

Jerusalem Chronology

(August - October, 2001)

August 3

Israeli border police refuse entry to al-Aqsa Mosque to all men under the age of 40 or without Israeli cards. Several thousand policemen are deployed to enforce the closure. When MK Abdulmalik Dehamshe (United Arab List) protests the decision, the Israeli Mayor of Jerusalem Ehud Olmert refers to Dehamshe as a bloodthirsty Hamas activist. (HA)

Agence France Press reports that the Jerusalem Municipal Council ordered the destruction of seven Palestinian family homes because they had been built without permits. Mayor Olmert accuses the Palestinian Authority of "financing the construction of houses" as a counterbalance to Jewish settlements in east Jerusalem. (AFP)

August 7

In a letter to the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan of Patra, Israeli Justice Minister Meir Sheerit approves the 15 candidates for the vacant Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the most important post in the Christian Holy Land, ending a bitter dispute over alleged Israeli interference in the selection of the new Patriarch. (HA)

August 9

A suicide bombing in a central Jerusalem pizza restaurant during the lunch hour kills 15 people and wounds dozens. Police

sappers find an additional unexploded bomb at the entrance to the restaurant. (JP)

August 10

Israeli police raid the Orient House, the unofficial foreign ministry and symbolic center of power of the Palestinian government, arresting seven Palestinian guards. During the raid, the police search offices and confiscate documents before declaring it closed. Israeli officials say it is a move to assert its authority in the traditionally Arab section of the city after years of growing Palestinian power. Palestinians warn the move against their institutions would intensify the conflict.

Dozens of Palestinian and left wing demonstrators clash with police after trying to pass through a police blockade in front of the Orient House. The demonstrators throw stones at the police, injuring one of the policemen. Six of the demonstrators are arrested and the IDF declares the area a closed military zone. (AP, HA)

August 13

Metropolitan Irineos, who served as the representative for the Jerusalem Patriarch Greek Orthodox Church in Athens for the past fifteen years, is selected as the new Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem. Irianus is chosen to replace Diodoros I, who died in December 2000.

Israeli Security Minister Uzi Landau declares that Orient House will never be handed back. Jerusalem Police Chief Mickey Levy says that the decision to renew the closure will be taken by the political echelon, not the police. (BBC, HA)

August 15

Israeli Prime Minister Sharon and Israeli Finance Minister Silvan Shalom agree to

transfer an extra NIS 64 million for work on the infrastructure of Arab East Jerusalem for the first time in two-and-a-half-years, in a response to a previous request from Mayor Olmert. (HA)

August 17

A 16-year-old Jerusalem resident is held in custody after confessing to the police that he had stabbed five Palestinians for nationalistic reasons in recent months. (HA)

In an interview with *Palestine Report Online*, Izhaaq Budeiri, the director of Orient House, declares that closure is just another link in a long chain of hostile Israeli actions towards the Orient House that started in July, when the Israeli Public Security Minister banned the commemoration ceremony for the late Faisal Husseini. (Palestine Report Online)

August 20

Jerusalem Municipality bulldozers demolish two Palestinian homes in the northern Jerusalem (JP)

August 21

The British newspaper *The Independent* reports that Israeli cranes, protected by at least 50 soldiers and policemen, destroyed a building containing eight apartments, a kindergarten, and six shops.

(*The Independent*)

The UN Security Council writes a letter describing recent Israeli actions, including its illegal seizure of Orient House and its forceful occupation of other Palestinian buildings in East Jerusalem, as severely undermining the Palestinian Authority's efforts to lend stability to its administration and threatening the peace process in the region. (M2 Presswire)

August 28

More than 900 Arab students petition Israel's High Court after the Israeli Ministry of Education denies them places in Jerusalem's public schools. (AFP)

August 30

Israeli Arab leaders and Palestinians and Jewish peace activists demonstrate outside the Orient House over the closure of the building and government policies in the ongoing Israel-Palestinian conflict. (JP)

The Israeli High Court of Justice refuses to compel the Jerusalem Municipality and the Ministry of Education to provide free public education to thousands of primary-school children from East Jerusalem. The court also refuses to discuss a petition by parents of some 1,000 children to instruct the Ministry to finance private schooling for their children in the absence of public schooling facilities. (HA)

September 4

A suicide bomber, dressed as an ultra-Orthodox Jew, blows himself up in downtown Jerusalem, injuring 13 people. The explosion takes place on Hanevi'im Street, near the site of the August 3 bombing. (HA)

September 5

The Shin Bet security services and the police arrest six members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) on suspicion of planting a bomb and parking an explosives-packed car in the western part of the city and planning numerous other attacks. (HA)

September 6

The Russian Orthodox Church suspends pilgrimages to Jerusalem, citing safety

concerns. (AFP)

September 16

The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Jerusalem holds the enthronement ceremony at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for its new patriarch, Eirinaios I, without the Israeli government's permission. The ceremony and the reception afterward are boycotted by the Israeli government, which does not send a representative. During the ceremony, Eirinaios thanks Abdullah, King of Jordan, Israeli President Moshe Katsav, and Palestinian Chairman Yasser Arafat. (HA)

Israeli police detain Mufti Ikrema Sabri, the chief Muslim cleric in Jerusalem and a senior appointee of Arafat, about a meeting with a Lebanese guerrilla leader and allegedly inflammatory sermons. His detention is seen as yet another Israeli challenge to the Palestinian Authority's efforts to establish a presence in the occupied city of Jerusalem. The mufti is released but the investigation continues. (AP)

September 24

Seven Palestinians are severely beaten by Jewish settlers at Bab al-Wad in Jerusalem's Old City. (Voice of Palestine Radio)

September 25

The Israeli Jerusalem police force announces a plan to erect permanent barriers between Jewish and Arab neighborhoods in Jerusalem. Up to 12 kilometers of fences and walls could be built in suburbs such as Neveh Ya'akov, which borders Arab village of Dihyat el-Barid, and Pisgat Ze'ev, which is nearby the Shuafat refugee camp. Minister Landau claims to support the plan, because it will make it harder for those trying to infiltrate into Israel,

but says the fences are not meant to separate the city. (JP)

Israeli police raid the American Colony Hotel, in East Jerusalem, where French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine is meeting Palestinian officials, seizing an identity card of a French security guard. (AFP)

September 27

Dozens of settlers and extremist Jews try to storm al-Haram al-Sharif from the area of Bab al-Nazir (Inspector Gate) around midnight and attack local Palestinian residents and their property in the Bab al-Wad neighborhood. (JP)

October 3

Israeli Jerusalem Police Chief Commander Mickey Levy declares that the Temple Faithful, an ultra-nationalist religious group, will not be allowed to bring a symbolic cornerstone of the Third Temple into the Old City. (JP)

October 4

The Israeli High Court of Justice throws out the Temple Mount Faithful's petition to allow the group to lay the Third Temple cornerstone on al-Haram al-Sharif, on the grounds that the petition was submitted too late. Temple Mount Faithful members instead hold a heavily guarded ceremony near the Mugrabi Gate. (JP)

October 5

An Israeli police decision not to allow Muslim men under the age of 40 to worship at al-Aqsa Mosque is met with protest by about 150 young Palestinian men, who try unsuccessfully to push their way up to the site. Also, around 15 right-wing Jewish activists try to hold a rally beside the Temple Mount. (HA)

The Jerusalem Times reports that hundreds of Jerusalem residents are filing a lawsuit against the Israeli government to seek the removal of the checkpoints set up by the Israeli army in al-Ram, and Qalandia, in northern Jerusalem, and at Ras al-Amud and Sawahreh, in southern Jerusalem. (TJT)

October 12

Ha'aretz reports that a group of Jewish investors from Israel and abroad is set to sign a deal to purchase 18 dunams of land near the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in East Jerusalem from two religious groups. The move will ensure Jewish control over the area around the nearby Shimon Hatzadik neighborhood. (HA)

Palestinian residents of Abu Tor complain to Israeli Council Member Meir Margalit about the occupation of a building in their area by two Jewish families and several members of the Ateret Cohanim yeshiva last month. The Armenian Patriarchy claims ownership of the structure, but the new occupants claim that the building was legally purchased from its owners. (HA)

Arafat officially appoints Dr. Sari Nusseibeh, president of al-Quds University, as his representative in Jerusalem, a position held by Faisal Hussein until his death in May. Nusseibeh's title will be Commissioner for East Jerusalem. Arafat said Nusseibeh will receive foreign dignitaries and arrange meetings between Palestinian and international officials in the city. Israeli Army radio reports that, due to Israel's continued presence in the Orient House, meetings will be held at an alternative location. (JP)

October 16

At a symposium at Hebrew University, PA Commissioner for East Jerusalem Nusseibeh

declares that Israelis and Palestinians are further apart than at any time in the past two decades and that he expects the situation to worsen. (JP)

Later, Nusseibeh calls for a two-state solution to the long-standing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, based on the 1967 borders. On the issue of Jerusalem, he says any solution must take into account the feelings and ties that the various religions had to their respective holy sites in the city. (Deutsche Presse-Agentur)

October 17

Gunmen fatally shoot Israeli Cabinet Minister Rehavam Ze'evi, leader of the far-right National Union-Yisrael Beiteinu bloc, in East Jerusalem's Hyatt Hotel. Later, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) claims responsibility for the assassination. (HA)

October 18

Arafat comes under intense international pressure "to take strong action" against the PFLP after it claimed responsibility for Ze'evi's assassination. The government cancels steps to ease the closure on the West Bank and Gaza and restores a tight blockade around Ramallah and other areas in the West Bank. (HA)

October 22

A Palestinian opens fire on passers-by in a Jerusalem shopping district, injuring at least four before being killed by an Israeli soldier. (AP)

October 23

PA Commissioner for East Jerusalem Nusseibeh says the Palestinians erred in appearing to insist on the right of millions of refugees to return to Israel - a demand that

was a key reason peace talks fell apart. In an interview with Associated Press, Nusseibeh says the refugees should be resettled in a future Palestinian state, "not in a way that would undermine the existence of the state of Israel as a predominantly Jewish state." (AP)

October 30

Israeli bulldozers destroy at least four Palestinian houses in the Beit Hanina and Shufat districts of East Jerusalem. (AFP)

In a special Knesset session to mark the sixth anniversary of the assassination of former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Israeli Prime Minister Sharon declares that Rabin

would never have conceded Jerusalem. (HA)

Acronyms

AP	Associated Press
AFP	Agence France Presse
HA	<i>Ha'aretz</i>
JP	<i>Jerusalem Post</i>
MK	Member of Knesset
PA	Palestinian Authority
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
TJT	<i>The Jerusalem Times</i>

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