DECEMBER

Israel agrees to transfer $25 m. in shekels to Gaza, an amount less than what the PA needs to pay its Gaza salaries, meaning banks are unlikely to reopen, still fearing a run on cash. In the West Bank, the IDF sends troops into Marda village nr. Nablus in the afternoon, arresting 2 Palestinians; returns to Marda late in the evening to search
several homes, arresting 5 Palestinians; conducts additional late-night arrest raids, house searches in and around Jenin town and r.c. Jewish settlers fr. Shavei Shomron settlement nr. Nablus enter nearby Sebastia village; fire on residential areas (causing damage but no injuries), leave when the IDF arrives. (WP 12/11; PCHR 12/18)

11 DECEMBER

The IDF sends troops into Khan Yunis to ambush, detain 3 Palestinians, releasing them after about 10 hrs. of questioning at a military post on the Gaza border. Gaza municipal authorities receive enough industrial fuel to restart Gaza’s power plant for the 1st time since 11/30. In the West Bank, the IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in Nablus. (OCHA 12/17; PCHR 12/18)

12 DECEMBER

The IDF conducts midday patrols inside Salfit, firing rubber-coated steel bullets at stone-throwing Palestinian youths who confront them, causing no reported injuries; conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches nr. Jenin; fires rubber-coated steel bullets, tear gas, percussion grenades at Palestinian, Israeli, international peace activists taking part in nonviolent demonstrations against the separation wall in Bil’in (injuring 2 Palestinians, including an 8-yr.-old child) and Ni’lin (injuring 5 Palestinians). Overnight and into the morning, Jewish settlers in Hebron vandalize Palestinian homes, attempt to occupy 1. (PCHR 12/18)

13 DECEMBER

The IDF conducts evening patrols in Anabta village nr. Tulkarm, firing rubber-coated steel bullets at stone-throwing Palestinian youths who confront them, causing no reported injuries; conducts synchronized, late-night house searches in 3 villages nr. Jenin, making no arrests; conducts additional late-night arrest raids, house searches in Bethlehem, nr. Ramallah. (PCHR 12/18)

14 DECEMBER

The IDF conducts synchronized, late-night arrest raids, house searches in 3 villages nr. Bethlehem; conducts additional late-night arrest raids, house searches in Bal-ata r.c., Nablus. Jewish settlers in Hebron vandalize nearby Palestinian homes; the IDF fires on Palestinians who defend their properties, seriously wounding a 14-yr.-old boy with a gunshot to the head. In Gaza, an estimated 300,000 Hamas supporters attend a rally in Gaza City celebrating Hamas’s 21st anniversary. From Damascus, Hamas leader Khalid Mishal says that the movement will not renew the 6-mo. Gaza cease-fire when it expires on 12/19. Later, however, Hamas’s Gaza leadership says that it is willing to consider an extension; meets with reps. of other factions to discuss extending the truce. (NYT, WP 12/15; PCHR 12/18)

15 DECEMBER

Israel releases 224 Palestinian prisoners; at least 9,000 Palestinians remain in Israeli jails. Gaza’s power plant shuts down after 4 days of operation for lack of fuel (see 12/11). In the West Bank, the IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in Bayt Umar nr. Hebron; hours later conducts synchronized house searches in 4 villages and al-Fawar r.c. nr. Hebron. The IDF also sends undercover units in a vehicle with Palestinian license plates into al-Yamun village nr. Jenin, where they ambush and assassinate Islamic Jihad mbr. Jihad Nawahda. Israel’s High Court orders a 2d revision of the planned separation wall around Bil’in, ruling that the new IDF route (submitted in compliance with a 9/07 High Court decision) still directs the wall unnecessarily through private Palestinian land. (NYT, WT 12/16; OCHA 12/17; PCHR 12/18)

16 DECEMBER

Overnight, Islamic Jihad mbrs. in Gaza fire more than a dozen rockets into Israel in retaliation for the IDF’s 12/15 assassination of Nawahda, causing no damage or injuries. The IDF makes 2 air strikes on Islamic Jihad mbrs. preparing to launch rockets nr. Bayt Hanun, injuring 3 Islamic Jihad mbrs., 1 bystander. OCHA reports that in recent days, Israel allowed 78 tons of chlorine and purification chemicals to be transferred to Gaza’s water authority, enough to treat Gaza’s water supply for 1 mo.; Gaza also received its 2d shipment (14 truckloads) of pharmaceutical supplies fr. the PA central pharmacy in Ramallah. In the West Bank, the IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches nr. Bethlehem. In
East Jerusalem, **Israeli forces** bulldoze a tent and level land, displacing a Palestinian family whose home on the site they had bulldozed in 11/08. Inside Israel, some **200 Israeli police** make an overnight raid on the Bedouin encampment of Abdallah al-Atrash in the Negev, which has existed for over 20 yrs., expelling 20 families and demolishing all structures. A **Gaza court** sentences **Palestinian Muhammad Saidam**, arrested in 2/08, to death for “treason, espionage, and collaborating” with Israel to assassinate **members** of the Palestinian resistance: **PA pres. Abbas** must approve the sentence before it can be carried out. (MM, OCHA 12/17; NYT, PCHR 12/18)

**17 DECEMBER**

For a 2d day, **Islamic Jihad** MBRS. retaliating for the 12/15 Nawahda assassination fire some **20 rockets** into Israel, injuring 2 Israelis and causing light property damage. The **IDF** responds with a surface-to-surface missile strike on a group of Islamic Jihad MBRS. in Jabaliya r.c., missing them, hitting nr. a Palestinian home, killing 1 **Palestinian bystander**. The **IDF** also makes an air strike on a suspected weapons cache in Khan Yunis, damaging 7 surrounding homes but causing no reported injuries. **Hamas** has reportedly arrested several MBRS. of smaller Palestinian factions for firing rockets in recent days. The **World Health Organization** warns that Israel’s siege has left all Gaza hospitals completely reliant on backup generators for electricity, warning that Israel’s continued ban on fuel and spare parts to repair generators seriously jeopardizes the hospitals’ ability to function. In the West Bank, the **IDF** conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches nr. Nablus. (MM, YA 12/17; MM, NYT, WP 12/20; PCHR 12/24)

**18 DECEMBER**

**UNRWA** is forced to suspend its food distribution to Gazan refugees for the 2d time in 60 yrs. (the first was on 11/13/08; see Quarterly Update in JPS 150) because of Israel’s near-total restriction on the import of food and wheat flour to Gaza (allowing only 15 trucks/day; UNRWA needs 70–80 trucks/day to keep operations going). In light of the ongoing siege and Israeli military actions, **Hamas** officials in Gaza declare that they will not renew the 6-mo. cease-fire when it expires on 12/19. **Palestinians** (some if not all MBRS. of **Islamic Jihad**) fire 11 **rockets**, 6 **mortars** fr. Gaza into Israel, causing light damage but no injuries. The **IDF** responds with air strikes on 2 rocket-launching sites, seriously wounding 1 Islamic Jihad MBR. In the West Bank, the **IDF** conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in and around Jenin town and r.c. (MM, OCHA 12/18; NYT, WT 12/19; WP 12/20; PCHR 12/24; London Review of Books 1/1)

**19 DECEMBER**

The 6-mo. **Hamas-Israel** truce in Gaza officially expires. **Palestinians** fire 4 **rockets** fr. Gaza into Israel and direct sniper fire across the border at IDF troops, causing no damage or injuries. In the West Bank, the **IDF** conducts nearly simultaneous house searches in 7 villages around Jenin but makes no arrests; fires rubber-coated steel bullets, tear gas, percussion grenades at Palestinian, Israeli, international peace activists taking part in nonviolent demonstrations against the **separation wall** in Bil’in (injuring 6 Palestinians and 1 Israeli, including a Palestinian and an Israeli journalist); fires tear gas at 2 Palestinian Red Crescent ambulances treating injuries at a wall protest in Ni’lin, damaging 1. A **Palestinian bystander** seriously injured in the 10/20/08 IDF assassination of 2 Hamas MBRS. in Khan Yunis dies of his injuries. (NYT 12/19; NYT, WP 12/20; PCHR 12/24)

**20 DECEMBER**

**Palestinians** fire 10 **rockets**, 23 **mortars** fr. Gaza into Israel, causing light damage to 1 building but no injuries; the **AMB** takes responsibility for the mortar fire. In response, the **IDF** fires a surface-to-surface missile at a mortar-launching site n. of Bayt Lahiyi (killing 1 **AMB** MBR., wounding 2) and makes an air strike on a rocket-launching site e. of Gaza City (wounding 1 bystander). In the West Bank, the **IDF** conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in Bayt Sahur and nr. Bethlehem, Jenin; raids, searches a medical center in Hebron. (WT 12/21; Forward, MM 12/22; PCHR 12/24)

**21 DECEMBER**

**Islamic Jihad** MBRS. fire 19 **rockets**, 3 **mortars** fr. Gaza into Israel, damaging a home, lightly injuring 1 Israeli in 2 separate instances. The **IDF** makes 2 air strikes on
rocket-launching sites in Gaza City, wounding a 2-yr-old girl. In the West Bank, IDF troops for no apparent reason fire on a group of Palestinian laborers on their way to work nr. Hebron, wounding 1 with live ammunition; conduct early morning patrols in Tulkarm; conduct daytime raids, search Palestinian homes and shops nr. Bethlehem and Ramallah, making no arrests; conduct late-night arrest raids, house searches nr. Ramallah, Tulkarm and in Balata r.c., Hebron, Nablus. In East Jerusalem, Israeli forces bulldoze a tent, displacing a family whose house on the site had been bulldozed in 11/08. (Forward, MM, WT 12/22; PCHR 12/24)

At its weekly session, the Israeli cabinet gives the IDF the green light to initiate attacks on Hamas targets in Gaza, in addition to hitting sites fr. which rockets and mortars are launched. Some reports suggest the cabinet took a decision to launch a military strike on Gaza and has authorized the IDF chief of staff to prepare to implement previously drafted plans for a ground invasion into Gaza to oust Hamas. Senior Hamas officials in Gaza immediately go underground, fearing assassination. The cabinet also authorizes the Israeli FMin. to launch an international public relations campaign enlisting support for a military offensive against Hamas. Israeli FM Tzipi Livni plans a series of teleconferences with UN Secy.-Gen. Ban Ki-moon, U.S. Secy. of State Condoleezza Rice, and the FMs of Britain, France, Germany, and Russia. Shin Bet head Yuval Diskin reports that Hamas has rockets that would strike as far n. as Kiryat Gat, Ashdod, Beersheba. (International Middle East Media Center [Bayt Sahur] 12/21; Forward, MM, WP, WT, YA 12/22)

22 DECEMBER

Hamas's Gaza leadership calls on factions to halt their fire for 24 hrs. in an effort to restore the truce. Senior Hamas official Mahmoud Zahhar appears on Israeli TV to state that Hamas seeks a new cease-fire in exchange for regular food and electricity in Gaza and a halt to IDF operations in the West Bank. On the ground, Palestinians (suspected to be Islamic Jihad, which says it had not agreed to suspend attacks) fire 3 rockets fr. Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries. An unnamed senior Israeli security official states (YA 12/23) that "all of the IDF's preparations for a military operation are continuing as planned. As far as we are concerned the clock is ticking down on a military operation." Israel, which maintains a full seal on Gaza, dispatches diplomats to lobby for international support and sympathy for Israel in the face of rocket attacks. Egyptian pres. Husni Mubarak asks Israeli FM Livni to come to Cairo on 12/25 for talks on renewing the truce. In the West Bank, the IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches nr. Hebron, Jenin, Nablus. (IFM 12/22; HA, JP, MA, MM, WP, YA 12/23; PCHR 12/24)

23 DECEMBER

The IDF kills 3 Hamas mbrs. laying a roadside bomb nr. the Gaza border, marking the deadliest day in Gaza since the truce expired on 12/19. Palestinians fire 2 rockets, 1 mortar fr. Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries. In the West Bank, the IDF conducts near simultaneous late-night house searches in 4 villages nr. Hebron, making no arrests. Israeli's Homefront Command begins several days of exercises in Israel simulating responses to Hamas rocket fire. Participating in the exercises for the first time are Ashdod, Ashkelon, Kiryat Gat, and Kiryat Malachi, on the assumption that Hamas now has rockets that can hit that far north. (MM 12/23; PCHR, WP 12/24; PCHR 1/1)

In Ankara, Israeli and Syrian teams hold their 5th round of indirect peace talks mediated by Turkey. (MM 12/22; al-Watan, MM 12/23) (see Quarterly Update for details)

24 DECEMBER

Citing the Hamas deaths on 12/23, Hamas fires some 80 rockets and mortars fr. Gaza toward Israel, damaging a factory, home, and several other structures but causing no injuries in Israel; 1 rocket reaches as far as Beit Hagdi, 12 mi. fr. the Gaza border; several of the missiles misfire or land inside Gaza, killing 2 Hamas mbrs., injuring 3 civilians. The IDF makes an air strike on a group of Palestinians firing mortars e. of Rafah, killing 1 Hamas mbr., wounding 2. Israeli DM Ehud Barak briefs the Israeli cabinet on IDF plans for a major military offensive against Gaza, receiving unanimous approval. Anticipipating an attack after hearing the Israeli cabinet went into special session, Hamas evacuates all of its Gaza offices; its leaders go into hiding. (WP, WT 12/25; HA, NYT 12/28; PCHR 1/1)
**25 DECEMBER**

In Cairo, Livni rejects Mubarak’s call to renew the Gaza cease-fire. Palestinians in Gaza fire 3 rockets, 15 mortars into Israel, causing no damage or injuries. In the West Bank, the IDF conducts simultaneous late-night house searches in 2 villages nr Jenin, making no arrests. An Israeli court sentences **jailed Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine** (PFLP) leader Ahmad Saadat, detained in 2001 for involvement in the assassination of Israeli cabinet minister Rehavam Ze’evi, to 30 yrs. in jail; Saadat is acquitted of planning the assassination but found guilty of plotting other anti-Israel attacks. (IFM 12/25; NYT, WP, WT 12/26; PCHR 1/1; NYT 1/3)

**26 DECEMBER**

Israeli DM Barak gives Israeli military and intelligence chiefs the final go-ahead to launch an offensive against Gaza. Olmert and his senior staff begin quietly briefing opposition leaders and prominent political figures on the impending operation. Israeli defense officials speaking to the press off the record say that a Gaza operation will begin when weather clears to allow precision-targeted air strikes. Meanwhile, the IDF allows 100 truckloads of humanitarian aid and fuel for Gaza’s power plant into Gaza. Palestinians fire about 12 rockets and mortars fr. Gaza toward Israel; 1 rocket falls inside the n. Gaza border, hitting a home, killing 2 Palestinian **girls**. In the West Bank, the IDF for a 2d night conducts coordinated late-night house searches in villages nr. Jenin, making no arrests; fires rubber-coated steel bullets, percussion grenades, tear gas at Palestinian, Israeli, and international activists taking part in the weekly demonstration against the separation wall in Bil’in, wounding 2. (HA, NYT, WP 12/27; HA 12/28; WP 12/31; PCHR 1/1; NYT 1/3)

**27 DECEMBER**

After early morning consultations with senior cabinet mbrs., the IDF launches its major offensive on Gaza, **Operation Cast Lead (OCL)**, at 11:25 A.M. local time (4:25 A.M. EST). Israeli DM Barak acknowledges (WP 12/28) that OCL has been planned for several months, stating that the aim is “to strike Hamas severely so as to change the situation from its base,” cautioning that “it won’t be short.”

Israeli actions: After an initial “shock and awe campaign” lasting 3 min. and 40 sec., with 64 warplanes hitting more than 50 targets across the Strip, the IDF conducts periodic air strikes throughout the day, recording a total of 170 sorties against 150 targets, killing at least 228 **Palestinians**, wounding more than 700 (140 seriously), marking the highest single-day death toll and Israel’s largest offensive in the territories since 1967. The midday timing of the initial onslaught, just as schools let out for lunch, increases the number of civilian casualties, including an estimated 25 women and children. Israeli Military Intelligence sends automated calls to 20,000 Palestinians across the Strip warning of further air strikes targeting anyone with weapons or guns.

Targets struck are primarily civil police stations, military training bases, Hamas-related command-and-control centers, suspected weapons depots, and sites believed to manufacture rockets. Target areas include Bayt Hanun, Bayt Lahiya, Al-Bureij r.c., Dayr al-Balah, Gaza City (the city center and al-Daraj, al-Shuja’iyya, Tal al-Hawa, al-Tuffah, al-Zaytun neighborhoods), Jabaliya r.c., Khan Yunis, al-Mughraqa (s. of Gaza City), Rafah, Shati’ r.c., and al-Zahra’ (c. Gaza nr. Jabaliya).

Palestinian actions: Palestinians fire 59 rockets (including some that reach the farthest north to date), 19 mortars into Israel during the day, killing 1 Israeli **civilian** in Netivot, wounding 4. (The fatality may have occurred before the official launch of OCL.)

Humanitarian notes: Gaza’s hospitals report (BBC 12/27) overflowing wards and not enough surgeons or supplies to cope. Egypt temporarily opens the Rafah crossing to allow transportation of some wounded to Egyptian hospitals.

Of note: During the initial “shock and awe,” the IDF hits a police academy graduation ceremony in Gaza City, killing at least 60 new civil police recruits and the chief of Palestinian police Maj. Gen. Tawfiq Jabber. Other targets include Gaza City’s main jail (the Saraya, holding Hamas opponents, hitting only the gates), the PA Preventive Security headquarters in Gaza City, the PA security compound in Rafah (southern headquarters of the PASF, PA Internal Security Service, and PA civil police), PA naval police facilities in n. Gaza and Khan Yunis, Palestinian Telecommunication Company.
offices in n. Gaza, a Gaza City mosque identified by the IDF as "a base for terrorist activities," Hamas's al-Aqsa TV station, the agriculture control dept. in Khan Yunis, numerous police stations and training sites, at least 9 homes, several workshops (considered rocket-manufacturing sites), and Hamas's Asda' media center outside Khan Yunis. One IDF airstrike on a PA ministry building kills 8 Palestinian students at an adjacent UNRWA training center, wounding 19 others (8 seriously). Hamas and Palestinian human rights groups in Gaza estimate that the dead include around 165 civil police officers (including those at the graduation ceremony) and Hamas's central district governor, Abu Ahmad Ashur. Some targets are hit with U.S.-supplied GBU-39 bunker-busting munitions received as recently as 9/08 (see Quarterly Update in JPS 150 and the "Israelí Arsenal" document in this issue's Special Focus section). (al-Arabiyya TV, BBC, HA, IDF, JAZ, Middle East News Agency [Cairo], Palestine News Agency, YA 12/27, AFP, AP, BBC, HA, IFM, JAZ, NYT, Radikal, REU, WP, WT, XIN 12/28; JP, NYT, Zaman [Ankara] 12/29; PCHR 1/1; BBC 12/30; UNOSAT 12/31; JP, WJW 1/1; WP 1/4; Eurasia Daily Monitor [online], NYT, UNOSAT 1/5; IFM, JPI 1/8; NYT 1/11)

In other Israeli-Palestinian violence, the IDF fires tear gas, percussion grenades, rubber-coated steel bullets to disperse Palestinians demonstrating against OCL in the East Jerusalem suburbs of Anata, Issawiyya, Shu'fat r.c. An E. Jerusalem Palestinian, reportedly angry over events in Gaza, injures an Israeli border police officer in a deliberate hit and run in the city. The IDF also conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches nr. Bethlehem, Jenin. (HA 12/28; PCHR, WJW 1/1)

28 DECEMBER

As massive Israeli strikes on Gaza enter a 2d day, IDF Southern Command head Maj. Gen. Yo'av Galant says (HA 12/28) that the IDF aims to "send Gaza decades into the past" in terms of Hamas's leadership, weaponry, and smuggling capabilities while achieving "the maximum number of enemy casualties." Israel's security cabinet authorizes the IDF to call up 6,500 reservists, and the IDF begins massing tanks and troops on Gaza's border, indicating planning for a ground incursion. Israel's Homefront Command orders 80 factories and businesses within 3 mi. of the Gaza border to close indefinitely for their safety (a move expected [WJW 1/1] to cost Israel's economy $1 m./day), indicating concerns of increased Palestinian rocket fire once ground operations begin. Israeli Military Intelligence breaks into Palestinian radio broadcasts to warn Gazans against cooperating with Hamas. The IDF drops 300,000 leaflets across Gaza warning residents to evacuate areas where Hamas is operating or storing weapons or to remain at their own risk. The Israeli FM, opens an international media broadcast outlet in Sederot (a main target of Palestinian rockets), begins tours of Sederot and other Gaza border communities for foreign media, diplomats, and VIPs. (Israel continues to prevent the foreign media fr. entering Gaza.)

Israelí actions: The IDF reports air and naval bombardment of 100 sites across Gaza, bringing the number of targets destroyed since operations began to more than 210. The 2-díy Palestinian toll rises to an estimated 300 dead (including at least 22 children, 9 women, 60 other civilians) and 1,300 injured (including at least 235 children and 200 women). Target areas include Abasan, Bayt Hanun, Bayt Lahiya, Bani Suhayla (s. Gaza), Bir al-Naja (n. Gaza), Dayr al-Balah, Gaza City (city center, al-Rimal, Shaykh Ridwan, Shati' r.c., al-Shuja'iyya, Tal al-Hawa, al-Zaytun), Jabaliya town and r.c., Khan Yunis, Khuza (east of Khan Yunis), Nussayrat r.c., al-Qarara (s. Gaza), Rafah, Shati' r.c., and Tal al-Za'atar (nr. Jabaliya).

The IDF's primary targets are around 40 tunnels along the Rafah border, hit with GBU-39s. Other major targets include several buildings at Islamic University (including a science building Israel claims was connected to rocket manufacturing); Gaza City's PA ministry compound, the offices of acting PM Ismail Haniyeh, and the main police station (destroying the Saraya; allowing about 50 Fatah prisoners to escape, but killing at least 4); Rafah's main PASF, governorate, and municipal complexes; more civil and naval police stations, metal workshops believed to make rockets; the Gaza City and Rafah ports; at least 3 mosques (Imad 'Akel Mosque in Jabaliya r.c., Izzeddin al-Qassam Mosque in Abasan, al-Rimal Mosque in Gaza City) alleged to be weapons depots; a Palestinian Energy Authority building in Khan Yunis; a private medical warehouse; and at least 8 homes and a 3 apartment buildings.

Palestinian actions: Palestinians fire 17 rockets, 18 mortars into Israel, injuring
at least 6 Israeli civilians (including cases of shock). The rockets include 1 manufactured Grad/Katyusha that lands in Gan Yavne 20 mi. inside Israel, outside Ashdod, the farthest to date. In the evening, 100s of Palestinians attempt to flee Gaza through small breaches in the border wall apparently caused by IDF air strikes; they are sent back by Egyptian security forces, who exchange fire with the crowd, leaving at least 1 Palestinian, 1 Egyptian border policeman dead, 4 Palestinians, 5 Egyptian border policemen, an 8-yr.-old Egyptian child wounded.

Humanitarian notes: Israel allows the entry to Gaza of 100 truckloads of food and medical aid, 10 ambulances, and fuel for hospitals, donated by Jordan, Turkey, and international aid organizations. The shipments include 4 truckloads of pharmaceuticals from the PA central pharmacy in Ramallah (the 2d PA delivery since the PA had blocked the shipments of medicine to Gaza in early 9/08; see 12/16), transferred by the PA at UNRWA request. Humanitarian groups, however, continue to warn of deteriorating medical conditions and lack of food in Gaza and urge Israel to allow unrestricted entry of aid. OCHA reports power outages of up to 16 hrs./day in Gaza City, n. Gaza, and c. Gaza; says all flour mills have shut down for lack of grain imports, threatening widespread bread shortages. (AFP, AP, BBC, HA, IDF, JAZ, OCHA, REU 12/28; IDF, JP, al-Masryun; NYT, SFR, WP, WT 12/29; BBC, Defense Update [online], Global Research [online], WP 12/30; REU, UNOSAT 12/31; JP, PCHR, WJW, WP 1/1; IDF, NYT 1/3; WP 1/4; IFM 1/8; WP 1/10)

Across the West Bank, Palestinians protest against OCL, clashing with the IDF at numerous points (Abu Dis, Issawiyya, and al-Ram nr. Jerusalem; Bani Na'im nr. Hebron; Ni'lin and Silwad nr. Ramallah), leaving 3 Palestinians dead, 31 Palestinians, 1 IDF soldier, 1 Israeli child injured. In at least one instance, PASF breaks up one protest by 100s of Palestinians in Ramallah when demonstrators unfurl Hamas banners; the PASF reportedly (NYT 1/3) has been ordered to prevent any popular displays of support for Hamas. The IDF conducts daytime house searches nr. Jenin, making no arrests; conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in Bil'in and nr. Hebron, Nablus. Palestinians stone a Jewish settler vehicle nr. Hebron, lightly injuring an 8-yr.-old girl. (PCHR, WJW 1/1)

29 DECEMBER

As Israel continues widespread air and naval bombardment of Gaza for a 3d day, Israeli DM Barak declares “all-out war” on Hamas. The IDF declares a 2-mi. buffer zone around the Strip a closed military zone and continues amassing tanks and troops there, indicating further preparations for a ground invasion. Israeli military officials speaking anonymously say they have expanded the IDF’s target list to include Hamas’s support network and symbols of Hamas power, stating that “there are many aspects of Hamas, and we are trying to hit the whole spectrum, because everything is connected and everything supports terrorists against Israel” and that “anything affiliated with Hamas is a legitimate target.”

Israel! actions: The IDF reports hitting 100 sites today, including more Islamic University buildings (including the engineering dept., library); homes and offices of Hamas leaders; PA government buildings (including the Interior Min., Finance Min., PA, WT 12/29; BBC, Defense Update [online], Global Research [online], WP 12/30; REU, UNOSAT 12/31; JP, PCHR, WJW, WP 1/1; IDF, NYT 1/3; WP 1/4; IFM 1/8; WP 1/10)

Palestinian actions: Palestinians fire 66 rockets, 14 mortars into Israel (twice as many as in the previous 24 hrs.), killing 3 Israeli civilians (1 each in Nahal Oz, Ashdod, Ashqelon; 1 of them an Israeli Palestinian) and wounding 5 (3 of them Israeli Palestinians), with 2 rockets hitting 23 mi. north in Gan Yavne/Ashdod. A Palestinian mortar hits an IDF base in Netivot, s. and e. of the Nahal Oz crossing, killing 1 IDF soldier (a Druze), seriously wounding 1 Palestinian, 1 Egyptian border policeman dead, 4 Palestinians, 5 Egyptian border policemen, an 8-yr.-old Egyptian child wounded.

Humanitarian notes: Israel allows the entry to Gaza of 100 truckloads of food and medical aid, 10 ambulances, and fuel for hospitals, donated by Jordan, Turkey, and international aid organizations. The shipments include 4 truckloads of pharmaceuticals from the PA central pharmacy in Ramallah (the 2d PA delivery since the PA had blocked the shipments of medicine to Gaza in early 9/08; see 12/16), transferred by the PA at UNRWA request. Humanitarian groups, however, continue to warn of deteriorating medical conditions and lack of food in Gaza and urge Israel to allow unrestricted entry of aid. OCHA reports power outages of up to 16 hrs./day in Gaza City, n. Gaza, and c. Gaza; says all flour mills have shut down for lack of grain imports, threatening widespread bread shortages. (AFP, AP, BBC, HA, IDF, JAZ, OCHA, REU 12/28; IDF, JP, al-Masryun; NYT, SFR, WP, WT 12/29; BBC, Defense Update [online], Global Research [online], WP 12/30; REU, UNOSAT 12/31; JP, PCHR, WJW, WP 1/1; IDF, NYT 1/3; WP 1/4; IFM 1/8; WP 1/10)

Across the West Bank, Palestinians protest against OCL, clashing with the IDF at numerous points (Abu Dis, Issawiyya, and al-Ram nr. Jerusalem; Bani Na'im nr. Hebron; Ni'lin and Silwad nr. Ramallah), leaving 3 Palestinians dead, 31 Palestinians, 1 IDF soldier, 1 Israeli child injured. In at least one instance, PASF breaks up one protest by 100s of Palestinians in Ramallah when demonstrators unfurl Hamas banners; the PASF reportedly (NYT 1/3) has been ordered to prevent any popular displays of support for Hamas. The IDF conducts daytime house searches nr. Jenin, making no arrests; conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in Bil'in and nr. Hebron, Nablus. Palestinians stone a Jewish settler vehicle nr. Hebron, lightly injuring an 8-yr.-old girl. (PCHR, WJW 1/1)
1, lightly injuring 4. The Israeli toll stands at 4–5 dead, about 20 injured. Reports circulate (e.g., NYT 12/30) of Hamas gunmen executing at least 5 accused collaborators with Israel inside hospitals; the 5 had been jailed for collaboration and transferred to hospitals after being wounded in IDF air strikes on jails.

**Humanitarian notes: Israel** allows 40 truckloads of humanitarian aid into Gaza; **Egypt** allows 23 truckloads of emergency goods in, some wound out through Rafah. International aid groups (including Amnesty International, the UN) say aid transfers are insufficient, warn that the death toll is rising in part because of lack of medicines and medical supplies, food, and fuel.

**Of note:** One Israeli air strike heavily damages the UN Special Coordinator’s Office (UNSCO) headquarters in Gaza City, prompting the UN to issue a formal complaint. Egyptian TV reports that captured IDF Cpl. Gilad Shalit has been wounded in an Israeli air strike in recent days; Hamas does not comment. (BBC, CNN, HA, *Houston Chronicle*, IFM, REU, White House press briefing, YA 12/29; BBC, IDF, *Independent*, NYT, WP, WT 12/30; IDF, UNOSAT 12/31; JP, PCHR, WJW 1/1; ITV 1/2; IDF 1/3; NYT, WP 1/4; WT, UNOSAT 1/5; IFM 1/8; Committee to Protect Journalists 1/9)

In the West Bank, the IDF fires rubber-coated steel bullets, percussion grenades, tear gas at Palestinians demonstrating against OCL in Issawiyya, Shufat r.c., al-Tur neighborhood in East Jerusalem, causing no serious injuries; conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in East Tura village nr. Jenin, Hebron. (PCHR 1/1)

**30 DECEMBER**

International diplomacy to end OCL clicks into gear with France proposing that Israel and Hamas impose a 48-hr. humanitarian truce to try to defuse the violence and restore the Gaza cease-fire, with humanitarian groups, Egypt, the EU, the Quartet, and the U.S. opening mediation channels (see Quarterly Update). **Israel’s security cabinet** meets to discuss the French proposal but does not formally respond.

**Israeli actions:** The IDF conducts 70 air strikes on Gaza, while the Israeli navy continues shelling from the sea, killing at least 10 Palestinians and wounding 40, bringing the death toll to about 370. The IDF reports hitting 110 individual sites, with primary targets being tunnels on the Rafah border, suspected weapons factories and rocket-launching sites, civil and naval police stations, and groups of resistance mbrs. In Gaza City, at least 20 air strikes hit Haniyeh’s offices, PA Interior Min., and main PA government complex in Gaza City, all of which had been targeted previously; 1 air strike hits an ambulance, killing 1 paramedic, seriously wounding a doctor and the driver. Part of Gaza’s main power grid is also hit, cutting all power to Gaza City. A fuel depot in Rafah is destroyed. In al-Bureij r.c., a mosque and health clinic are hit. In Khan Yunis, a money exchange is destroyed. At least 7 homes across the Strip are targeted. Target locations include Abasan, Bayt Hanun, Bayt Lahiyeh, al-Bureij r.c., Dayr al-Balah, Gaza City, Jabeliyya town and r.c., Khan Yunis, al-Maghazi (c. Gaza), al-Mughrara, al-Qarara, Rafah. The IDF launches a YouTube channel to broadcast declassified videos of its operations in Gaza, “other footage of interest to the international community” (JPI 1/8) and begins regular briefings for Internet bloggers worldwide.

**Palestinian actions:** Palestinians fire 41 rockets, 10 mortars into Israel, damaging 1 home in Sderot and causing several light injuries (excluding shock); 1 rocket lands in Beersheba, 25 mi. fr. the Gaza border, marking the farthest strike to date; 2 other long-range rockets land in Ashdod.

**Humanitarian notes: Israel** allows 93 trucks into Gaza (50 carrying medical supplies and food donated by aid groups; 43 carrying commercial goods), but Gaza City’s Shifa Hospital says it is out of 150 kinds of medicine and 230 other medical supplies, including gloves, scissors, sterilization equipment, nitrogen for anesthesia. Fuel shipments are still cut off; Gaza’s power plant shuts down for lack of fuel. (BBC, HA, *Independent* 12/30; IDF, IFM, NYT, REU, UNOSAT, WP, WT 12/31; JP, PCHR 1/1; ITV 1/2; IDF 1/3; WP 1/4; IFM 1/8; NYT 1/13)

In the West Bank, a Palestinian worker in Mod’in Ilit settlement, angry over Israel’s war on Gaza, stabs, wounds 4 Jewish settlers before being shot and wounded by a paramedic who arrives on the scene. The IDF fires live ammunition, rubber-coated steel bullets, percussion grenades, tear gas at Palestinians demonstrating against OCL in al-Fawar r.c. nr. Hebron, wounding 3 (including teenagers ages 13, 14); makes simultaneous afternoon incursions into Beita and Hawara villages nr. Nablus, imposing curfews through 12/31; conducts
simultaneous late-night raids, house searches on 4 villages nr. Jenin, firing on residential areas in all cases, causing no injuries and arresting only 1 teenager; conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in Abu Dis and Jalazun r.c. nr. Ramallah, and nr. Bethlehem, Hebron, Jenin, Nablus, Tulkarm. (PCHR, WJW 1/1)

31 DECEMBER

The Israeli cabinet rejects the 12/30 French proposal for a 48-hr. humanitarian truce, complaining that it lacked a mechanism to guarantee enforcement. Damascus-based Hamas leader Khalid Mishal says Hamas will consider any cease-fire proposal that includes a lifting of Israel’s embargo, but in Gaza, Haniyeh states that Hamas would not consider any proposals until Israel halts its attacks and opens Gaza’s border crossings, including Rafah.

In a briefing to Olmert’s security cabinet, Shin Bet head Yuval Diskin states that Hamas’s weapons development facilities have been “completely wiped out” and “Hamas’s ability to govern Gaza has been significantly impaired.” Senior Israeli military sources speaking anonymously state that no major hardened targets remain standing but that Hamas’s military wing, the Izzeddin al-Qassam Brigades (IQB), “has to a large extent survived the initial onslaught.”

The IDF continues to mass troops and tanks on the Gaza border, stating explicitly for the 1st time that a ground invasion is likely once wet weather clears. The security cabinet increases the number of reservists activated to more than 9,000.

Israeli actions: The IDF carries out some 60 air strikes, and the Israeli navy shells Gaza from the sea. Among the 66 sites hit by the IDF are Haniyeh’s office, the Tal al-Hawa Mosque in Gaza City (Israel claims it was used as a weapons depot), a major Islamic Jihad weapons depot in Khan Yunis (killing senior Islamic Jihad military cmdr. Amar Abu Ghalula, 3 other Islamic Jihad mbrs.), more tunnels on the Rafah border, at least 8 homes, 1 medical clinic, Hamas posts (including money exchanges). Target areas include Abasan, Bayt Hanun, Gaza City, Jabaliya r.c., Khan Yunis, Nusayrat r.c., Rafah. The estimated Palestinian toll reaches 393 dead, more than 1,900 wounded.

The IDF claims to have destroyed 200 smuggling tunnels since 12/27; a Palestinian source in Rafah says the Israelis seem to know which tunnels are commercial and which are used by Hamas, and have been selectively targeting Hamas tunnels.

Palestinian actions: Palestinians fire 49 rockets, 15 mortars into Israel, causing no serious injuries; 4 longer-range rockets land in Beersheba, 25 mi. n. of the Gaza border, 1 of which hits an empty school, causing significant damage to 1 room.

Humanitarian notes: Israel allows 93 truckloads of food, medicine into Gaza. UNRWA issues a $34-m. emergency appeal for additional food, medical, and reconstruction aid for Gaza in the wake of OCL, the appeal is in addition to a $275-m. emergency appeal for the West Bank and Gaza for 2009 issued earlier in the month. UNRWA Commissioner-Gen. Karen AbuZayd, warning of the dire conditions in Gaza (where she currently is based), states that for the first time in her 8 yrs. with UNRWA she has begun to see Palestinians begging on the streets of Gaza.

Of note: Residents in Egyptian Rafah report a heavy military, border police, and plain-clothed intelligence presence on the Egyptian side of the border, which Egypt has declared a closed military zone, preventing demonstrations, keeping journalists away, and preventing breeches of the Rafah border from either direction. (AFP, AP, BBC, Canadian Broadcasting Center, FT, IDF, IFM, JP, REU, UNIS, UNOSAT, XIN 12/31; IDF, JP, NYT, PCHR, WP, WT 1/1; WT 1/2; IDF, Sabab 1/3; WP 1/4; IFM, PCHR 1/8; NYT 1/11)

In the West Bank, observers report that Palestinian sympathy for Hamas is growing, even though overall public reaction to OCL has been muted, largely because PA security forces have been breaking up explicitly pro-Hamas demonstrations. The IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in and around Hebron, nr. Nablus. (PCHR, WP 1/1)

1 JANUARY

As OCL enters day 6, Israel announces that it will allow 443 foreign passport holders living in Gaza (mostly the spouses and children of Gazan Palestinians, including U.S., Russian, Moldovan, Ukrainian, Turkish, and Norwegian passport-holders) to leave on 1/2, raising concerns that a major ground incursion into Gaza is imminent.

Israeli actions: The IDF continues air strikes and naval bombardment of Gaza,
hitting at least 70 targets and carrying out at least 40 air strikes. Primary targets include the PA parliament building, Justice Min., Education Min., the headquarters of the PA presidency in Gaza City, homes of several other Hamas and PRC cmdrs., tunnels on the Rafah border, suspected weapons depots, 2 mosques in Jabaliya r.c., a fishing harbor w. of Khan Yunis, a water reservoir in Bayt Hanun. Target areas include Abasan, Bani Suhayla, Bayt Hanun, al-Bureij r.c., Gaza City, Jabaliya, Khan Yunis, al-Maghazi r.c., Nussayrat, al-Qarara, Rafah, Tal al-Za'atar. By day’s end, the Palestinian toll is at least 412 dead.

**Palestinian actions:** Palestinians fire 59 rockets (at least 10 of them fired by Islamic Jihad) and 1 mortar into Israel, with 1 long-range rocket hitting an apartment building in Ashdod (causing heavy damage but no major injuries) and 3 in open areas outside Beersheba (causing no damage or injuries). Beersheba municipal official Shimon Krief says that city emergency workers received only 18 calls from concerned citizens during incoming rocket warnings today, stating “People are relaxed.” Beersheba hospital reports that since the city first came under rocket fire on 12/30, it has treated 10 Israelis for moderate physical injuries and 154 for stress, adding that “with each attack, we’ve gotten significantly fewer patients.”

**Humanitarian notes:** Israel allows 60 trucks of humanitarian aid into Gaza. The International Comm. of the Red Cross (ICRC) warns that humanitarian needs are growing sharply despite the limited entry of aid, noting severe shortages of water, cooking gas, electricity. Israeli human rights groups issue an appeal to DM Barak to restore fuel shipments to Gaza to allow proper functioning of hospitals, water services, and so on.

**Of note:** Air strikes today include an attack on the home of Hamas’s Nizar Rayyan, a cleric and chief liaison btwn. Hamas’s political and military wings, in a densely populated residential area inside Jabaliya r.c., assassinating him and killing his 4 wives and 11 of his 12 children, causing heavy damage to surrounding buildings; Rayyan is the most senior Hamas official to be killed since Israel assassinated Abd al-'Aziz Rantisi in 2004 and one of the only Hamas figures who has not gone into hiding since OCL began. (AFP, AP, BBC, HA, IDF, REU 1/1; Bloomberg, HA, ITV, NYT, REU, WP, WT 1/2; IDF 1/3; NYT, WP 1/4; MM, QA 1/6; IFM, PCHR 1/8)

The IDF seizes the West Bank through 1/3, citing unspecified security concerns. IDF troops at Nilin checkpoint fire rubber-coated steel bullets, percussion grenades, tear gas at mbrs. of a funeral procession that refuses to lower a Palestinian flag while going through the crossing, injuring 2 Palestinians; 1 tear gas canister lands inside a nearby Palestinian home, sparking a fire that guts the 1st floor. (IDF 1/2; PCHR 1/8)

**2 JANUARY**

Israel’s security cabinet authorizes the IDF to open phase 2 of OCL at its discretion by sending ground troops into Gaza “to destroy the terrorist infrastructure of the Hamas in the area of operation, while taking control of some of [sic] rocket launching area used by the Hamas”; authorizes the call-up of 10,000s of additional reservists. The IDF does not immediately take action.

**Israeli action:** The IDF continues air strikes and naval bombardment of Gaza, carrying out 65 air strikes and hitting 65 individual sites. Target areas include al-Atatra, Bayt Lahiya, Dahaniyya, Dayr al-Balah, Gaza City (Shaykh Ridwan, al-Shuja’iyya, Tal al-Hawa, al-Yarmuk), Jabaliya, Khan Yunis, Nussayrat, Rafah, Tal al-Za’atar. Primary targets include the homes of more than 12 senior Hamas officials (including senior IQB official Imad Akel, who reportedly is killed along with 3 children nearby; and Haniyeh’s chief of staff Muhammad Madhun and fmr. PA Refugee Affairs M Atif Udwan, who are believed to be in hiding); a car carrying Hamas’s Gaza City military cmdr. Muhammad (Abu Zakariya) al-Jamal, assassinating him; the Rafah airport site (already heavily damaged by yrs. of IDF attacks); the American International School in al-Atatra in n. Gaza; a public works dept. building southwest of Gaza City; tunnels on the Rafah border; and suspected weapons depots across Gaza. The estimated Palestinian toll reaches 431 killed, more than 2,200 injured.

**Palestinian actions:** Palestinians fire 26 rockets and 5 mortars into Israel, including 10 rockets that strike nr. Ashqelon, 1 of which causes damage and lightly injures 2 Israelis.

**Humanitarian notes:** The IDF escorts 226 foreigners who opt to leave Gaza to the Allenby Bridge crossing into Jordan; allows 64 truckloads of humanitarian goods into the Strip.

**Of note:** By this date, nearly all of Gaza’s police stations and government buildings
have been destroyed. One senior Israeli security official states that “All of the offices and databases are gone. When all this is over, no civil servant will have an office to sit in.” (HA, IDF, IFM, ITV 1/2; AFP, AP, HA, IDF, Nation, NYT, REU, WP, WT, YA 1/3; Adalah 1/4; IFM, JP, PCHR 1/8; WT 1/22; JPI 1/23)

In the West Bank, the IDF fires rubber-coated steel bullets, percussion grenades, tear gas at Palestinian, Israeli, and international activists taking part in weekly non-violent protests against the separation wall in Bil‘in (injuring 5 Palestinians), Ni‘lin (wounding 1 Israeli, 3 Palestinians), and Jayyus (injuring 3 Palestinians; 1 is hit with live ammunition). In Jerusalem, 100s of Palestinians clash with Israeli police after Friday prayers. Small demonstrations against OCL are reported in East Jerusalem and across the West Bank (including Bani Na‘im nr. Hebron, Bethlehem, Hebron, Is-sawiyaa, Ramallah, Shu‘fat r.c.). IDF troops shoot at protesters in Bani Na‘im, wounding 5. The PASF breaks up large rallies against OCL in Hebron and Ramallah, firing tear gas at demonstrators, ripping up pro-Hamas placards and flags, beating and arresting suspected Hamas supporters, injuring at least 10 Palestinians. (HA, NYT, REU, WP, WT, YA 1/3; PCHR 1/8)

3 JANUARY

Israel begins phase 2 of OCL, a massive ground advance into Gaza, in the evening. The IDF states that “the objective . . . is to destroy the terrorist infrastructure of the Hamas in the precise area of operation, while taking control of some of [sic] rocket launching areas used by Hamas in order to greatly reduce the quantity of rockets fired at Israel and Israeli civilians.” Israeli FM Livni acknowledges that Israel has broader aims, stating that toppling Hamas is “a strategic Israeli objective,” but that it might take more than one large-scale military operation such as OCL to do the job.

Israeli actions: Before phase 2 begins in the evening, the IDF launches artillery strikes on some 40 targets concentrated in open areas around Bayt Hanun, east of Rafah, and along Gaza’s main north–south artery in an apparent effort to clear the areas of mines and tunnels, to move Palestinians away from those areas in preparation for the insertion of ground forces.

The IDF also continues air strikes and naval bombardments across Gaza. Target areas include Bayt Lahiya, Gaza City (al-Nasser, al-Rimal, al-Shuja‘iyya, al-Tuffah, al-Zaytun), Jabaliya, Juhur al-Dik, Khan Yunis, Khuzza, al-Mughraqa, Nussayrat, Rafah, al-Shuka (e. of Rafah). Targets include 2 mosques in Bayt Lahiya and Jabaliya, killing at least 13 worshipers and injuring 30 during evening prayers; a car in Khan Yunis, assassinating senior Hamas military cmdr. Muham-mad Ma‘aruf; 2 PA security compounds in Gaza City; the al-Aqsa Radio and the al-Risala newspaper offices in Gaza City; tunnels on the Rafah border; suspected rocket-launching sites and weapons depots. By evening, the Palestinian toll reaches at least 460 dead and more than 2,000 wounded.

At dusk, the IDF drops leaflets on n. Gaza warning residents that troops will soon operate in this area and that they should evacuate for their safety. Around 8:00 p.m. local time, the IDF cuts power to the Strip and begins sending ground forces into n. Gaza, taking up positions on the outskirts of Bayt Hanun and Bayt Lahiya (occupying homes as operational bases); securing areas e. of Gaza City nr. the Qarni crossing, but notably keeping a distance from Jabaliya (considered a Hamas stronghold), and just inside the s. Gaza border e. of Rafah (with tanks firing flechette shells at houses and agricultural areas, killing 1 Palestinian and wounding 7 inside their homes). Heavy gun battles are reported, with Hamas issuing a statement that it is firing mortars at IDF ground forces. After ground operations begin, the IDF announces a naval blockade of Gaza out to 20 nautical miles.

Palestinian actions: During the day, Palestinians fire 28 rockets and 7 mortars into Israel, hitting as far as Ashdod and Ashqelon to the n., and Netivot to the e., lightly damaging 3 homes and an apartment building, lightly injuring 2 Israelis.

Of note: Embedded with some IDF ground units are the first Israeli journalists and 2 foreign reporters (BBC and Reuters) allowed into Gaza since late 10/08. These journalists have been given “trusted” status by the government for their “long history of relations with the IDF” and are under the strict rules of the IDF censor; the general ban on foreign journalists is still in place, despite a 12/31 High Court ruling ordering the government to allow journalists access. (AFP, AP, BBC, IDF, IFM, ITV, Organization of the Islamic Conference [OIC] press release, REU, YA 1/3; HA, IFM, JAZ, JP, NYT, OCHA, WP, WT 1/4; NYT, UNOSAT,
4 JANUARY

**IDF ground forces** backed by naval and air support continue to enter Gaza overnight, with troops taking up positions across n. Gaza (from which most Palestinian rockets have been fired), surrounding Gaza City, retaking the former Netzarim settlement site nr. the Gaza coast south of Gaza City, and bifurcating the Strip into e. and w. (cutting a swath roughly from the Qarni and Nahal Oz crossings to Netzarim on the coast, driving 1,000s of residents from Juhur al-Dik, al-Mughraqa, and al-Zahra’ with heavy artillery and tank fire), but not entering dense urban areas.

**Combat notes:** IDF-Palestinian ground fighting is described as “fierce,” characterized by heavy IDF artillery fire and heavy Palestinian sniping and mortar fire. Because the IDF stays out of built-up areas, there are few reports of close-quarter combat or heavy exchanges of gunfire. While ground troops concentrate in the north, Israeli air strikes and naval bombardment focus equally on the north and south, hitting more tunnels on the Rafah border and targeting Hamas leaders for assassination. (The IDF claims to assassinate Hamas rocket cmdr. Hussam Hamdan and IQB and long-range rocket cmdr. Muhammad Hilu in Khan Yunis, senior IQB mbr. Muhammad Shalbush in Jabaliya, but there is no independent confirmation.)

The IDF reports hitting 45 sites and carrying out 40 air strikes during the day, striking a produce market in Gaza City, several mosques, a medical building and 3 mobile clinics in Shati’ r.c. run by a Danish charity, homes of at least 4 Hamas mbrs. (most of whom have gone into hiding), and suspected weapons depots across Gaza. Target areas include Abasan, Bayt Hanun, Bayt Lahia, al-Bureij r.c., Dayr al-Balah, Gaza City (al-Daraj, Tal al-Hawa, al-Tuffah, al-Yarmuk, al-Zaytun), Jabaliya, Juhur al-Dik, Khan Yunis, al-Mughraqa, al-Nasser (n. of Rafah), Rafah, Shati’ r.c., al-Shuka, al-Zahra’. After dark, IDF troops conduct door-to-door searches on the outskirts of Gaza City.

**Palestinians** fire 29 rockets (including at least 12 Grads) and 5 mortars into Israel, hitting Ashdod, Ashqelon, Netivot, Ofakim, and Sederot; 1 house in Sederot is damaged and 1 Israeli woman lightly injured.

At least 47 Palestinians (including 4 paramedics) are killed and 400 wounded (including 3 paramedics) during the day: 1 **IDF soldier** is killed, 1 is seriously wounded in a heavy exchange of gunfire nr. Jabaliya; 15 IDF soldiers are wounded (3 seriously) by Palestinian mortar fire inside Gaza. The UN and Palestinian medical workers estimate the Palestinian toll to have reached at least 507 dead, 2,400 injured. The Israeli toll stands at 5–6 killed, more than 40 injured.

**Humanitarian notes:** The **Israel FMin.** announced a new joint office of the FMin. and Israel’s Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, called the **Humanitarian Affairs Coordination Center (HACC)**, to coordinate humanitarian organizations operating on aid transfers to the Strip. The UN reports that shortages of fuel, electricity, and water are worsening. Gazan hospitals report drastic shortages of anesthesia, surgical equipment, heaters, spare parts. (AP, BBC, IDF, JAZ, National Public Radio, OCHA, REU, WT 1/4; IDF, IFM, NYT, RFM, UNOSAT, WP, WT 1/5; BBC 1/6; IFM, PCHR 1/8; WP 1/27)

In the West Bank, the **IDF** fatally shoots 1 **Palestinian demonstrator** who attempts to climb the separation wall nr. Qalqilya; conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in al-Arub r.c. nr. Hebron, nr. Jenin. **Israel’s High Court** rules that the IDF may seal 2 floors of the home of the East Jerusalem Palestinian who killed 8 students at the Mercaz HaRava yeshiva in Jerusalem in 3/6/08, even though the gunman was killed during the attack and sealing the home would serve only to punish his extended family; another floor of the home will not be sealed because it is being rented to an unrelated family. (PCHR 1/8)

5 JANUARY

As OCL enters day 10, **IDF** ground forces tighten the circle around Gaza City and continue to operate against Palestinian rocket-launching units across n. Gaza, still avoiding entering densely populated areas. Troops deploy to segment the Strip into 3 main operational zones: a northern zone running fr. the n. Gaza border south to Netzarim Junction (the Qarni Crossing–Netzarim settlement line drawn on 1/4); a central zone fr. Netzarim Junction to Khan Yunis; and a southern zone fr. Khan Yunis to the Rafah border. While IDF troops are still entering
Gaza, IDF reservists have not yet been sent in.

Meanwhile, French pres. Nicholas Sarkozy begins a regional tour to press for a 48-hr. humanitarian cease-fire, meeting with Mubarak in Cairo and Olmert in Israel (see Quarterly Update for details).

Combat notes: In Gaza City, residents and medical workers report that IDF troops are concentrated in the al-Shuja’iyya, al-Tuffah, and al-Zaytun neighborhoods (al-Zaytun is a strategic high point, providing a view over the breadth of the Strip) and that fighting is so intense (involving heavy Israeli tank and helicopter fire) that bodies of the dead have been left lying in the street and ambulances are unable to reach the area. IDF troops occupy at least 3 high-rise buildings in eastern areas of Gaza City as observation posts, expelling the residents and exchanging heavy gunfire with Palestinian gunmen. Israeli aircraft drop leaflets over Gaza City warning residents to evacuate their neighborhood; 1,000s of Gazans report receiving automated phone messages form the IDF saying “We are getting rid of Hamas.”

In addition to carrying out air strikes in support of advancing ground troops, the IDF reports making 40 air strikes targeting tunnels on the Rafah border, weapons caches, homes of senior Hamas and PFLP mbrs. (most of whom are in hiding), the Gaza airport site. Target areas include Abasan, Bayt Hanun, Bani Shuayla, Bayt Lahiya, al-Bureij r.c., Dayr al-Balah, Gaza City (the center city, al-Tuffah, al-Shuja’iyya, Tal al-Hawa, al-Zaytun), Jabaliya, Khan Yunis, Khuza, the al-Mawasi area (w. of Khan Yunis), Nusayrat, Rafah, al-Shabura r.c. (nr. Rafah), Shati’ r.c., al-Shuka, Yibna r.c. (nr. Rafah).

Of particular note: A home in Gaza City’s al-Zaytun neighborhood, where the IDF placed 110 Palestinians it had rounded up on 1/4, is hit by an air strike and repeatedly shelled, killing at least 30 mbrs. of an extended family (including 5 children age 4 and younger) and wounding scores; the IDF bars relief workers fr. reaching the scene until 1/7. A shell fired from an Israeli naval vessel hits a Palestinian home in Shati’ r.c., killing a family of 7 asleep in their beds. A late-night air strike hits an UNRWA school in Shati’ r.c. being used as a shelter, killing 3 members of a single family. The IDF also makes air strikes hitting the offices of the Hamas-affiliated al-Risala for a 2d time (see 1/3). Photographs and live footage of the ongoing operations clearly show IDF artillery firing white phosphorus shells on densely populated areas, though Israel denies using the munitions. The IDF fires flechette shells on residential areas nr. Bayt Hanun, killing at least 1 Palestinian, wounding at least 3.

Palestinians fire 28 rockets, 5 mortars into Israel, hitting Ashdod, Ashqelon, Beersheba, Sederot, and Shaar Hanegev, damaging an empty kindergarten in Ashdod, injuring 2 Israelis in Shaar Hanegev.

More than 40 Palestinians are killed today (almost half of them children), bringing the estimated Palestinian toll to 550 dead, 2,500 injured. The Israeli toll reaches 9-10 dead, more than 70 wounded: 3 IDF soldiers are killed, 24 wounded (4 seriously) by friendly fire when their unit is hit by an Israeli tank shell outside Gaza City; an IDF officer is killed during an exchange of fire in n. Gaza, possibly by an IDF tank shell; 6 IDF soldiers are wounded in clashes with Palestinians nr. the e. Gaza border.

Humanitarian notes: Israel allows 80 truckloads of food, medicine, and medical equipment into Gaza, but the UN says much more is needed. Relief agencies (including the ICRC, UNRWA, and UNSCO) warn that two-thirds of the Strip is still without power, suffering freezing winter temperatures; 250,000 Gazans are without any running water; and water supplies for another 500,000 Gazans are expected to run out within days because of lack of fuel for pumps and backup generators. Shifa hospital, which has been running fully on generators for 3 days, warns that it has only a 2-day supply of generator fuel. (BBC, CNN, IDF, IDF Radio, MM, NYT, REU, RFM, UNIS, UNOSAT, WT 1/5; AFP, BBC, Guardian, HA, IDF, IFM, Israel Radio News, MA, MM, NYT, WP, WT, YA 1/6; IFM, PCHR, WJW, WT 1/8; Committee to Protect Journalists, MM, YA 1/9; NYT, WP 1/10; NYT 1/17; WP 1/27; BBC 2/23)

The IDF arrests 2 12-yr.-old Palestinians at an OCL protest nr. Hebron; conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches nr. Bethlehem and in al-Bireh, Ramallah. Club-wielding PASF officers violently disperse a protest against OCL by students attempting to march fr. Ramallah’s Birzeit University to a main IDF checkpoint at Atarot. (PCHR 1/8)

6 JANUARY

Sarkozy and Mubarak, with U.S. support, jointly call for an immediate cease-fire followed by talks on Israel’s siege and
Palestinian smuggling (see Quarterly Update for details).

**Combat notes:** IDF ground forces expand operations in s. Gaza overnight, surrounding Khan Yunis (taking up positions in Abasan and al-Qarara, where heavy artillery fire is reported). Fighting intensifies in and around Gaza City, with the IDF tightening its cordon around the city and making forays into built-up areas for the first time. Heavy exchanges are also reported on the edges of the Dayr al-Balah and al-Bureij r.c.s in c. Gaza. IDF air and naval bombardments continue, with the IDF reporting strikes on 40 targets, including 8 smuggling tunnels, more than 10 groups of gunmen, 16 suspected weapons storage and production facilities, 5 rocket-launching sites. Target areas include Abasan, Bayt Lahiya, al-Bureij r.c., Dayr al-Balah, Gaza City (al-Rimal, al-Tuffah, al-Zaytun), Jabaliya r.c., Juhur al-Dik, Khan Yunis, al-Maghazi, Nussayrat, al-Qarara, Rafah, Shati’ r.c., Yibna r.c. One IDF air strike targets the home of Hamas’s chief rocket engineer Imad Siyam; Israel claims he is assassinated, but there is no independent confirmation.

In the single deadliest attack since OCL began, a mortar attack by IDF ground forces in Jabaliya hits outside at an UN-RWA school being used as a shelter, killing 42 Palestinians and wounding around 55 civilians (15 critically; 1 of whom dies on 1/12, bringing the comprehensive toll in this attack to 45). The dead include 2 wanted Hamas mbrs. passing through the area and 40 civilians in and around the school, including 16 children (most of whom were lined up outside the building as UN workers registered their entry). Another IDF airstrike on a residential area of al-Bureij r.c. injures 7 UN workers at a medical clinic.

Palestinians fire 30 rockets and 5 mortars into Israel, including 1 Grad rocket that lands in Gadera, 28 mi. n. of Gaza, lightly injuring a 3-mo.-old Israeli child and marking the farthest rocket strike to date.

At least 85 Palestinians are killed during the day, bringing the toll to around 640 Palestinians killed, 2,900 injured; 1 IDF soldier is killed, 9 are wounded in clashes with Palestinians, bringing the Israeli toll to 10–11 dead.

**Humanitarian notes:** Israel says it will open “humanitarian corridors” into Gaza beginning 1/7 to prevent a humanitarian crisis, halting attacks for 3 hrs. every other day (in practice, they occur daily) in pre-determined areas where Palestinians could receive needed food and supplies. **Save the Children** warns that Gazan children are at particular risk for hypothermia because there is no electricity or fuel to provide heat in the freezing cold, and many families are keeping windows open to prevent injuries if they shatter during Israeli bombing raids.

Israel agrees in principle to the 1/6 Egyptian-French cease-fire proposal, agreeing to send an envoy to Cairo on 1/8 to discuss details with Egyptian officials. On the ground, Israeli air, naval, and ground attacks continue across the Strip, “tightening the noose” around Gaza’s population centers. IDF reservists begin to complete their training and deploy to staging areas on the Gaza border. IDF officials say that since Israeli troops entered Gaza on 1/3, Hamas and other Palestinian fighters have largely pulled back into the cities and refugee camps, sniping and engaging IDF troops on the edges of densely populated areas but not coming out to engage directly.

**Combat notes:** The IDF carries out more than 40 air strikes on targets across Gaza, hitting the PA presidential compound in Gaza City (already hit several times), 14 rocket-launching sites, more tunnels on the Rafah border, 9 homes allegedly hiding smuggling tunnels, 4 groups of armed Palestinians, 1 Hamas outpost, 1 suspected weapons depot, 2 mosques (Bani Suhayla, Khan Yunis). Target areas include Abu Middayan (c. Gaza), Bani Suhayla, Bayt Lahiya, al-Bureij r.c., Dayr al-Balah, Gaza City (Shaykh Ridwan), the al-Fukhari area (nr. Khan Yunis), Jabaliya, Khan Yunis, Khuza, Ma’an (c. of Khan Yunis), al-Maghazi, Nussayrat, Rafah, the Western Sawahira area (c. Gaza). Particularly heavy IDF artillery fire and exchanges of gunfire are reported in al-Atatra, the al-Salatin area northwest of Bayt Lahiya, the Izbet ‘Abid Rabbuh area e. of Jabaliya, al-Qarara, and al-Zaytun in Gaza City. In the afternoon, the IDF drops leaflets on houses nr. the Rafah border, ordering residents to evacuate their homes; aerial bombing there begins after dark.

Palestinians fire 17 rockets and 5 mortars into Israel, lightly injuring 2 Israelis; around a dozen are Grads that land in...
Ashdod and Ashqelon, the rest are Qassams that land closer to the Gaza border. With IDF troops now in control of open areas around Bayt Hanun and Bayt Lahiya, most rocket and mortar fire is coming from densely populated urban areas.

At least **29 Palestinians** are killed today, bringing the estimated Palestinian toll to at least 682 dead and 3,085 injured. One IDF soldier is moderately wounded, 8 are lightly wounded in exchanges with Palestinians inside Gaza.

**Humanitarian notes:** In the afternoon, the IDF observes a 3-hr. cease-fire nr. Gaza City to allow 80 truckloads of humanitarian aid to enter the Strip and to give Gazans an opportunity to seek food, fuel, and medical care. Some Israeli gunfire is reported (WP 1/22) during the lull, leaving at least 2 Palestinian girls (ages 2, 7) dead and their father and sister wounded. Aid groups say the imports do not come close to relieving the dire crisis. Moreover, Palestinians are reportedly (NYT 1/8) running low on cash to buy supplies because Israel has barred the import of currency; banks are closed because of the fighting; and ATMs do not work because of the lack of electricity.

The ICRC reports finding 16 bodies (7 women, 6 children, 3 men) and 18 seriously wounded Palestinians (including 4 emaciated children too weak to stand) in a cluster of destroyed houses in Gaza City’s al-Zaytun neighborhood. The ICRC received specific reports of these casualties on 1/3, but the IDF had barred ambulances and rescue workers fr. reaching the site; international aid workers finally enter the area with donkey carts to evacuate the wounded, ignoring IDF efforts to chase them away. The ICRC later attempts to return to the area to remove the bodies and check reports of additional casualties but is blocked by the IDF. The ICRC’s headquarters in Geneva issues a rare denunciation of Israel, calling (WP 1/8) the IDF’s handling of the incident “unacceptable,” stating that it had “failed to meet its obligations under international law to care for and evacuate the wounded.” (AP, Arutz 7, AYM, BBC, HA, IDF, JP, MA, MM, REU, RFM, RIA, YA 1/7; IDF, IFM, HHY, JP, MA, MM, NYT, PCHR, WP, WT, YA 1/8; WP 1/14; PCHR 1/15; NYT 1/17; ITIC 1/18; WP 1/22)

**Combat notes:** The IDF carries out another 60 air strikes across Gaza, with heavy bombing of the Rafah border. Targets include more than 18 homes of senior IQB members (all believed to be in hiding), “a number of armed operatives” assassinated (not named), several groups of armed men, 15 tunnels (including some homes believed to be covering entrances to tunnels), 11 suspected weapons depots (including 1 mosque in n. Gaza), 15 rocket-launching sites, the PASF headquarters and PA Youth and Sports Min. offices in Rafah, and an Islamic Jihad office in Abasan. Target areas include Abasan, Bani Suhayla, Bayt Hanun, Bayt Lahiya, al-Bureij r.c., Dayr al-Balah, Gaza City (city center, al-Nasser), Jabaliya town and r.c., Khan Yunis, al-Nasser (n. of Rafah), Nussayrat, Rafah. Heavy naval shelling of Dayr al-Balah and the nearby al-Qur’an area of c. Gaza is also reported. As ground operations continue, the IDF begins moving a small number of reservists into the Strip for the 1st time since OCL began. Heavy artillery and ground fire is reported in Abasan, Gaza City (al-Sha’a, al-Shuja’iyya, Tal al-Hawa, al-Zaytun), al-Qarara. Late in the evening, IDF troops withdraw from al-Qarara; residents report at least 20 homes destroyed since the IDF took up positions in the city on 1/6.

**Palestinians** fire at least 15 rockets and 1 mortar into Israel, lightly injuring 4 Israelis. Areas hit by rockets include Ashdod, Ashqelon, Beersheba (4 Grads), Ofakim.

The Palestinian toll, including bodies recovered during the humanitarian lull today (see below), reaches at least 758 dead and more than 3,100 injured. In addition, a **Ukrainian woman** (married to a Gazan) and her **toddler** are killed by an IDF shell in Gaza City, becoming the 1st foreign casualties inside Gaza (1 Egyptian was killed on Ni’lin; no injuries are reported. (PCHR 1/8, 1/15)

**8 JANUARY**

The UNSC passes (14–0, with the U.S. abstaining) res. 1860, calling for an “immediate, durable, and fully respected cease-fire, leading to the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza” but not outlining an implementation or enforcement mechanism (see Doc. A8). **Israel** says it will not halt its operations until a Hamas cease-fire can be guaranteed. Meanwhile, **Egypt** begins intensive bilateral talks with **Israeli** and **Hamas** envoys to mediate a cease-fire (see Quarterly Update).

The IDF carries out another 60 air strikes across Gaza, with heavy bombing of the Rafah border. Targets include more than 18 homes of senior IQB members (all believed to be in hiding), “a number of armed operatives” assassinated (not named), several groups of armed men, 15 tunnels (including some homes believed to be covering entrances to tunnels), 11 suspected weapons depots (including 1 mosque in n. Gaza), 15 rocket-launching sites, the PASF headquarters and PA Youth and Sports Min. offices in Rafah, and an Islamic Jihad office in Abasan. Target areas include Abasan, Bani Suhayla, Bayt Hanun, Bayt Lahiya, al-Bureij r.c., Dayr al-Balah, Gaza City (city center, al-Nasser), Jabaliya town and r.c., Khan Yunis, al-Nasser (n. of Rafah), Nussayrat, Rafah. Heavy naval shelling of Dayr al-Balah and the nearby al-Qur’an area of c. Gaza is also reported. As ground operations continue, the IDF begins moving a small number of reservists into the Strip for the 1st time since OCL began. Heavy artillery and ground fire is reported in Abasan, Gaza City (al-Sha’a, al-Shuja’iyya, Tal al-Hawa, al-Zaytun), al-Qarara. Late in the evening, IDF troops withdraw from al-Qarara; residents report at least 20 homes destroyed since the IDF took up positions in the city on 1/6.

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the Rafah border on 12/28). Today, 3 IDF soldiers are killed and 14 are wounded (1 seriously, 1 moderately, 12 lightly) during clashes inside Gaza, bringing the Israeli toll to 13–14 dead and more than 100 injured.

**Humanitarian notes:** IDF soldiers fire on relief workers in 3 incidents in which the UN and ICRC had fully coordinated their movements with the IDF in advance (providing the IDF with the license plates of the vehicles, giving precise times and routes of travel, and using clearly marked vehicles) and received IDF assurances that travel would be safe. One UN driver is killed and 2 other UN employees and 1 ICRC employee are wounded. The UN and other groups scale back or suspend aid deliveries to Gaza, citing security concerns.

During the humanitarian lull, the IDF allows ICRC workers back into a heavily damaged residential block of al-Zaytun (see 1/7), where they rescue 103 injured Palestinians who have been stranded since 1/5 and report finding 40–50 bodies, fearing that more dead and injured may be trapped under demolished homes. The **Israeli human rights group** B’Tselem reports (WP 1/9) new evidence that IDF soldiers stationed outside the destroyed houses were aware people were trapped but denied aid.

**UN Undersecy. Gen. for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes** urges Israel to investigate, calling (WP 1/9) it “a particularly outrageous incident” and “absolutely horrifying.”

Israel allows 223 Palestinian dual nationals to exit Gaza via the Erez crossing for Jordan (see 1/2).

The UN estimates that 20,000 Gazans have been internally displaced by the fighting. (AP, HA, IDF, IHH, JP, MA, NYT, UNIS, YA 1/8; AFP, Daily Star, IDF, IFM, ITAR-TASS, MET, NYT, RFM, UNIS, WP, WT 1/9; AFP, AP, NYT, WT 1/12; AYM, JP, NYT, WT 1/13; IHH, MM 1/14; PCHR 1/15; WJW 1/16; NYT 1/17; ITIC 1/18; JPI 1/25)

In the West Bank, the IDF fatally shoots a Palestinian who allegedly attempted to set fire to a gas station outside the Ma’ale Adumim settlement e. of Jerusalem; fires live ammunition and rubber-coated steel bullets at Palestinians demonstrating against OCL in al-Fawar r.c. nr. Hebron, seriously wounding 2 (including a 12-yr.-old boy); fires live ammunition at Palestinians protesting against the separation wall in Bil’in, wounding 1; conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in and around Nablus, in Qabatya nr. Jenin. (PCHR 1/15)
(bulldozing 13 homes). Heavy tank and artillery fire are reported in Bayt Lahiya, Dayr al-Balah, Gaza City (al-Shuja‘iyya, al-Tuffah, al-Zaytun), Jabaliya. Heavy close-quarter combat is reported in Gaza City and nr. Bayt Lahiya, with Palestinians firing antitank weapons and mortars and sniping at ground troops, moderately wounding 1 IDF soldier and lightly wounding 7.

Palestinians also fire 30 rockets and 1 mortar into Israel (including several Grads that hit Ashqelon), causing no reported damage or injuries.

At least 35 Palestinians are killed during the day, bringing the estimated Palestinian toll to around 795 dead and 3,300 wounded.

Humanitarian notes: The UN and other relief groups resume humanitarian aid transfers after receiving assurances fr. the Israeli government that they will not be targeted. During today’s 3-hr. humanitarian lull, Israel allows 41 trucks carrying food and medicine into the Strip. (Committee to Protect Journalists, *Daily News*, IDF, MA, MM, YA 1/9; IDF, NYT, WT, WP 1/10; NYT 1/11; PCHR 1/15)

Israel seals the West Bank through 1/10 citing unspecified security concerns. The IDF fires rubber-coated steel bullets, tear gas, percussion grenades at Palestinians demonstrating against OCL after Friday prayers in Bayt Umar nr. Hebron (injuring 2), Hawara s. of Nablus, Hebron (injuring 4), Is-sawiyya, Ras al-Amud in East Jerusalem; also fires rubber-coated steel bullets, tear gas, percussion grenades at Palestinian, Israeli, and international activists attending weekly nonviolent demonstrations against the separation wall in Bil’in (injuring 3 Palestinians, arresting 5), Jayyus (injuring 9, including 2 wounded by live ammunition, which is not used at the other rallies), N‘lin (injuring 5 Palestinians); conducts late-night house searches in Azmunt nr. Nablus. Jewish settlers fr. Shilo nr. Ramallah beat and fire on 2 Palestinians collecting water at a well nr. the settlement, wounding 1. (IDF 1/9; PCHR 1/15)

10 JANUARY

Israel warns of an expanded ground war in Gaza and begins moving more tanks and reservists to the Gaza border. The IDF drops leaflets and sends out automated phone messages across Gaza, warning of an escalation in fighting.

Combat notes: IDF tanks and artillery pound Gaza throughout the day. The IDF reports making air strikes on about 120 targets, including the home of IQB head Ahmad Jabari (presumed to be in hiding), at least 15 rocket-launching sites, 21 suspected weapons depots (including a mosque and school in Rafah, the homes of several Hamas memb.), 16 tunnels, 3 Hamas outposts, 1 police station, and 2 vehicles allegedly transporting weapons. In Khan Yunis, an air strike destroys Gaza European Hospital’s fuel depot, electricity generator, and water supply system. Target areas include Bani Suhaylaya, Bayt Lahiya, al-Bureij r.c., Gaza City (al-Nasser, Shaykh Ridwan, al-Shuja‘iyya), Jabaliya, Khan Yunis, al-Maghazi, Nussayrat, Rafah. IDF ground forces engage in heavy exchanges with Palestinians in and nr. Bayt Lahiya. Heavy IDF tank and artillery fire are reported in Jabaliya (where 8 family memb. are killed by an IDF tank shell that lands outside their home), Khuza (possibly involving white phosphorus, burning 15 homes and 100s of individuals), Nussayrat, and Tal al-Hawa in Gaza City. The IDF claims to kill 16 armed Palestinians, including Hamas’s “leading authority on Grad rockets,” IQB cmdr. Amir Mansi, during a strike on a rocket-launching site. The estimated Palestinian toll reaches 820–840 dead.

Palestinians fire 9 rockets and 10 mortars into Israel, the fewest since OCL began on 12/27; 3 Grad rockets strike Ashqelon (each causing damage and light injuries, including shock), others land in open areas nr. Ashdod and in the Negev (causing no damage or injuries). The IDF reports 7 ground troops lightly wounded in various exchanges.

Humanitarian notes: The IDF observes a 3-hr. humanitarian lull to allow relief agencies to recover casualties and distribute food but does not allow new aid through Gaza’s crossings on the Sabbath.

Of note: The IDF reports that ground troops have been facing extensive tunnel networks inside the Strip, especially in Gaza City, which the Palestinian factions are using to try to ambush soldiers. IDF sources and Israeli journalists embedded with IDF troops report recent incidents in which Palestinian fighters tried to lure troops into a booby-trapped building in al-Zaytun; left a weapons cache rigged with explosives where the IDF would find it (the booby trap did not detonate); and sent a suicide bomber on a failed attempt to attack a group of soldiers. The IDF also acknowledges that it has rounded up and interrogated scores of Palestinians to gain knowledge of local Hamas positions and...
tactics. Israeli intelligence officers acknowledge phoning Gazans, sometimes overtly and sometimes pretending to be sympathetic Arabs fr. abroad, to gain information about conditions and locations of Palestinian forces on the ground. (AP, BBC, IDF, REU 1/10; IDF, NYT, WP, WT 1/11; MM, QA, WP 1/12; al-Akhbar, MM 1/13; NYT 1/14; PCHR 1/15; WJW 1/16; ITIC 1/19; JPI 1/23)

The IDF fires live ammunition at Palestinians demonstrating against OCL in Bat Ayin nr. Hebron, seriously wounding a 13-yr.-old boy; fires live ammunition and rubber-coated steel bullets at Palestinians holding a similar protest in Sa‘ir nr. Hebron, wounding 3 Palestinians; conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in ‘Askar r.c. nr. Nablus, nr. Hebron. (PCHR 1/15)

11 JANUARY

The IDF launches its deepest ground incursions into Gaza City since OCL began, conducting a 2-front assault from the north and the south; troops pull back to the outskirts of Gaza City by nightfall. To accommodate expanded operations, the IDF commits its first significant influx of reservists into Gaza, numbering in the 1,000s, using them to hold IDF positions, freeing up regular combat troops to thrust deeper into Gaza City.

Combat notes: The intensified IDF assault on Gaza City begins before dawn, with tanks and troops based in the fmr. Netzahim settlement advancing fr. the southwest, supported by helicopter gunships and F-16s, resulting in some of the heaviest fighting since OCL began, especially in Shaykh Ajlīn. Simultaneously, the IDF steps up attacks on the northern outskirts of the city. The IDF reports (IDF 1/11) finding 10s of booby-trapped houses, buildings, and tunnels, accusing Hamas of booby-trapping 30 homes in one neighborhood (location not given). Ground forces also move into Khūza in s. Gaza under heavy artillery fire, bulldozing several homes and razing tracts of agricultural land before withdrawing late in the evening.

The IDF reports hitting nearly 70 targets across Gaza today and making more than 40 air strikes. Targets hit include 23 smuggling tunnels (including 2 located under the homes of Hamas mbrs.), at least 15 “armed cells,” 11 suspected weapons depots, several rocket-launching sites. Air strike target areas include Bani Suhayla, Bayt Hanun, Bayt Lahiya, Gaza City (Shaykh Ridwan), Khan Yunis, al-Maghazi, al-Mughraqa, Nussayrat, Rafah, al-Shabura r.c., Yibna r.c., al-Zawayda (c. Gaza). Heavy tank and artillery fire is reported in Bayt Hanun (white phosphorus use confirmed by Amnesty International), Gaza City (al-Shuja’iyya, Tal al-Hawa, al-Zaytun), Jabaliya, Khūza, Khan Yunis (possibly involving white phosphorous).

Palestinians fire 20 rockets and 8 mortars into Israel, including at least 1 Grad that hits an empty kindergarten in Ashdod (damage but no injuries) and 2 rockets that hit Beersheba (some light injuries). The IDF reports sustaining no casualties but killing around 45 armed Palestinians, bringing the estimated Palestinian toll to at least 876 dead, 3,600 wounded.

Humanitarian notes: The IDF observes the daily 3-hr. humanitarian lull but does not release figures on the number of trucks permitted entry.

Of note: Today’s IDF air strikes on tunnels along the Rafah border damage 10 homes in Egyptian Rafah, seriously wound 2 Egyptian border policemen and lightly wound 1 border policeman, 2 Egyptian children (ages 2 and 5). Egyptian security officials say that the Israeli drones and planes have violated Egyptian air space daily since OCL began and that previous Israeli air strikes during OCL have damaged buildings and 1 mosque, shattered windows, and caused power shortages inside Egypt. (AFP, HA, IDF, WP 1/11; IDF, MM, NYT, WP, WT 1/12; WT 1/13; PCHR 1/15; ITIC 1/19; MM, QA 1/22)

The IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in Bayt Umar and Sa‘ir, both nr. Hebron. (PCHR 1/15)

12 JANUARY

Olmert’s security cabinet revives discussion of opening phase 3 of OCL (see 1/9), agreeing to make a final decision whether to expand or wind down operations within 2–3 days, by which time the IDF believes ground forces will have done all they can from the open and suburban areas they currently hold to weaken Hamas’s ability and desire to fire rockets.

Combat notes: The IDF significantly increases attacks, particularly around Gaza City, and continues to send troops into Gaza. Palestinians report (AYM 1/12) heavy clashes with the IDF n. of Bayt Lahiya, in Daraj and al-Shuja’iyya neighborhoods on the eastern boundary of Gaza City, and in Dahadih and al-Zaytun to the south of the
city. Overnight, the IDF also sends troops back into Khuza (see 1/11) under heavy artillery fire (possibly including white phosphorous), occupying a number of homes as staging posts and prompting 1,000s of residents to flee their homes.

The IDF reports carrying out more than 120 air strikes (half of them after nightfall, targeting Gaza City), uncovering 1 booby-trapped home and 2 booby-trapped tunnels. Targets include the PA Interior Min. offices in n. Gaza, more than 35 tunnels on the Rafah border, homes of Hamas leaders, at least 22 mortar and rocket launching sites, at least 26 groups of armed men, at least 10 “Hamas outposts,” 2 suspected weapons depots and manufacturing facilities, 2 mosques, 2 hotels. Air strike target areas include Bayt Lahia, Gaza City (city center and Shaykh Ridwan, al-Sudaniyya, Tal al-Hawa, al-Zaytun), Jabaliya town, al-Maghazi r.c., Nussayrat, Rafah, al-Shabura r.c., al-Shuka, Tal al-Za’atar, the Twam area (northern outskirts of Gaza City), Yibna r.c. IDF gunboats shell Nussayrat, Rafah, a fishing port w. of Rafah. Heavy tank and artillery fire are reported in Bayt Hanun, al-Bureij r.c., Dayr al-Balah, Gaza City (al-Shuja’iyya, al-Zaytun), Jabaliya town, al-Mughraqa, Twam.

Israeli attacks are so intense that reliable updates on Palestinian casualty estimates are not possible. The IDF estimates killing at least 30 Palestinians in air strikes. UNRWA reports at least 19 Palestinian children killed and 52 children injured in nighttime operations (possibly overlapping with air strikes), 1 paramedic killed by tank fire in Jabaliya during the day. The IDF reports 8 soldiers wounded (1 severely, 1 moderately, 6 lightly) in various incidents, all after nightfall; 3 of the soldiers are injured when they trigger a setup in a booby-trapped house.

Palestinians fire 17 rockets and 7 mortars into Israel, with 1 rocket in Ashqelon and 1 in Sederot causing damage but no reported injuries.

Humanitarian notes: The IDF observes the daily 3-hr. humanitarian lull, allowing 120 trucks carrying humanitarian aid to enter Gaza. UNRWA estimates that internally displaced Gazans number now 90,000: 30,000 seeking shelter in UNRWA schools; 60,000 in the homes of friends and relatives. (AP, AYM, BBC, HA, IDF, IFM, JP, MA, MM, al-Ra‘i, REU, RFM, WP, YA 1/12; HA, MM, NYT, REU, WP, WT, YA 1/13; AYM, HA, MM, NYT, WP, WT 1/14; PCHR 1/15; BBC, WJW 1/16; ITIC 1/19)

In the West Bank, unidentified armed Palestinians fire on an IDF patrol nr. Kiryat Arba settlement, wounding 3. In response, the IDF raids, searches Palestinian homes nr. Kiryat Arba, making no arrests. The IDF also conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches nr. Hebron. (HA 1/13; PCHR 1/15)

13 JANUARY

The IDF significantly increases attacks on Gaza for the 2d straight day, as international mediation efforts led by Egypt to secure a cease-fire also intensify (see Quarterly Update).

Combat notes: The IDF tightens the cordon around Gaza City (focusing attacks on the outlying neighborhoods of Shaykh Ajjin, Tal al-Hawa, and al-Zaytun and open areas n. of the city), with troops reportedly taking fire from Palestinian rocket-propelled grenade antitank missiles and mortars. The IDF also launches a major incursion into Jabaliya under heavy shelling, engaging in heavy exchanges of fire with Palestinian gunmen, killing at least 13. In s. Gaza, the IDF continues heavy attacks on Khuza, including air strikes, intense shelling, and widespread bulldozing of some 50 houses and farms; Israeli fire is so heavy and constant that residents report being unable to reach the injured or flee their homes to seek shelter outside the village; IDF troops pull back fr. Khuza after nightfall.

The IDF reports carrying out more than 160 air strikes across Gaza. Air strike target areas include Bayt Hanun, Bayt Lahia, Gaza City (al-Sabra, Shaykh Ridwan, al-Zaytun), Jabaliya r.c., Khan Yunis, Khuza, Nussayrat r.c., Rafah, al-Shuka, Tal al-Za’atar, and the Twam area. Israeli gunboats shell Nussayrat r.c. Heavy tank and artillery fire are reported nr. Bayt Lahia (white phosphorous suspected) and in Dayr al-Balah, Jabaliya town, Khan Yunis (white phosphorous suspected), Khuza, Nussayrat r.c. (confirmed use of flechette shells). For a 2d day, nearly half of the air strikes take place after nightfall, targeting Gaza City. Palestinians report 12 hrs. of constant Israeli bombardment of the Rafah border, with the IDF claiming to destroy 90 smuggling tunnels. (The IDF also demolishes 1 tunnel on the Gaza-Israel border nr. the Nahal Oz crossing.) Specific targets include a Hamas police headquarters in Gaza City, 31 groups of armed men, 25 rocket-launching sites, and 13 suspected weapons manufacturing and storage facilities.
On the ground, the IDF reports a total of 6 soldiers wounded (2 moderately, 4 lightly) in 2 exchanges of gunfire with Palestinians. In a 3rd incident, IDF reservists open fire on an IDF paratrooper unit, seriously wounding 1 and moderately wounding 3. Palestinians report around 70 Gazans killed today, putting the estimated Palestinian toll at 971 dead and 4,400 wounded. The Israeli toll stands at 13–14 dead, more than 125 injured. (Israeli military intelligence confirms that 1 soldier killed on 1/6 or 1/8 was targeted by a suicide bomber, stating that several Palestinian suicide bombers, including some women and some dressed as IDF soldiers, have approached combat units.)

Palestinians fire about 11 rockets and 6 mortars into Israel, causing no reported damage or injuries.

Humanitarian notes: The IDF observes another 3-hr. lull, allowing 102 truckloads of aid into Gaza. (The IDF states that 1,028 truckloads of humanitarian goods have been allowed into Gaza since 12/27.) During the lull the ICRC rescues 100 Palestinians trapped in Jabaliya. Heavy IDF attacks in Rafah force UNRWA to close a medical center just n. of the border to ensure the safety of patients and to open more shelters for displaced residents. Human Rights Watch calls Israel’s 3-hr./day breaks to facilitate humanitarian aid “woefully insufficient.” Other aid groups (including Doctors Without Borders, the ICRC, the UN) complain that they are still able to import and distribute only a fraction of the emergency supplies available for Gaza because of Israeli delays and restrictions. (BBC, HA, IDF, IFM, MA, MM, REU, YA 1/13; AYM, IDF, IFM, MM, NYT, WP, WT, YA 1/14; NYT, PCHR, WP, XIN 1/15; ITIC 1/19)

In the West Bank, IDF troops at the Tarqumiyya crossing nr. Hebron fatality shoot a Palestinian who allegedly attempts to grab the gun of a border patrol officer after being denied permission to cross the checkpoint. Late in the evening, the IDF conducts arson raids, house searches in Bayt Awa, Dura, and Kaf Khaileil (all nr. Hebron). A Jewish settler driving nr. Azuz village e. of Qalqiliya opens fire on Palestinian youths who stoned his car, killing 1 Palestinian teenager, wounding 2. (HA 1/13; PCHR 1/15)

A Jordanian soldier fires on an Israeli border patrol unit operating along the Negev border with Jordan n. of Elat. The border police return fire. No injuries are reported. (MM 1/13; WT 1/14; JPI 1/23)

14 JANUARY

Egypt announces that Gaza- and Damascus-based Hamas officials have agreed on a cease-fire offer to be present to Israel (see Quarterly Update). Israel agrees to send an envoy to Cairo on 1/15 to be briefed on the plan. Meanwhile, Israel’s intense air, naval, and ground assaults on Gaza continue.

Combat notes: Under cover of air strikes and heavy shelling, IDF troops take up new positions in s. Gaza’s al-Fukharia area nr. the Sufa crossing (occupying several homes and expelling the residents) and al-Shuka village; Israeli fire is so intense that rescuers cannot reach the wounded or retrieve the dead. The IDF reports carrying out approximately 120 air strikes today (70 of them after nightfall) that kill 10s of Palestinians. Targets include at least 24 groups of armed Palestinians, 16 smuggling tunnels, at least 10 suspected weapons depots (including a Rafah mosque), and 24 rocket launching sites (killing senior IQB cmdrs. Walid Za’abud and Muhammad Dagh nr. al-Zaytun). Air strike target areas include Bani Suhaylaya, Bayt Lahiya, Gaza City (areas northwest of the city and al-Nasser, al-Sabara, al-Sha’af, Shaykh Sidwan, al-Shuja’iyya, Tal al-Hawa, al-Yarmuk, al-Zaytun), Khan Yunis, Khuza, al-Mughrqqa, Nussayrat r.c., al-Qarara, Rafah, al-Shabura r.c., Twam, Yibna r.c. Heavy artillery and tank fire are reported in and around Bayt Lahiya (white phosphorous suspected), al-Bureij r.c., Gaza City (al-Sabara, al-Tuffah), Jabaliya town and r.c. Naval bombardment centers on Rafah’s Tal al-Sultan neighborhood.

Palestinians fire 14 rockets and 2 mortars, including 4 Grads (2 each in Ashdod and Beersheba), into Israel, causing no injuries. Gaza medical workers put the estimated Palestinian toll at 1,018 dead (including an estimated 300 children), 4,700 injured. The IDF reports 27 soldiers wounded (1 severely, 2 moderately, 24 lightly), mostly in ground fighting with Palestinians nr. Gaza, including 7 soldiers wounded (1 severely, 1 moderately, 5 lightly) by a Palestinian antitank missile. The Israeli toll stands at 13–14 dead, more than 150 wounded.

Humanitarian notes: The IDF allows at least 108 truckloads of humanitarian aid into Gaza during the lull. A group of Israeli human rights groups (including Amnesty International–Israel, B’Tselem Gisha, Physicians for Human Rights–Israel) characterize Israel’s restrictions on aid and access to...
Gaza by relief groups and medical workers as a “blatant violation of the laws of warfare and raises the suspicion, which we ask be investigated, of the commission of war crimes.” (AP, BBC, CBS News, HA, IDF, IFM, JAZ, MM, QA, REU, RFM, XIN 1/14; AYM, HA, IDF, IFM, IHY, JAZ, MA, MM, NYT, PCHR, WP, WT, YA 1/15; ITIC 1/19; PCHR 1/22, 1/29)

The IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in and around Hebron and Jenin, in Bayt Sahur, and nr. Nablus. (PCHR house searches in and around Hebron and Jenin, 1/22, 1/29)

The 20th day of OCL is marked by serious diplomatic steps toward a cease-fire but also by Israel’s heaviest attacks on Gaza since operations began. Israel’s envoy receives the Egyptian-Hamas cease-fire offer in Cairo, returns to Israel to brief the security cabinet. Olmert dispatches Livni to Washington to finalize a bilateral “memorandum of understanding” (MOU) regarding U.S.-led international efforts to halt arms smuggling into Gaza. (See Quarterly Update for more on these efforts.)

Combat notes: The IDF sharply escalates air, naval, and ground attacks across Gaza. IDF ground forces push deep into Gaza City under cover of air strikes and heavy tank and artillery fire. Residents report almost constant air, naval, artillery bombardment from 1:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. local time, and particularly heavy ground engagements in al-Atatra n. of the city and Tal al-Hawa neighborhood on the southern outskirts, as well as in Jabaliya r.c. Thousands of Gaza City residents attempt to flee the fighting, but many cannot leave their homes because of the intensity of Israeli fire. During the operations, Israeli troops surround the home of Hamas’s Mahmud Zahhar (in hiding), killing his security guards. Gaza City fighting cases slightly in the afternoon, but IDF troops remain in the city overnight. The IDF also takes up new positions in Bayt Hanun’s al-Farta and al-Nazzaza quarters under cover of heavy shelling and gunfire, ordering residents of the 2 areas (some 20 families) to evacuate.

Unidentified assailants fire 3 rockets fr. s. Lebanon into n. Israel. (Up to a dozen rockets total may have been fired, with others landing inside Lebanon). The IDF returns fire. No damage or injuries are reported. (MM, MNR 1/14; WP 1/15)

15 JANUARY

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The IDF reports carrying out more than 80 air strikes today, hitting at least 23 rocket and mortar launching sites, 19 groups of armed Palestinians, 6 suspected weapons depots (including 2 mosques in Gaza City, 1 in Rafah), 4 tunnels, 1 radio station in Gaza City. Air strike target areas include al-Atatra, Bayt Hanun, Bayt Lahiya, Dayr al-Balah, Gaza City (al-Rimal, al-Sabra, Tal al-Hawa, al-Yarmuk), Jabaliya, Khan Yunis, al-Maghazi r.c., Nusserayt r.c., Rafah, Yibna r.c. Heavy tank and artillery fire are reported in Ahsan, Bayt Hanun, Bayt Lahiya, al-Bureij r.c., Dayr al-Balah, Gaza City (al-Sabra, Tal al-Hawa, al-Tuffah), Jabaliya, Khuza, al-Mughraqa, al-Nasser (n. of Rafah), Nussaryat r.c., al-Qarara, Rafah. UNRWA reports 100s of Palestinians fleeing areas of northeastern Rafah to escape heavy bombardments. Reports of Israel using white phosphorous munitions spike sharply, with confirmed use in 3 areas (Ahsan, Khuza, al-Qarara) and suspected use in 5 areas (Bayt Hanun, Bayt Lahiya, al-Bureij r.c., Khan Yunis, Nussaryat r.c.). Israeli naval bombardment concentrates on Khan Yunis and the neighboring al-Mahatin area. Close-combat fighting is reported around Jabaliya r.c.

In a major air strike on Jabaliya, the IDF assassinates Gaza’s acting Interior M Siyam in his brother’s home, along with his brother and nephew, Hamas internal security head for Gaza Salah Abu Sharah, 4 Palestinians in an adjacent home. In addition, IDF air strikes hit buildings in Gaza City housing UNRWA’s main food depot (3 white phosphorous missiles incinerate tons of food and medicine brought in during the humanitarian lulls); Palestinian Red Crescent Society offices and the adjacent al-Quds Hospital (both hit repeatedly over a 5-hr. period; the patient wing of the hospital is not targeted); and the shared media offices of Abu Dhabi TV, al-Arabiyya TV, Reuters, and the Russian TV channel Rusiya al-Yaum, causing serious damage and injuring 2 journalists. A number of other hospitals in Gaza City are damaged by Israeli mortar fire. Palestinian medical workers say the Palestinian toll is at least 1,090 dead (including 375 children, 150 women, 14 medical workers), more than 5,000 wounded.

Palestinians fire 15 rockets and 8 mortars into Israel, seriously injuring a 7-yr.-old Israeli boy in Beersheba and causing significant damage in 2 instances (both by Qassams in Sederot); at least 3 of the rockets are Grads (2 in and nr. Beersheba, 1 in Gadera).
The Palestinian toll is estimated to be at least 1,090 dead, more than 5,000 wounded.

**Humanitarian notes:** With diplomacy toward a cease-fire showing progress, Israel extends the daily humanitarian lull to 4 hrs./day, allowing in up to 170 truckloads of humanitarian aid; permits the Qarni crossing conveyor belt to resume operation for the 1st time since 12/27 for the import of grain. Israel also allows the ICRC and Palestinian Energy Authority to begin repairs to part of Gaza’s electricity network. (AFP, AP, HA, IDF, IFM, HY, MM, RFM, UNOSAT, YA 1/15; HA, IDF Radio, JP, MA, MM, NYT, REU, Scotsman, WP, WT, XIN, YA 1/16; IFM, NYT, XIN 1/17; ITIC 1/19; PCHR 1/22, 1/29)

Citing unspecified security concerns, the IDF imposes a total closure on the West Bank through 1/17. The IDF also conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches nr. Bethlehem, Hebron, Nablus. Jewish settlers fr. Yitzhar attempt to close a road nr. Nablus to Palestinian traffic, stone Palestinians, wounding 7. Another air strike on a home in al-Bureij r.c. kills a mother and her 3 children, ages 7–15. Gazan medical officials put the Palestinian toll at 1,140 dead, more than 5,100 wounded (470 in serious condition).

**16 JANUARY**

In Washington, Livni and Rice sign the MOU on curbing arms smuggling, aimed at facilitating Israel’s acceptance of the Egypt-Hamas cease-fire offer (see 1/15). Anonymous Israeli military officials state that OCL is “in its final act.”

**Combat notes:** Early in the day, the IDF pulls back to the outskirts of Gaza City (with reports indicating that Tal al-Hawa has been devastated), but fighting intensifies again in the evening. Intensified IDF ground operations under cover of air strikes and heavy shelling are reported on the outskirts of Khan Yunis. The IDF reports hitting more than 50 targets during the day, including 15 rocket-launching sites, 13 groups of armed men, 4 suspected weapons depots, 2 smuggling tunnels, at least 1 mosque, Hamas’s Asda’ media center outside Khan Yunis (previously hit on 12/27). Air strike target areas include Bani Suhayla, Bayt Lahiya, al-Bureij r.c., the al-Fukhari area, Gaza City (al-Shuja’iyya, Tal al-Hawa; al-Tuffah), Izbet Umar (injuring 3), Issawiyya (injuring 4); Hebron (injuring 4) and neighboring Bayt Umar (injuring 3), Issawiyya (injuring 4); fires live ammunition, rubber-coated steel bullets at Palestinians who attend nonviolent demonstrations against OCL following Friday prayers in Hebron (injuring 4) and neighboring Bayt Umar (injuring 3), Issawiyya (injuring 4); fires live ammunition, rubber-coated steel bullets, percussion grenades, tear gas at Palestinian, Israeli, and international activists taking part in weekly nonviolent protests against the separation wall in Bil’in (injuring 5 Palestinians, 4 with live ammunition); fires rubber-coated steel bullets, percussion grenades, tear gas at Palestinian, Israeli, and international activists taking part in weekly nonviolent protests...
against the separation wall in Ni’lin (injuring 12 Palestinians, including 7 children). In East Jerusalem, Israeli forces beat and fire rubber-coated steel bullets at Palestinians protesting against OCL nr. al-Aqsa Mosque (injuring 1) and in Ras al-Amud neighborhood (injuring 1). (PCHR 1/22)

17 JANUARY

With the 1/16 MOU in hand (see Doc. A9), along with a letter from European heads of state pledging to support the U.S.-led efforts outlined therein and a private message from Mubarak to the Israeli security cabinet (see Quarterly Update for details on these) received today, Olmert formally declares a unilateral cease-fire in Gaza effective 2:00 A.M. local time on 1/18 (7:00 p.m. 1/17 EST). Stressing that Hamas was not party to any of the pledges secured by Israel, Olmert states: “If [the Palestinians] stop firing, we will consider leaving Gaza at a time that is suitable to us,” but if they continue rocket fire (NYT 1/17), “the Israeli army will regard itself as free to respond with force.” Hamas denounces Israel for ignoring Egyptian efforts to broker an agreed upon truce.

Combat notes: Olmert’s announcement comes at the end of a day of “sporadic and intensive” fighting in Gaza. The IDF reports hitting more than 120 targets, mostly comprising a final massive bombardment of more than 100 tunnels along the Rafah border that lasts 10 hrs., but also including strikes on at least 10 rocket-launching sites, 5 groups of armed Palestinians, 3 Hamas outposts. In addition to Rafah, air strike target areas include Bayt Hanun, Gaza City (city center), Jabaliya, Khan Yunis. Heavy artillery and tank fire are reported in: Bayt Lahiya, Jabaliya, al-Nasser (n. of Rafah). In Bayt Lahiya, IDF shells (possibly including white phosphorus) hit an UNRWA school sheltering 1,600 Gazans, killing 2 Palestinian brothers (ages 4, 5) and wounding 36 Palestinians (including the boys’ mother, who loses both legs). Naval bombardments center on Khan Yunis. Ground engagements are reported in al-Bureij r.c., al-Mughraqa, Nussayrat r.c., al-Zahra’a. Late in the evening, IDF troops pull out of al-Shuka (where troops seized positions on 1/14), with residents reporting many houses demolished and damaged, wide areas of agricultural land razed, and significant damage to the village infrastructure (water systems, etc.).

Palestinians fire 19 rockets and 5 mortars into Israel, lightly injuring 5 Israelis (possibly all shock). The IDF reports 4 IDF soldiers seriously wounded in a friendly fire incident involving Israeli mortar fire, plus another 13 soldiers injured (3 seriously, 3 moderately, 7 lightly) in clashes with Palestinian gunmen over the previous 24 hrs., including 5 soldiers wounded by a Palestinian antitank round today.

With the truce ordered, the IDF puts Israel’s comprehensive casualty toll for OCL at 3 (perhaps 4; see casualties chart in special document section for details) civilians and 10 soldiers dead, more than 100 soldiers and an unstated number of civilians injured. (This marks the 1st time the IDF has given estimates for comprehensive IDF casualties inside Gaza.) Gazan health officials estimate the Palestinian toll to be at least 1,200 killed and more than 5,000 wounded, though numbers are expected to change as rescue workers gain access to damaged areas.

Humanitarian notes: The IDF allows 62 truckloads of humanitarian aid into Gaza. Israel gives no indication whether or how quickly it will ease restrictions on imports once the cease-fire goes into effect. (IDF, IFM 1/17; IFM, ITIC, NYT, QA, WP, WT 1/18; ITIC, JP, MM 1/19; JAZ 1/20; PCHR 1/22; FT 1/28; PCHR 1/29)

The IDF imposes a curfew on Hawara village s. of Nablus. (PCHR 1/22)

18 JANUARY

Israel’s unilateral cease-fire goes into effect early in the morning as planned, marking the official end to OCL. The IDF begins withdrawing ground troops fr. Gaza early in the morning and releases reservists from call-up later in the day, with Olmert stating that Israel intends to pull out of Gaza as quickly as possible. Israel generally observes its cease-fire during the day, but maintains a policy of firing on Palestinians who stray close to the Gaza border fence or approach withdrawing troops. After firing 15 rockets into Israel early in the day (lightly injuring 2 Israelis in Ashdod), Hamas and other Palestinian factions declare their own Gaza cease-fire but warn that they would resume fighting if Israel does not withdraw quickly. (Unidentified factions fire 4 rockets after Hamas’s announcement, causing no injuries.) Egypt, France, the EU, and the Arab states shift their mediation efforts to securing a lasting truce and securing donor aid to fund Gaza reconstruction.
Combat notes: The IDF carries out 3 air strikes against 1 group of armed Palestinians that fires on IDF ground forces nr. Wadi al-Siqa and 2 rocket-launching sites nr. Bayt Hanun; no injuries are reported. IDF troops on the s. Gaza border fire on a group of Palestinians inspecting damage to agricultural land nr. the border, killing 1 Palestinian civilian. The Israeli navy fires a missile at the PA General Intelligence compound in n. Gaza. Israeli warplanes continue low-level overflights of the Strip throughout the day, keeping many Palestinians off the streets. By day’s end, the IDF pulls troops in n. Gaza back into the buffer zone along the n. Gaza border; redeploys outside Gaza City’s al-Dahahidh, al-Sha’af, Tal al-Hawa, and al-Zaytun neighborhoods; pulls troops out of al-Zahra’ in c. Gaza; withdraws from the al-Fukhari area and al-Mughraqa in the south.

Palestinians attempting to return to their homes in Gaza City’s northwestern neighborhoods find widespread devastation (especially in Twam, used as a staging area for the IDF’s tank corps), prompting 100s to return to UNRWA shelters. Residents of al-Atatra and al-Salatin areas on the northern outskirts of Gaza City similarly report 10s of homes and 3 schools destroyed, large tracks of agricultural land razed, significant damage to infrastructure. In s. Gaza, residents of the al-Fukhari area report at least 30 homes demolished, large areas of agricultural land razed since troops occupied the area on 1/14. Rescue workers combing the rubble in heavily damaged areas in and around Gaza City report finding at least 35 bodies in the Twam area, 95 bodies in al-Zaytun neighborhood, 24 bodies in Atatra and Izbat ’Abid Rabbuh, 5 in Jabaliya. Palestinian workers begin repairing water and electricity lines in various areas. Israel allows 150 truckloads of humanitarian goods into Gaza. (AFP, IDF, IFM, NYT, WP, WT 1/18; HA, IDF Radio, MM, NYT, WP, WT 1/19; NYT 1/20; PCHR 1/22; FT 1/28; PCHR 1/29)

The IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches nr. Hebron, Jenin, Nablus; issues military orders confiscating 3,000 dunums (d.; 4 d. = 1 acre) of land in Yatta s. of Hebron and 13 d. nr. Bethlehem for settlement expansion, and 500 d. of land in Abu Dis for construction of the separation wall around Jerusalem. A Jewish settler driving nr. Ramallah is shot, seriously wounded fr. a passing car. In East Jerusalem, Israeli forces evict a family (18 mbrs.) and seal their home in Jabal al-Mukabir, where Israelis are expanding a Jewish settlement. (HA, NYT 1/20; MM 1/21; PCHR 1/22)

19 JANUARY

The Gaza cease-fire holds, with no Israeli or Palestinian violence reported. Israeli officials say the IDF has accelerated its withdrawal fr. Gaza in hopes that it will be completed by the time U.S. pres.-elect Barack Obama is sworn in on 1/20. Across Gaza, some stores reopen, and traffic along the main north–south route (occupied by the IDF during the war) resumes, though observers say (WP 1/20) that “much of the main highway was nearly impassable from the dirt and debris plowed up by Israel’s military”; Hamas-led police provide traffic control in damaged areas and generally try to assert a presence. Israel allows a small group of foreign reporters into Gaza and permits them to interview Palestinians, but requires them to team report as a pool and runs their coverage through IDF censors, given the continued presence of Israeli soldiers in the field. Israel for the first time since 12/27 allows a few truckloads of commercial goods into Gaza in addition to humanitarian aid; in total, 208 truckloads are allowed entry. Rescue workers continue searching for survivors and uncovering bodies (at least 14 today), particularly in al-Zaytun. (AY, DUS, MM, YA 1/19; NYT, WP, WT 1/20; DUS, al-Hayat, JP, MM, QA 1/21; NYT, PCHR, UNICEF press release, WT 1/22; PCHR 1/29; AP 1/30; WT 2/4; WP 2/6; Electronic Intifada 2/24)

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20 JANUARY

Obama is sworn in as the 44th president of the U.S. (NYT, WP, WT 1/20; MA, MM, NYT, WP, WT, YA 1/21; HA, JP, MA, MM, QA, al-Ra‘i, al-Watan, YA 1/22)

The IDF completes its withdrawal from Gaza’s built-up areas, moving troops to elevations overlooking the Strip, but slows its withdrawal fr. n. Gaza and secures positions inside the northern border after Palestinians fire 8 mortars toward Israel today (all of which land inside Gaza, causing no damage or injuries). The IDF responds with air strikes on several launching sites, causing no reported injuries. IDF troops on the s. Gaza
border fire on residential areas of al-Qarara, wounding 1 Palestinian. In Khuza, 1 Palestinian is wounded when he accidentally triggers unexploded IDF ordnance. Israeli naval vessels fire warning shots at Palestinian fishing vessels going out to sea for the first time since OCL began, forcing them to stay close to shore. As Gazans continue to return to their homes, residents of the farming village of Juhur al-Dik (who evacuated the village several days after the ground invasion began on 1/3) report that about a third of the 600 homes have been bulldozed or heavily damaged and much crop land has been razed. Meanwhile, 1,000s of Palestinians turn out for 4 rallies across Gaza organized by Hamas to celebrate the end of OCL. Israel allows 217 truckloads of goods (mostly humanitarian aid) into Gaza. In the West Bank, the IDF conducts synchronized, late-night house searches in Bethlehem and neighboring Aida and Dahaysha refugee camps, making no arrests; conducts similar, synchronized house searches in villages nr. Jenin and villages nr. Hebron, making no arrests; conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches nr. Nablus. (HA, JP, REU, UNOSAT 1/20; NYT, WP, WT 1/21; DUS, MM, PCHR, WJW 1/22; DUS, MM, al-Ra’i 1/23; PCHR 1/29)

21 JANUARY

Israel announces the complete withdrawal of ground forces from Gaza. Israeli naval vessels direct heavy machine gun fire at beaches in n. Gaza, causing no reported injuries. Israel allows 118 truckloads of goods into Gaza. Hamas mbrs. reportedly begin rounding up alleged collaborators with Israel, including Fatah mbrs. (See Quarterly Update.) In the West Bank, the IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in and around Bethlehem, Jenin and nr. Salit, Tulkarm; fires on Palestinians demonstrating against OCL in Bayt Umar nr. Hebron, wounding 2; fires rubber-coated steel bullets, tear gas, percussion grenades at Palestinian, Israeli, international activists taking part in the nonviolent demonstration against the separation wall in Ni’lin (injuring 1 Palestinian, 2 foreign journalists; live ammunition is also fired but causes no injuries), Jayyus (injuring 1 Palestinian), Ni’lin (injuring 6 Palestinians; live ammunition is also fired, causing 2 of the injuries). (HA, MM 1/23; NYT, WP 1/24; PCHR 1/29)

22 JANUARY

Gaza remains relatively quiet. IDF troops on the s. Gaza border fire on Palestinians inspecting damaged homes in Khuza, wounding 1 Palestinian. Palestinian smugglers work to clear and repair tunnels on the Rafah border, estimating their operations will be “back to normal” within a month. Israel allows 204 truckloads of humanitarian aid and commercial goods into Gaza and lifts the ban on foreign journalists entering Gaza, though they must sign a document saying they will not sue Israel should they be injured. The UN estimates 15,000 Gazans are still seeking refuge in UN shelters. In the West Bank, the IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in Issawiyya (arresting 16 teenagers and a 20-yr.-old) and nr. Jenin, Nablus. (PCHR 1/29)

23 JANUARY

On the 1st Friday since the Gaza cease-fire went into effect, Gaza’s imams praise the “victory” of the Palestinian resistance; mosques across the Strip overflow with Hamas supporters. Hamas security officers deploy outside the posts they guarded before OCL, even if the buildings are no longer standing. Israel allows 65 truckloads of humanitarian aid and commercial goods into Gaza. In the West Bank, the IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in Qabatyia; fires rubber-coated steel bullets, tear gas, percussion grenades at Palestinian, Israeli, and international activists taking part in the weekly nonviolent demonstrations against the separation wall in Bil’in (injuring 1 Palestinian, 2 foreign journalists; live ammunition is also fired but causes no injuries), Jayyus (injuring 1 Palestinian), Ni’lin (injuring 6 Palestinians; live ammunition is also fired, causing 2 of the injuries). (HA, MM 1/23; NYT, WP 1/24; PCHR 1/29)

24 JANUARY

Israel allows entry of 10 truckloads of medicine. In the West Bank, the IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in and around Hebron, in Dahaysha r.c. (AP,
NYT, WP 1/25; NYT 1/26, 1/27; PCHR 1/29; WP 1/30)

25 JANUARY

**IDF troops** on the s. Gaza border open fire on residential areas of Khuza, seriously wounding a 55-yr.-old Palestinian man. **Israel** allows 128 truckloads of humanitarian aid and commercial goods into Gaza. In the West Bank, the **IDF** raids a market in Beita nr. Nablus in search of stone-throwing children, arresting 1 older man; conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in and around Bethlehem, Hebron and nr. Ramallah. (PCHR 1/29)

26 JANUARY

No violence is reported in Gaza. **Israel** allows in 293 truckloads of humanitarian aid and commercial goods. In the West Bank, the **IDF** raids Battir village nr. Bethlehem early in the morning and occupies a Palestinian home, stating the home is needed for several days “for security purposes”; makes a late-night raid on a market in al-Fara’ r.c. nr. Tubas, firing on stone-throwing youths who confront them, wounding 2 but making no arrests; conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in and around Bethlehem, nr. Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah. (PCHR 1/29)

**Obama’s newly appointed Middle East envoy George Mitchell** begins an 8-day “listening tour,” with planned stops in Israel, Ramallah, Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, France, and Britain. He will not meet with Hamas officials. (Globes, MM, al-Ra’i, YA 1/26; MM, NHR, NYT, QA, al-Thawra [Damascus], WP 1/27; WJW 1/29)

27 JANUARY

In the 1st serious breach of the Gaza cease-fire, 1 **IDF soldier** is killed, 3 are wounded when **Palestinians** remotely detonate a roadside bomb nr. an IDF patrol near the Gaza border inside Israel, e. of Dayr al-Balah, nr. Kissufim crossing; **Hamas** denies involvement and says it is unclear who staged the attack; no group asserts responsibility. **IDF soldiers** make a brief incursion into Dayr al-Balah under cover of helicopters to bulldoze land along the border fence, directing heavy helicopter and machine-gun fire on nearby residential areas, wounding 1 Palestinian. Later, an **IDF drone** fires a missile at a **Hamas**-affiliated police officer riding a motorcycle in Khan Yunis (wounding him and 2 Palestinian children, ages 5 and 13, nearby) and briefly sends troops into Khan Yunis, withdrawing after several hrs. (Israel claims that the targeted man broke fr. Hamas to start a new faction, called **Global Jihad**, and was responsible for planning the Kissufim bombing earlier in the day.) Separately, **IDF** troops on the s. Gaza border fire on Palestinian farmers working land nr. the border fence, killing 1 **Palestinian**. **Israel** seals Gaza’s borders completely, denying entry to humanitarian aid (14 truckloads of goods entered before the closure) and, late in the evening, makes air strikes on smuggling tunnels on the Rafah border for the first time since OCL. In the West Bank, the **IDF** conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches nr. Hebron. (AFP, FT, IHY, MM, NYT, al-Quds, WP, WT, YA 1/28; PCHR 1/29; HA, IDF Radio, MM, NYT, YA 1/30)

28 JANUARY

The **IDF** conducts 3 air strikes on tunnels along the Rafah border and makes an air strike on a workshop in Shuka. During the day, **Palestinians** fire a **rocket** into Israel for the 1st time since Gaza factions declared their own cease-fire on 1/18, causing no damage or injuries. **Israel** allows 146 truckloads of goods (much of it seed and fodder) and 65 tons of medicine into Gaza. In the West Bank, the **IDF** demolishes 2 **Palestinian homes** in Bayt Hanina and Silwan, both suburbs of East Jerusalem; conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in Qabata, nr. Hebron. (FT, IDF Radio, MM, NYT, REU, WT 1/28; PCHR 1/29)

29 JANUARY

An **IDF** drone fires a rocket at Muhammad al-Sumairi (affiliation unknown) riding a motorcycle in Khan Yunis, seriously inuring him in an apparent assassination attempt, and wounding 17 bystanders, including 11 children, a pregnant woman. **IDF** troops on the n. Gaza border fire on Palestinians and international activists repairing homes on the outskirts of Bayt Hanun, forcing them to leave the area but causing no injuries. **Palestinians** fire a **rocket** fr. Gaza into Israel (the 2d in 12 hrs.; see 1/28), causing no damage or injuries but raising concerns
over the durability of the cease-fire. Israel allows 145 truckloads of goods (much of it seed and fodder) and 130 tons of medicine and medical equipment into Gaza. In the West Bank, the IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in Qabatya, nr. Qalqilya. (UNIS 1/29; HA, MM, NYT, WP 1/30)

30 JANUARY

The IDF relays automated phone messages to Rafah residents ordering them to evacuate houses nr. the border, prompting 1,000s to flee; no strikes are reported. Israel allows 66 truckloads of goods (much of it seed and fodder) and 27 tons of medicine into Gaza. In Gaza, 5,000 Hamas supporters rally to celebrate Palestinian Council mbr. Khalil al-Haya’s emergence fr. hiding after OCL. In the West Bank, the IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in Qabatya, nr. Qalqilya. (UNIS 1/29; HA, MM, NYT, WP 1/30)

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4 FEBRUARY

UNRWA accuses Hamas-affiliated police of raiding a UN compound in Shati’ r.c. on 2/3 and confiscating 400 food parcels and 3,500 blankets intended for the needy after UNRWA refused Hamas’s request to turn the aid over to Hamas-run Social Affairs Min. Meanwhile, Israel allows 101 truckloads of humanitarian aid and commercial goods into Gaza. In the West Bank, the IDF conducts early morning house searches in Hebron, photographing homes but making no arrests; bulldozes 90 d. of Palestinian agricultural land in Sa‘ir village nr. Hebron; Palestinian residents attempt to block the Israelis, but troops fire in the air and troops and settlers beat back the Palestinians, injuring 6. (MM, NYT, WP 2/4; PCHR, WJW 2/5; JPI 2/13)

5 FEBRUARY

IDF troops on the s. Gaza border fatally shoot a Palestinian nr. the border, claiming that he attempted to fire on them. The Israeli navy diverts a Lebanese cargo ship (organized by Lebanese politicians and human rights groups) en route to Gaza to an Israeli port and detains the crew of 20, including an al-Jazeera reporter. After confirming that the cargo contained only food, medicine, bedding, and toys, Israel agrees to transport the aid to Gaza. Israel, which has been allowing only very limited amounts of cooking gas and fuel for Gaza’s electricity plant into Gaza, cuts off fuel deliveries without comment but allows 114 truckloads of humanitarian aid and commercial goods into Gaza. In the West Bank, IDF undercover units make an early morning raid on a home in Qabatya, fatally shooting Islamic Jihad mbr. Ala’ Abu al-Rub in an apparent assassination. The IDF also conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in and around Jenin town and r.c., in Qabatya, and nr. Nablus. (MM 2/5; MM, NYT, SFR, WT 2/6; PCHR 2/12)

6 FEBRUARY

Palestinians fire 2 rockets into Israel, causing no damage or injuries. The IDF responds with 10 air strikes on tunnels on the Rafah border, also destroying an evacuated house and a farm, killing many animals. Israeli naval vessels fire on Palestinian fishing boats off the Rafah coast, wounding 1 Palestinian. UNRWA halts aid transfers to Gaza, accusing Hamas of confiscating UN stocks for a 2d time, commandeering 10 truckloads of rice, flour. UN Secy. Gen. Ban Ki-moon warns Hamas that the suspension will remain in place until the stolen goods are returned and UNRWA is given credible assurances that thefts would not be repeated. Some Fatah-affiliated charities in Gaza also accuse Hamas of confiscating their supplies. Israel allows 82 truckloads of humanitarian aid and commercial goods into Gaza today. In the West Bank, the IDF fires live ammunition, tear gas to disperse Palestinians holding a nonviolent demonstration against OCL in Hebron, wounding 1 Palestinian; fires rubber-coated steel bullets at Palestinian and international activists taking part in nonviolent demonstrations against the separation wall in Jayyus (injuring 3 Palestinians); fires tear gas at a similar demonstration in al-Ma’sara s. of Bethlehem (injuring 5 Palestinians); conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in Bil’in and nr. Jenin, Nablus; makes a late-night
incursion into Dayr Abu Da’if nr. Jenin, rousts 3 shop owners fr. their homes and has them open their stores, photographing and confiscating some goods. Jewish settlers fr. Ramat Yishai in Hebron vandalize nearby Palestinian houses. Separately, the IDF tells Palestinians in the Ramat Yishai vicinity that they may not receive visitors to their homes without IDF permission. (MM, NYT, WP, YA 2/7; WP, WT 2/8; PCHR 2/12)

7 FEBRUARY

In the morning, IDF troops cross into s. Gaza, firing on and searching the al-Fukhari area and Khuza, causing no injuries and withdrawing after 4 hrs. In the West Bank, the IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches nr. Ramallah, in Balata r.c., Qabatya. (PCHR 2/12)

8 FEBRUARY

Islamic Jihad fires 2 rockets fr. Gaza into Israel (including 1 Grad that lands nr. Ashqelon), causing damage but no injuries. The IDF responds with air strikes on the rocket-launching site nr. Bayt Lahiya, killing 2 Islamic Jihad mbrs., and on a Hamas-affiliated police post nr. Khan Yunis, which has been bombed repeatedly, causing no reported injuries. Israel resumes limited shipments of fuel for Gaza’s electricity plant, as well as allowing entry of 761 truckloads of humanitarian aid and commercial goods, 76 truckloads of seed and fodder. In the West Bank, the IDF conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches nr. Ramallah, in Balata r.c., Qabatya. (IDF Radio 2/8; MM, WP 2/9; PCHR 2/12)

9 FEBRUARY

No violence is reported in the West Bank or Gaza. UNRWA reports that Hamas authorities have returned all of the aid seized fr. the agency in the previous wk., allowing the agency to resume operations; the agency notes, however, that food distributions have been hampered by a shortage of plastic bags, which Israel is banning for import to Gaza. Israel allows 112 truckloads of humanitarian aid and commercial goods, 74 truckloads of seed and fodder into Gaza. (NYT 2/10; PCHR, WJW 2/12)

10 FEBRUARY

Israeli elections are held but results are too close to call; late returns show Kadima with a thin lead over Likud (28 seats to 27), and both Kadima’s Livni and Likud’s Benjamin Netanyahu declare victory. Overall distribution of Knesset seats shows a dramatic shift to the Right. (AP, AYM, HA, HJ, MA, MM, REU 2/10; DUS, HA, HJ, IHY, JP, MA, MM, NYT, QA, WP, WT, YA 2/11; WP 2/12; WT 2/13; see Yiftachel report in this issue for details.) IDF troops on the n. Gaza border fire on a group of international activists searching for the body of 1 Islamic Jihad mbr. killed on 2/8 (the other body was retrieved on 2/8), causing no injuries; the IDF eventually allows the body to be retrieved. In the West Bank, the IDF searches homes in Tarama village s. of Hebron, uproots trees fr. a plot of Palestinian land with the intention of annexing it to an adjacent IDF post; conducts a midday patrol in the al-Udaysiya area nr. Hebron, arresting 4 children (ages 14–16) for throwing stones at them; makes a late-night raid on a pool hall in Kafr Ra’i, interrogating patrons but making no arrests. (NYT, WT 2/11; PCHR 2/12)

11 FEBRUARY

In Gaza, the IDF makes an air strike on a Hamas-affiliated police station in Khan Yunis, which has been bombed repeatedly, causing no reported injuries. Israel allows 94 truckloads of humanitarian aid and commercial goods into Gaza, as well a limited amount of fuel for Gaza’s power plant. In the West Bank, the IDF enters Jayyus in the afternoon, imposes a curfew; conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in and around Ramallah, and nr. Jenin, Salfit, Tulkarm. Palestinians in Yassuf village nr. Salfit report that over the past several days, Jewish settlers escorted by IDF troops have bulldozed at least 250 d. of village land and replanted 200 d. with their own crops. (PCHR 2/12, 2/19)

12 FEBRUARY

Final Israeli election results are posted, showing Kadima maintaining a 1-seat lead over Likud. The close race means that Kadima’s Livni and Likud’s Netanyahu will have to compete to form a governing
During the day, the IDF makes an air strike on a lumber store in Gaza’s Jabaliya r.c., destroying it, heavily damaging 20 other stores, wounding 11 Palestinians (including 5 children ages 1–6). Late in the evening, an IDF drone fires on 2 PRC mbrs. riding a motorcycle nr. Khan Yunis, assassinating **PBC mbr. Ali al-Qidra**, wounding a 2d PRC mbr. **Israel** allows 109 truckloads of humanitarian aid and commercial goods into Gaza, as well as a limited amount of fuel for Gaza’s power plant. In addition, **Israel** permits Gazans to export 25,000 carnations to Europe via the Kerem Shalom crossing and Ben-Gurion Airport, marking the 1st permitted exports in nearly a yr. The **IDF** says no further Gazan exports are planned, though the situation will be reviewed periodically. In the West Bank, the **IDF** conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in Qabatya and nr. Hebron, Ramallah, Salfit. (WP 2/13; PCHR 2/19)

13 FEBRUARY

**Palestinians** fire 2 rockets, 1 mortar fr. Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries. The **IDF** responds with 6 air strikes on tunnels on the Rafah border. **Israel** allows 81 truckloads of humanitarian aid and commercial goods into Gaza. In the West Bank, the **IDF** fires live ammunition at Palestinians holding a nonviolent demonstration against OCL in Hebron, fatally shooting a 16-yr.-old **Palestinian**; fires live ammunition, rubber-coated steel bullets, tear gas, percussion grenades at Palestinian, Israeli, and international activists taking part in the weekly nonviolent demonstrations against the separation wall in Bil’in (10s suffer tear gas inhalation), Jayyus (injuring 2 Palestinians, 1 by live ammunition; severely beating a 55-yr.-old Palestinian man); conducts early evening raids, house searches in Jenin town and r.c.; conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in and around Nablus, nr. Bethlehem. (WP 2/14; PCHR 2/19)

14 FEBRUARY

**IDF** troops on the n. Gaza border e. of Jabaliya fatally shoot a 13-yr.-old **Palestinian boy** in the head when he strays near the border fence while herding sheep. In the West Bank, the **IDF** conducts simultaneous late-night house searches in villages nr. Jenin, making no arrests. (PCHR 2/19)

15 FEBRUARY

**Israel** allows entry to Gaza of 103 truckloads of humanitarian aid and commercial goods, 75 truckloads of seed and fodder, and a limited amount of fuel for Gaza’s power plant. In the West Bank, the **IDF** conducts late-night arrest raids, house searches in and around Jenin town and r.c., in Nablus, and nr. Hebron, Qalqilya, Ramallah. (WP 2/16; PCHR 2/19)

**CHRONOLOGY SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS**

- AFP (Agence France-Presse, Paris)
- AP (Associated Press [Internet])
- AY (al-Arab al-Yawm, Amman)
- AYM (al-Ayyam, Ramallah)
- BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation World Service [Internet])
- CNN (Cable News Network [Internet])
- DUS (al-Dustur, Amman)
- FT (Financial Times, London)
- HA (Ha’aretz [Internet], Tel Aviv)
- HJ (al-Hayat al-Jadida, Ramallah)
- IDF (Israel Defense Force Spokesperson [Internet])
- IFM (Israeli Foreign Ministry, Jerusalem)
- IHY (Israel HaYom, Tel Aviv)
- ITIC (Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, Gelilot, Israel)
- ITV (Israel Television Network, Jerusalem)
- JAZ (al-Jazeera Satellite Channel Television, Doha)
- JP (Jerusalem Post [Internet], Jerusalem)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JPI</td>
<td>Jerusalem Post International Edition, Jerusalem</td>
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<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Ma'ariv, Tel Aviv</td>
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<tr>
<td>MET</td>
<td>Middle East Times Egypt Edition, Cairo</td>
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<tr>
<td>MM</td>
<td>Mideast Mirror, London</td>
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<tr>
<td>MNR</td>
<td>al-Manar TV, Beirut</td>
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<td>NHR</td>
<td>al-Nabar, Beirut</td>
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<tr>
<td>NYT</td>
<td>New York Times, New York</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCHA</td>
<td>United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Weekly Briefing Notes, Jerusalem</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCHR</td>
<td>Palestinian Center for Human Rights, Gaza</td>
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<tr>
<td>QA</td>
<td>al-Quds al-Arabi, London</td>
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<tr>
<td>REU</td>
<td>Reuters [Internet]</td>
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<td>RFM</td>
<td>Russian Foreign Ministry, Moscow</td>
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<td>RIA</td>
<td>Russian News and Information Agency–Novosti [Internet]</td>
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<td>SFR</td>
<td>al-Safir, Beirut</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNIS</td>
<td>United Nations Information Service, Geneva</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNOSAT</td>
<td>United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Program, Geneva</td>
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<tr>
<td>WJW</td>
<td>Washington Jewish Week, Rockville, MD</td>
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<td>WP</td>
<td>Washington Post, Washington</td>
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<tr>
<td>WT</td>
<td>Washington Times, Washington</td>
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<tr>
<td>XIN</td>
<td>Xinhua–New China News Agency, Beijing</td>
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<td>YA</td>
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