

# REPORT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

A Bimonthly Publication of the Foundation for Middle East Peace

Volume 20 Number 6

November-December 2010

## BACK TO SQUARE ONE — THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION RESETS U.S. POLICY

By *Geoffrey Aronson*

Machiavelli famously cautioned kings to be bold and inflict pain early. President Barack Obama has indeed aspired to act courageously. His administration declared resolution of the Israel-Palestinian conflict to be a vital national security interest of the United States. In his June 4, 2009 Cairo speech Obama declared that “The United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements. This construction violates previous agreements and undermines efforts to achieve peace. It is time for these settlements to stop.” His diplomacy showed an understanding that Israel’s policy of settlement construction is not a sideshow but rather the keystone of the ongoing, zero-sum battle for control of the land, and an issue of existential importance for Palestinians who have struggled for close to a century, with only marginal success in Gaza, to carve an island of sovereignty out of the rump of historical Palestine. This almost two year diplomatic effort to build a solid foundation for final status negotiations by winning meaningful concessions from Israel on settlement expansion has now been declared a failure by the administration itself.

A December 10 speech by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton offered an opportunity to “reset” U.S. policy which has focused on temporary reductions in settlement expansion. Noting that the continuing conflict “is at odds also with the interests of the United States,” she declared that, “It is

**[W]e have determined that a moratorium extension will not at this time provide the best basis for resuming direct negotiations. In the coming days and weeks, we will engage with both sides on the core substantive issues at stake in this conflict and with the Arab states and other international partners on creating a firm basis to work toward our shared goal of a framework agreement on all permanent status issues, a goal to which we and the parties remain committed.**

**State Department spokesman  
P.J. Crowley, December 8, 2010**

time to grapple with the core issues of the conflict on borders and security; settlements, water and refugees; and on Jerusalem itself. And starting with my meetings this week, that is exactly what we are doing.”

Administration officials have often declared that the United States cannot want peace more than the parties themselves, but if there is a defining character to the diplomacy of the last few months, it is that Washington has demonstrated more of a commitment to diplomatic engagement than either of the antagonists. But as high as Obama’s

aspirations have soared, his administration has failed to follow Machiavelli’s admonition that the successful establishment of a new order requires a necessarily painful transformation of the status quo. Notwithstanding its success in winning from Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu a rhetorical commitment to a Palestinian state, a limited 10-month settlement construction moratorium that ended in September, and now-lapsed planning limitations in East Jerusalem, the Obama administration has shied away from the kind of painful confrontation that is required to reverse the decades-long failure of the United States to end Israel’s illegitimate settlement effort.

The Obama administration has attempted to convince and entreat, rather than oblige Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to rebel against his own political, personal, and familial history by placing effective and lasting constraints on settlement construction. The results of Washington’s effort have fallen woefully short of the spirit and the standard the administration itself set when, on May 27, 2009, Secretary of State Clinton explained, “With respect to settlements, the President was very clear when Prime Minister Netanyahu was here. He wants to see a stop to settlements—not some settlements, not outposts, not natural growth exceptions. . . . That is our position.”

The Obama administration failed to gauge correctly the depth and intensity

*SQUARE ONE, continued on page 4*

## TO OUR READERS

The United States was the principal founder and sponsor of the United Nations. U.S. administrations regularly proclaim the importance of international law, and often use the United Nations to support U.S. national security interests. It was the United Nations that welcomed the new state of Israel in 1948.

Yet for three decades, Washington has almost always protected Israel from actions by the United Nations by vetoing or voting against measures criticizing Israeli policies toward the Palestinians, often in the face of huge majorities. Last month, the United States again voted reflexively against annual UN General Assembly resolutions, as it has for decades, that condemned Israel's settlements and its other violations of international law and called for Palestinian self-determination and a two-state peace.

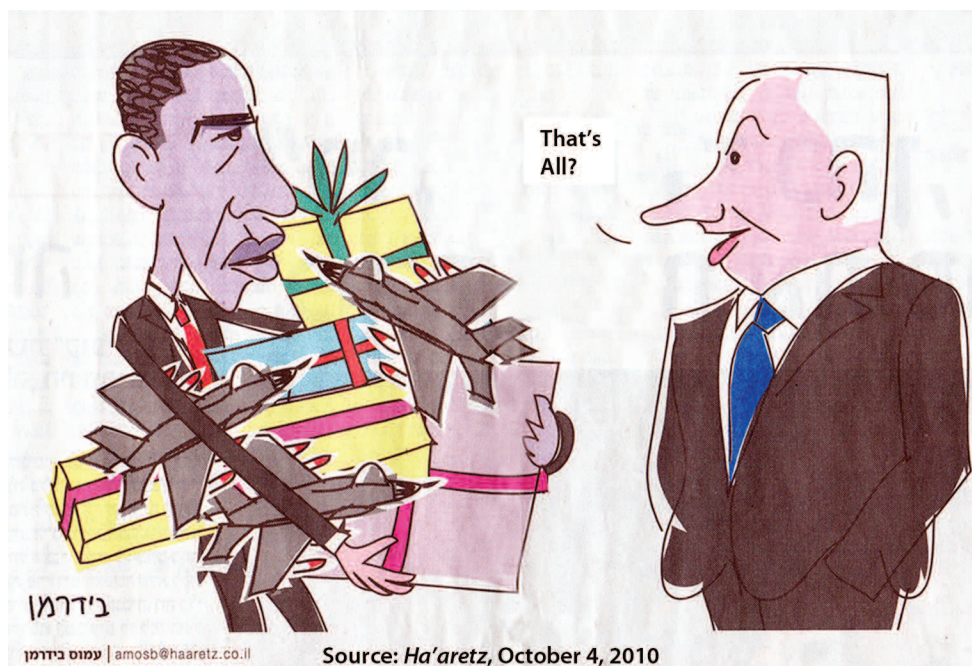
Almost all states and the International Court of Justice regard settlements as illegal under the Fourth Geneva Convention. The United States supported the applicability of the convention to settlements in a

1978 State Department legal opinion, but in 1981, after President Ronald Reagan disagreed in a press conference—asserting, “They’re not illegal”—the United States shelved, but never formally countermanded, its own legal doctrine. Even President Barack Obama has ducked the legal issue by using a softer formulation, rejecting “the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements.”

By providing immunity from the United Nations and international law, the United States has encouraged Israel to believe it need not accept the legal and other international constraints that other nations are expected to heed. Now that Obama's settlement freeze diplomacy has collapsed, he will be searching for more authoritative ways, of which there are many, to persuade Israel to yield on occupation and settlement. Among them should be new U.S. policies at the United Nations and the resurrection of international law.

*Philip C. Wilcox, Jr.*

## HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?



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The Foundation, a non-profit I.R.C. 501(c)(3) organization, supports peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians through mutual recognition and a negotiated division of historic Palestine. It publishes the bi-monthly *Report on Israeli Settlement in the Occupied Territories*.

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## After 40 Years – It's Happening...



### The town of Har Gilo is accepting new families

דודו סלוני - BRL

#### מאת: בן הר אבן

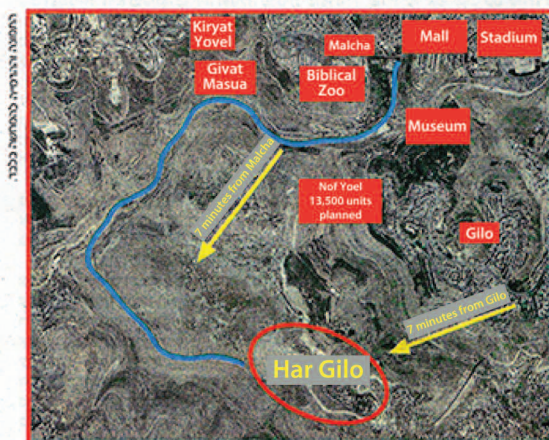
##### Just 7 Minutes From The Jerusalem Mall

The sophisticated road network allows quick access without traffic to all the central areas in Jerusalem and beyond. The proximity to Jerusalem allows the residents of Har Gilo to live close to nature and still enjoy all the advantages that the city can provide, including work and entertainment.

##### Har Gilo – Quality of Life and Rural Atmosphere

Those who live in Har Gilo know that this area has a quality of life that is the highest around. Phenomenal views, crisp mountain air, wide green areas and quiet are among the many qualities that make Har Gilo high in demand.

Limited lands and a desire to keep the town small have prevented the expansion of Har Gilo for some time. Now with the opening of the town of Har Gilo to new families, you are welcome to move and live in a huge cottage in natural surroundings. The number of units is limited and new applicants must pass an approval process from the committee for local admissions.



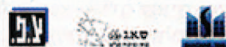
##### Academic and Public Institutions

Daycare and preschool accommodate a wide range of ages. Students from first grade through high school study in Jerusalem and organized transport is available.



##### Exceptional Community

The town was established in 1968 and hosts today 150 upper middle class families. The community is developed and includes academic institutions, children's daycare, preschool, synagogue and more. Har Gilo's proximity to Jerusalem and secure route into the city allow residents to work in the city and live in nature.



לתיאום סיור ולהרשמה חייבו \*4560 | ההצטרפות מותנית בהליך קליטה המקובל בישוב ובאישור ועדת הקבלה האזורית.

of Israel's commitment to settlement expansion, especially in East Jerusalem. And so it has been repeatedly surprised and outmaneuvered when confronted with this fact—when, for example, Netanyahu successfully parried the new administration's initial demand for a complete freeze, and more recently, when, in November 2010, Netanyahu rejected an unprecedented package of incentives aimed at moving diplomacy beyond a short-lived settlement moratorium, a decision that pushed the administration to declare an end to its settlement freeze initiative.

### The Latest Maneuvering

During the period since the end of the 10-month suspension of new construction starts in late September 2010, work has begun on more than 1,500 new settlement units throughout the West Bank, both east and west of the separation barrier (see chart page 5). As a result, during 2010, the number of new construction starts will not deviate markedly from the historical average. In other words, the 2010 settlement moratorium failed to make a difference on the ground or to build confidence between the parties—the twin objectives that the Obama administration initially embraced. Indeed, as pursued by Washington, the placement of a settlement freeze at the center of its diplomatic effort has reduced confidence between the parties and produced two years of debilitating diplomatic stalemate.

In East Jerusalem, although excluded from the moratorium, American pressure in the wake of Vice President Joseph Biden's March 2010 visit resulted in the temporary postponement of numerous planning efforts there. These constraints are only now being partially lifted, with announcements in November of planning progress on new construction in Har Homa (1,000 units), Ramot (300 units), Pisgat Ze'ev (655 units), and Gilo (130 units), along with the critical extension of the Begin ring road south to the Tunnels Road leading to the Etzion bloc. Obama decried these Israeli moves, highlighting both his interest and his ineffectiveness—keeping settlements in the international spotlight even as his administration hoped to “move beyond the settlement freeze” to a resumption of direct talks. The president's December 7 decision to abandon

this policy has also suspended U.S. efforts to focus on the resumption of direct Israel-Palestinian negotiations.

At least since the publication of the Mitchell Commission's report in May 2001, a settlement freeze, including “natural growth,” has been a key weapon in the arsenal of American and international peacemakers. No longer. The Obama administration's failure to negotiate such a freeze is the latest in an unbroken string of unsuccessful U.S. efforts: Israel's commitment to President Jimmy Carter not to establish new settlements was undercut by Prime Minister Menachem Begin after the 1978 Camp David summit; Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's “new order of priorities” after his 1992 election offered no respite from continuing settlement expansion during the Oslo era to accommodate “natural growth”; the establishment since 1996 of more than 100 new settlements (re-branded as “outposts”) violates a long-standing Israeli pledge not to establish new settlements.

### A Stillborn Freeze

The Obama administration's initial effort to impose a blanket settlement freeze faltered in July 2009 over construction plans at the East Jerusalem site of the Shepherd's Hotel and never recovered. More recently, after the expiration of the initial moratorium in September, Washington tried unsuccessfully to restart direct negotiations by winning Israel's agreement to a renewed construction moratorium (reportedly including all construction that commenced since expiration of the original moratorium) for three months “according to the format of the previous moratorium” (that is, excluding East Jerusalem). It reportedly offered Israel a package

of incentives including a promise of backing at the United Nations, a multi-billion dollar provision of top-of-the-line F35 aircraft, and U.S. support for long-term Israeli security control of the Jordan Valley. Administration officials deny any U.S.-Israeli agreement on the Jordan Valley. But Washington made no public accounting of the elements under discussion, adding to the lack of clarity.

Palestinians decry Obama's inability to place effective constraints on settlement expansion. They remain opposed to resuming direct talks with Israel as long as a construction moratorium excludes East Jerusalem even as they consider

Each one of these guarantees and undertakings is more dangerous and worse than the issue of settlements. While continuing Israeli settlement activity is undoubtedly bad, it is not as serious and threatening as these American guarantees and undertakings. Let us consider the issue of keeping an Israeli security presence in the Jordan Valley: The Israelis want to keep their army in that area for decades. What sovereignty would a Palestinian state enjoy when it is hemmed in by Israeli troops on all sides? What is even more serious is that these U.S. guarantees are preventing us from internationalizing the problem, which is one of the few tools we have in our hands.

I hope that what I am saying is not reported in a way that appears as if I am not against settlements. On the contrary. All these guarantees were given in the hope that Netanyahu would extend his moratorium by two months, which in any case does not include Jerusalem or the major settlement blocks. This is nonsense, and we reject it completely.

Palestinian prime minister  
Salam Fayyad, *Sharq al Awsat*,  
November 15, 2010

broadening a diplomatic offensive against continuing occupation. Of even greater concern however, are the very elements of the aborted American package offered to Israel that suggested an Israeli-American understanding on the territorial and diplomatic outlines of a final status agreement.

Palestinian prime minister Salam Fayyad has recently noted that “settlement activity is totally unacceptable, and even its freeze is unacceptable to us.” In a meeting with journalists reported by *al-Hayat* on November 13, Fayyad said that the U.S. guarantees reportedly offered to Israel “are more dangerous and worse” than continuing settlement. In this regard, he referred specifically to the call for “keeping the Israeli presence in the [Jordan]Valley area for decades.” In addition, Fayyad criticized the promise to Israel of U.S. diplomatic cover in international institutions. “What is more dangerous,” Fayyad said, “is the [U.S.] guarantees to obstruct the [Palestinian and Arab] ability to internationalize the issue” and move it to the United Nations General Assembly or the Security Council.

### Next Steps

The Israeli cabinet, for its part, refused to consider the American offer discussed in early November between Netanyahu and Secretary of State Hilary Clinton, in part because of the ambiguity surrounding Jerusalem construction, but more fundamentally because of Netanyahu’s reluctance to endorse a process aimed at seriously addressing final status issues. Netanyahu’s original game plan was to survive Obama’s diplomatic initiatives for two years until congressional elections and a hoped-for Republican comeback that would weaken Washington’s ability to confront Israel. In extraordinary remarks, Republican representative Eric Cantor promised to do just that. In a November 11 meeting with Netanyahu, Cantor, according to a press release issued by his office, “stressed that the new Republican majority will serve as a check on the Administration. . . . He made clear that the Republican majority understands the special relationship between Israel and the United States, and that the security of each nation is reliant upon the other.”

After almost two years of energetic but stillborn diplomacy, the Obama administration has been unable to make progress on ending the occupation and creating a Palestinian state at peace with Israel. The president’s attempt to rein in settlement expansion and his effort to place settlements at the heart of a negotiated end to the Israel-Palestinian conflict have failed. As Obama surveys the future, he might recall Machiavelli’s wise counsel, “He who wishes to be obeyed must know how to command.” ♦

## POST-MORATORIUM CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Peace Now reports that since the end of Israel’s partial moratorium on settlement construction on September 26, 2010, construction has begun on 1,629 housing units in the West Bank. This new construction is ongoing in 63 settlements, 46 of them located east of the separation barrier and 17 to its west. A comparable number of units were begun in 2009, when construction began on 1,888 housing units. Throughout November settlers labored to dig new foundations, under the assumption that another moratorium would be based on the same criteria as the previous one: structures with foundations can be completed while work on others will cease. Concrete foundations are being poured even if the necessary infrastructure—sewage systems, roads, and electricity—is absent.

**Post-moratorium West Bank Settlement Construction,  
After September 26, 2010**

West of the Barrier		East of the Barrier	
Settlement	Housing Starts (units)	Settlement	Housing Starts (units)
Adam	24	Ateret	18
Alei Zahav	22	Avnei Hefetz	18
Alon	10	Bat Ayin	1
Alonei Shilo	3	Beit El	4
Ariel	136	Dolev	2
Barkan	62	Einav	16
Beitar Illit	216	Eii	27
Bet Arie	30	Karmeil Zur	42
Bruchin	8	Kfar Tapuach	13
Elazar	58	Kiryat Arba	24
Elkana	18	Kochav Hashahar	24
Etz Efraim	15	Kochav Ya'acov	27
Har Gilo	20	Maale Michmash	11
Karnei Shomron	2	Mitzpe Yericho	36
Kedar	3	Na'ale	30
Kedumim	76	Negohot	4
Kfar Adumim	10	Nerya	30
Kfar Etzion	21	Nili	45
Ma'ale Adumim	24	Ofra	20
Matityahu	27	Shavei Shomron	9
Mitzpe Kramim	11	Shilo	12
Modiin Illit	96	Susya	15
Neve Daniel	2	Talmon	6
Oranit	30	Tekoa	32
Peduel	24	Yitzhar	11
Revava	60	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>477</b>
Rosh Zurim	3		
Sansana	4		
Shaarei Tikva	65		
Shaked	25		
Shvut Rachel	28		
Tal Menashe	4		
Yakir	5		
Zufim	10		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,152</b>	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>1,629</b>

Source: Peace Now, November 13, 2010.

## SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

**June 6** The Israel Land Administration approves reductions of up to \$20,000 in the cost of purchasing land in Golan Heights settlements. (*Ma'ariv*)

**June 8** Civil administration officials demolish the foundation of a building in the Beit El settlement for violating the settlement construction moratorium. Clashes between settlers and police ensue, injuring 23 yeshiva students and 8 police officers. (*Israel HaYom*)

**June 10** Police arrest four youths charged with defacing a mosque in the Bedouin village of Ibtin, in northern Israel. The suspects had spray painted "price tag" and "slated for demolition" along with Stars of David on the walls of the mosque, possibly in response to the demolition of illegal construction in Beit El on June 8. (*Yediot Aharonot*)

**June 14** The Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem reports that despite the removal of 15 checkpoints, movement and access for Palestinians is still limited in large areas of the West Bank. Movement between major Palestinian urban centers has improved. The report also indicates that Israel has not evacuated a single settlement outpost in the past year as mandated by the 2003 road map.

**June 16** *Yediot Aharonot* reports that Hamas has begun purchasing land in East Jerusalem through intermediaries, sometimes paying well above market price.

Israel's ambassador to the United States Michael Oren is reported saying that the United States "is too busy with the [Gulf of Mexico] oil spill" to worry about planned construction in the East Jerusalem settlement of Ramat Shlomo. He made the comments after the passage of the second bureaucratic step authorizing construction. Initial approval for building in Ramat Shlomo in March triggered a diplomatic uproar during a visit to Israel by Vice President Joseph Biden. (*Arutz 7*)

**June 17** Settlers from Kiryat Arba destroy farmland and raid the homes of Palestinians in Jabal Jales, near Hebron. (*Ma'an News*)

**June 20** The Negotiations Affairs Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization reports on the revocation of residency rights and expulsion from East Jerusalem of four Hamas members of the Palestinian Legislative Council. Israel cited security con-

siderations as the basis for their exclusion.

**June 21** The Jerusalem Planning and Construction Committee considers plans to demolish 22 Palestinian homes in the al-Bustan neighborhood, near Silwan in East Jerusalem. The committee, which seeks to build a national park on the site, says it will allow residents whose homes are demolished to rebuild east of the park. (*Israel Radio*)

Work begins on 600 new housing units on the land between the East Jerusalem settlements of Pisgat Ze'ev and Neve Ya'acov. (*al-Quds*)

**June 22** An Israeli military appeals court orders the evacuation of settlers from Susiya who had taken over a 25-acre plot of Palestinian-owned land south of Hebron. (*Ma'an News*)

**June 26** Stone-throwing residents of Silwan injure six police officers during a confrontation provoked by the June 21 decision to demolish 22 Palestinian dwellings in the al-Bustan neighborhood. (*Yediot Aharonot*)

**June 27** *TheMarker* reports plans by Israel's Tourism Ministry to invest \$80,000 in a new 200-acre hotel complex in the Etzion settlement bloc.

**June 28** Palestinian prime minister Salam Fayyad launches the "shop to shop" campaign, another step in the ongoing Palestinian Authority (PA) boycott of settlement-produced goods. The aim is to remove settlement products from the Palestinian market by the end of the year. (*Ma'an News*)

**June 29** The director of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) human resources branch instructs the Hesder yeshiva to reinstate two soldiers from Nahshon Company who were removed from service after they expressed resistance to carrying out eviction orders for settlers violating the settlement construction moratorium. (*Ma'ariv*)

The Israel Land Administration publishes tenders for 30 housing units in the Golan Heights settlement of Katzrin. (*TheMarker*)

*Ma'ariv* reports the Jerusalem municipality's approval of the King's Garden, a settlement project that includes the construction of 20 housing units in East Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. The plan also includes the demolition of 22 Arab homes in the Palestinian neighborhood of Silwan.

**July 5** Fearing the prospect of thousands of

dollars in fines, a Palestinian resident of East Jerusalem is reported to have demolished part of his own house. (*al-Ayyam*)

**July 8** Settlers set fire to 60 olive trees in Beit Hanina. The trees are believed to have dated to the Roman period. (*al-Quds*)

Settlers uproot trees in Luban al-Sharqiyya village, in the northern West Bank. The IDF seal the main road between Nablus and Ramallah to remove the settlers. (*Ma'an News*)

Hours after his apprehension, a settler from Yitzhar who was a suspect in the murder of a Ramallah teenager in May 2010 is released from police custody. (*Wafa*)

**July 12** The Jerusalem municipality demolishes six Palestinian houses in East Jerusalem, displacing 26 people. It also approves construction of 32 new settlement housing units in Pisgat Ze'ev as part of a plan for 230 such units. (*al-Quds*)

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics announces that the Palestinian population in areas occupied since 1967 has reached 4.05 million people: 2.51 million in the West Bank and 1.54 million in Gaza.

Four hundred Israeli settlers accompanied by IDF soldiers visit holy sites in the village of Orta, near Nablus. During the visit, the IDF prevents all Palestinian movement in the village. (*Ma'an News*)

**July 13** Israeli authorities arrest right-wing extremist Haim Pearlman on charges of stabbing two Palestinians to death in Jerusalem in the late 1990s. They also charge him with the attempted murder of five Palestinians in the Jerusalem area. (*Ha'aretz*)

**July 14** It is reported that the PA is working with donor countries to launch a fund to financially support Palestinians who have lost their source of income as a result of the PA's campaign to prevent Palestinians from working in settlements. The PA hopes that by 2011 no Palestinians, said to number 25,000, will be engaged in such work. (*Ma'an News*)

**July 15** Dozens of settlers from Migdalim torch agricultural fields in Qusra village, in the northern West Bank. (*Ma'an News*)

**July 19** *Ha'aretz* reports that the IDF is considering lifting the ban on Israelis entering West Bank cities under PA control on the grounds that the security situation has improved.

## SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

The Olympia Food Co-op in Olympia, Washington, becomes the first U.S. grocery store to boycott Israeli products. (Wafa)

The IDF demolishes 79 structures in the Palestinian village of al-Farisiya. The properties included homes, stables, storage sheds, water tanks, as well as two tons of animal feed, fertilizer, and wheat. (Wafa)

**July 22** IDF soldiers fire on unarmed Palestinians attempting to enter the settlement of Barkan, killing one and injuring another. The incident follows a recent increase in home burglaries and thefts in the settlement. (Israel Radio)

The PA Ministry of Economy sets July 31 as the deadline for merchants to remove settlement-produced goods from their shelves or face legal consequences. (Ma'an News)

*Ha'aretz* reports on plans by the Israeli government to fund a year's free tuition at institutions of higher learning for discharged soldiers in the Negev, the Galilee, West Bank, and Ashkelon.

**July 26** The IDF arrests five Palestinians after discovering two firebombs and a knife in their possession. The IDF claims that they were planning an attack on its forces in the Elon Moreh area. (walla.co.il)

Clashes erupt between Palestinians and settlers following the demolition of a house in the Givat Ronen outpost. Settlers blockade 11 intersections throughout the West Bank. (*Ha'aretz*)

**July 27** In response to the demolition at the Givat Ronen outpost, settlers from Yitzhar attempt to torch agricultural fields in the village of Hawara. They continue on to Burin, throwing rocks, injuring residents, damaging property, and torching olive trees. (*Yediot Aharonot*)

Police arrest Rabbi Yitzhak Shapira on charges of inciting violence and advocating racism. Shapira, the principal of the Od Yosef Hai yeshiva in the settlement of Yitzhar, wrote *The King's Torah*, in which he claims the prohibition Thou Shalt Not Murder applies only "to a Jew who kills a Jew" and that non-Jews are "uncompassionate by nature" and attacks on them "curb their evil inclination." (*Ha'aretz, Yediot Aharonot*)

**July 29** Gaza farmers gather in Beit Hanoun to demand access to arable lands in

the Israeli-poled zone along the Gaza-Israel border. The area—22.5 square kilometers comprising 6.25 percent of the Gaza Strip and about 20 percent of its arable land—has been declared by Israel to be off limits to Palestinian entry, which IDF enforces by live fire. (Ma'an News)

The National Council of Churches in Australia asks its members to consider boycotting products made in Israeli settlements. (Ma'an News)

Settlers accompanied by police take over a building in the al-Sa'adieh neighborhood of East Jerusalem, evicting about 50 Palestinian residents. The settlers had lost a lawsuit in 1996 in which they sought to take over the same building but were unable to prove ownership. (Ma'an News)

**August 1** The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reports that Israel has demolished 17 structures in Area C for lack of proper permits and notes that Israel has issued more than 3,000 additional demolition orders.

**August 2** The Jerusalem Municipality approves 40 housing units in the Pisgat Ze'ev settlement, in East Jerusalem. (Arutz 7)

**August 4** Civil administration authorities accompanied by police raze several structures in the Mitzpe Avichai outpost in accordance with a court order. In response, settlers torch agricultural fields belonging to nearby Palestinian villages. (Ynet)

**August 6** The IDF warns settlers of a threat of kidnapping by Hamas operatives in the West Bank based on intelligence from interrogations of Palestinians arrested and suspected of involvement in the plan. (*Ha'aretz*)

**August 7** Settlers from Itamar set fire to hundreds of dunams in the village of Beit Furik, destroying grape vines, and olive, fig, and almond trees. (Ma'an News)

**August 8** Civil administration officials, Muslim clergymen and PA ministers reach an agreement to place a cap on the volume of the call to prayer from mosques throughout the West Bank. (*Yediot Aharonot*)

**August 11** Jerusalem mayor Nir Barkat announces that 20 buildings will be demolished in Silwan as part of a plan to transform al-Bustan into a tourist destination.

Furthermore Barkat says that 50,000 units will be built in Jerusalem at a rate of two thirds for Israelis and one third for Palestinians. (*al-Quds*)

Settlers set fire to hundreds of dunams of agricultural land in the village of Bet Fourik near Nablus. (*al-Quds*)

**August 16** Settlers from the Shvut Rachel outpost uproot 200 olive trees in Qusra village near Nablus. (Ma'an News)

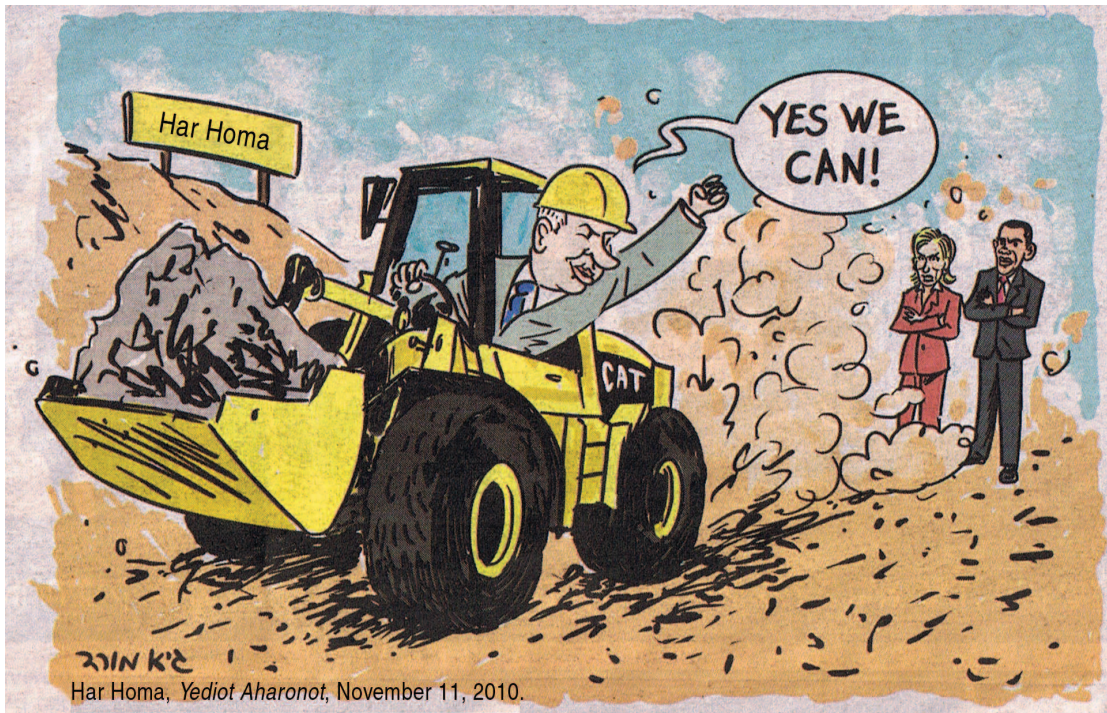
**August 23** The Norwegian oil fund decides to divest from the Africa Israel Group because of the latter's involvement in settlement construction in the Palestinian territories. (*Yediot Aharonot*)

**August 24** The Israeli finance ministry transfers \$11 million to 24 local settlement authorities and councils in the West Bank for harm suffered as a consequence of the settlement construction moratorium. (*Israel HaYom*)

Following an Israeli military court conviction of Abdullah Abu Rahma, leader of the non-violent protests against the separation fence in the Ramallah area, European Union foreign affairs head Catherine Ashton's office releases a statement, "The EU considers the route of the barrier where it is built on Palestinian land to be illegal. The High Representative is deeply concerned that the possible imprisonment of Mr. Abu Rahma is intended to prevent him and other Palestinians from exercising their legitimate right to protest against the existence of the separation barriers in a non-violent manner." (*Israel HaYom*)

**August 25** Ten settlers attempt to break into a Palestinian-owned building in Silwan, leading to clashes between dozens of Palestinian residents, settlers, and border police. (walla.co.il)

**August 29** Thirty-six Israeli actors, directors and playwrights circulate a letter indicating that they will not perform in the soon-to-be inaugurated Ariel Culture Center. The signatories wrote to six Israeli-government-subsidized theaters expressing their "dismay with the intention of the theaters' management to perform in the new auditorium in Ariel." The group asks that the Israeli theaters "pursue their prolific activity inside the sovereign territory of the State of Israel within the boundaries of the Green Line." (*Ma'ariv*)



Over recent months, Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas have met face to face multiple times. . . . Significantly, both sides decided together to pursue a framework agreement that would establish the fundamental compromises on all permanent status issues and pave the way for a final peace treaty.

Reaching this goal will not be easy by any means. The differences between the two sides are real and they are persistent. But the way to get there is by engaging, in good faith, with the full complexities of the core issues and by working to narrow the gaps between the two sides. By doing this, the parties can begin to rebuild confidence, demonstrate their seriousness, and hopefully find enough common ground on which to eventually re-launch direct negotiations and achieve that framework. The parties have indicated that they want the United States to continue its efforts. And in the days ahead, our discussions with both sides will be substantive two-way conversations with an eye toward making real progress in the next few months on the key questions of an eventual framework agreement. The United States will not be a passive participant. We will push the parties to lay out their positions on the core issues without delay and with real specificity. We will work to narrow the gaps asking the tough questions and expecting substantive answers. And in the context of our private conversations with the parties, we will offer our own ideas and bridging proposals when appropriate.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, Brookings Institution's Saban Center for Middle East Policy  
Seventh Annual Forum, Washington, DC, December 10, 2010

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