



EUROPEAN UNION

European Commission Technical Assistance Office (West Bank and Gaza, UNRWA)

By e-mail

REVIEW OF THE PALESTINIAN PRESS

September 4, 2007

1. Summary of key news

- **President Abbas met the Italian FM in Ramallah**
- **Israel prepares to execute a large scale military operation in Gaza as rockets continue to fall on Sderot**
- **Olmert is not sure it will be possible to reach an agreement on principles with President Abbas before November conference**
- **Solana expresses his support for the EU missions in the Palestinian territories and reaffirms the EU position regarding contacts with Hamas**

2. Domestic situation

2.1 Political

- **Changes in PLO structure and negotiation file**
 - **The Palestinian Interior Ministry closed 17 associations and private organizations**
 - **President Abbas said that all concerned parties should attend the peace conference**
- All three Arabic dailies (Al-Quds, Al-Ayyam, Al-Hayat Al-Jadida), focus on the meeting between President Abbas and the Italian FM, Solana's restatement of the EU's refusal to hold talks with Hamas, Israel's intention to invade Gaza and the payment of public servants salaries.
 - President Abbas and the Fatah Central Committee are working these days a division of labour in light of a possible beginning of negotiations with Israel and the return of several Fatah leaders to the homeland, including Abu Maher Ghneim. He would assume his post as Fatah General Commissioner in place of Ahmad Qurei', who would assume the negotiations file with Israel. Erekat would remain in the negotiations affairs department but would assume the file concerning everyday issues. (Al-Quds al-Arabi)
 - The Palestinian Interior Ministry decided to close 17 associations and private organizations and issued closure warnings to 52 others, owing to legal violations. (Al-Ayyam)
 - President Abbas: All parties concerned must attend the international peace conference. (Al-Quds)
 - Fayyad government: \$325,000 to be allocated in emergency assistance to old prisoners and their families. One million dollars to pay university fees of outstanding students; 900,000 NIS annually to procure food to the centres belonging to the Social Affairs Ministry; 1,800,000 NIS to the Social Affairs Ministry to implement the Basma Campaign for students in the Gaza Strip. (Al-Hayat Al-Jadida)
 - The Palestinian Cabinet will pay salaries tomorrow with a ratio of the arrears to the employees and military personnel. The Cabinet expresses support for the President and all decrees he has issued and condemns the measures and practices of Hamas militias in Gaza Strip. (Al-Quds)
 - Hatem Abdul Qader, former PLC member and Fatah figure in Jerusalem, appointed adviser to PM Fayyad on Jerusalem Affairs. (Al-Ayyam)
 - The government announces a mechanism to pay emergency financial payments to those whose homes are demolished by the occupation. (Al-Ayyam)

2.2 Security

- **The Executive Force continues its arrest campaign against Fatah members in Gaza**
- Hamas militias discharged a physician from his job, cut the hair of two security personnel, abducted two journalists and two youths in Gaza. (Al-Hayat Al-Jadida)
 - Under the claim that the Executive Force was under gunfire, the Force besieged al-Majaideh Quarter in Khan Yunis and cut off electricity and water for several hours. (Al-Ayyam)

- Marwan al-Barghouthi, Fatah Secretary in the West Bank, who is spending a life-imprisonment sentence in Israel, warned of a Hamas attempt to seize the West Bank after it seized Gaza Strip and called for an emergency conference for Fatah Movement. (*Al-Hayat al-Jadida*)
- The Palestinian Security Services kidnapped six Hamas activists in the West Bank. (*felesteen*)

3. Palestinian - Israeli conflict

- **Palestinian military groups continue to fire rockets at Israeli targets; Olmert threatens to strike their leaders**
- **The Israeli army prepares to execute a large-scale military operation in the Gaza Strip**
- **Qurei' leads secret talks with Israelis**
- **Olmert is not sure to reach an agreement of principles with President Abbas before the international conference**
- **Blair arrives in Saudi Arabia**
- Olmert warned the leaders of Palestinian armed groups in Gaza against continuing to fire rockets on southern Israel. At the conclusion of a meeting with the Austrian Chancellor who is visiting the region, Olmert said: We will not hesitate in striking anyone who threatens the residents in southern Israel. (*Al-Ayyam*)
- Al-Quds Brigades claimed responsibility for firing six rockets at Sderot. (*Al-Ayyam*) Latest hour: rockets fall on Ashkelon and Sderot. (*Al-Quds*)
- The Israeli army prepares to execute a large-scale military operation in Gaza Strip. Olmert says: Orders have been issued to eliminate all those involved in the rocket firing. 16 Israelis suffer panic and shock and schools suspend classes in Sderot after the fall of rockets. (*Al-Quds*)
- Informed sources revealed to al-Sharq al-Awsat newspaper that Ahmad Qurei', a leading Fatah figure, is currently leading secret negotiations with the Israelis in preparation for the peace conference next autumn. (*Al-Sharq al-Awsat*)
- Israeli PM Olmert said that he is not sure to reach an agreement with President Abbas on the principles of establishing a Palestinian state before the conference scheduled to be held in November under US sponsorship. (*Al-Ayyam*)
- An Israeli security report alleged that Hamas is launching rockets into Israel that are deliberately missing civilian targets in order to prevent an escalation of the conflict. (*maannews*)
- Students' fathers decide to close the schools in Sderot till the invasion of Gaza. (*alwatanvoice*)
- Palestinian sources revealed that the Israeli government submitted to PA and Egypt a detailed report on invading the southern Gaza Strip and destroy the tunnels that connect the Strip with Egypt. (*samanews*)
- Israeli trucks continue to dump thousands of tonnes of garbage in dump areas in Palestinian villages close to the Green Line. (*Al-Quds*)
- Erekat: A meeting between President Abbas and Israeli PM soon. (*Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*)
- The occupation forces arrest 28 citizens in the West Bank and demolish a home in Bet Hanina. (*Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*)
- Former British PM and the Quartet Committee envoy to the Middle East arrived in Jeddah yesterday on a one-day visit aiming to exert efforts to end the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. (*Al-Quds*)

4. EU coverage in the local media

- **President Abbas met the Italian FM**
- **Solana expresses his support for the EU missions in the Palestinian territories**
- **Solana: the EU rejects any dialogue with Hamas**
- During a press conference after meeting Italian FM D'Alema at the Presidential HQs, Abbas said: the peace process needs real support from all concerned and capable parties so that we can achieve peace. On his talks with the Italian guest, President Abbas said they discussed several issues, mainly the international peace conference to be held next November. (*Al-Ayyam*)
- Javier Solana met the Heads of Missions and key personnel of the EU Police Mission in the Palestinian Territories (EUPOL COPPS) and the EU Border Assistance Mission at Rafah Crossing Point (EUBAM Rafah), at EUPOL COPPS headquarters in Ramallah. In remarks to journalists after the meeting Mr. Solana congratulated mission members for their excellent and important work which constitutes an essential aspect of the EU's support to the PA.- www.eubam-rafah.eu - www.consilium.europa.eu/eupol-copps
- Solana repeats that the EU rejects dialogue with Hamas. (*Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*)
- Solana to Al-Ayyam: The donor countries meeting at the ministerial level in December will discuss assistance to the Palestinians. Solana denied any political dialogue between the Europeans and Hamas. (*Al-Ayyam*)
- The Spokesperson of Hamas, Sami Abu Zuhri said that Solana's refusal to hold dialogue with Hamas is negligence to democracy. (*felesteen*)
- The governor of Nablus met with a UK Parliamentarians and briefed them about the difficult situation in the governorate. (*palpress*)
- The Political Advisor of Haniya said that there are no disputes inside Hamas and the contacts with Europeans are ongoing. (*felesteen*)
- The Italian FM said that he will encourage president Abbas and PM Fayyad to dialogue with Hamas. (*samanews*)
- Ahmad Qurei met in Ramallah with the head of the Swedish Socialists Party. (*Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*)

- An article titled: " Minimising the Gap between the US and Europe". (*Al-Ayyam*)

5. Others

- **UN: Gaza students lack textbooks due to border crossing closures**
- Three days into the new school year, Gaza students have to make do without 30 percent of their new academic textbooks because of the closure of commercial crossings, a UN official said Monday. John Ging, head of the UN Relief and Works Agency, said restrictions on importing raw materials into the territory have held up paper, ink, and binding materials. (*AP*)
- The Executive Committee of the PLO: We work in coordination with the Lebanese government to provide potentials to rebuild Nahr al-Bared Camp. (*Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*)

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IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER: Please note that the language used in this press review is a reflection of the language used in the Palestinian press, and not a reflection of EU policy.