

Chronology of Events in Israel and Palestine

Israel holds legislative elections on 17 March in which Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party wins with 23.4% of the vote and the Zionist Union, a party formed in December 2014 by Tzipi Livni's Hatnuah party and the Labour Party of Isaac Herzog, takes 30 seats. Another important aspect of these hard-fought elections is the constitution of a unified list of Israel's Arab parties, which come third in terms of the number of seats held in the Knesset (Parliament). Likud's victory, with the same percentage of votes as the 2013 elections, forces the party to negotiate the formation of a new coalition government in which Yisrael Beiteinu will not participate, according to a statement issued by the outgoing Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, days before Netanyahu announces the members of the new coalition on 7 May: the centrist party Kulanu, the religious Zionist Bayit Yehudi and two ultra-orthodox parties: Shas and United Torah Judaism. Besides having to make the complicated coexistence of the coalition members a viable political force, the so-called Government 33 will face major challenges: Firstly to uphold the fragile truce with Hamas and make every effort to avoid the rearmament of the group that controls the Gaza Strip, in view of the resumption of attacks from the territory in May. Secondly, to present a – hardly viable – opposition to the negotiations between the G5+1 and Iran on Tehran's nuclear programme and the lifting of sanctions on the Islamic Republic. Thirdly, to maintain a distance from the Syrian conflict and the advance of Islamic State (Daesh). Noteworthy developments with respect to the war in Syria are the increased

tensions in the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon, as well as Israel's decision to build a fence along its border with Jordan. Fourthly, to show that what until now has been a hardly credible commitment to the two-state solution is real, something that directly opposes the demands of the more radical coalition members to expand and accelerate the settlement construction in the occupied territories and alter the fragile status of the Temple Mount / Noble Sanctuary of Jerusalem. On this point, the US warns the re-elected Benjamin Netanyahu that it may decide not to exercise its right to veto in the United Nations Security Council if Israel does not show signs of advancing. Another significant feature of 2015 is the increase in the number of Jewish people making Aliyah, or 'the return,' to Israel from Europe, especially from Russia, Ukraine, France and Belgium, due to the growing climate of anti-semitism, which is analogous to the increase in Islamophobia, the surge in nationalist tensions in Europe and the jihadist attacks, such as those perpetrated in Brussels, Copenhagen, Grenoble and Paris. In Palestine, repeated accusations made by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and Fatah against Hamas for preventing Palestine's unity government, formed in September 2014, from exercising its authority in the Gaza Strip end with the short-lived government's resignation in June. The setback runs counter to the PNA's achievement of Palestine's admission on 1 April 2015 as a full member of the International Criminal Court, despite Israel's fierce opposition. Palestine's admission takes place the same month that a United

Nations report accuses both Israel and Hamas of committing war crimes during the conflict in the summer of 2014 in the Gaza Strip. In terms of Palestine's international recognition, another remarkable achievement is the agreement signed in May with the Vatican, in which the latter declares its support for the two-state solution.

The ongoing stalemate in the Arab-Israeli peace process makes no substantial advances, at a time when relations between Israel and the Palestinian territories are strongly conditioned by regional destabilization, stemming primarily from Syria and Iraq. As a result, countries in the region, such as Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Turkey remain in a constant state of alert, under threat from Daesh. At the end of May, Tony Blair announces his resignation as the head of the international quartet following years of disagreements between the former British Prime Minister and Washington and Brussels. In June, yet another initiative to resume talks, this time led by the French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius, is unsuccessful.

Despite efforts to the contrary, unrest increases throughout 2015 to a worrying extent with the outbreak of attacks led by armed Palestinian groups from the Gaza Strip, prompting Israeli retaliation, and, from July, with a wave of stabbings and 'car-rammings' perpetrated mostly by young Palestinians against members of the security forces and Israeli citizens, which come to be known as the 'stabbing' or 'car' intifada. The violence, which increases in the beginning of October and reaches its height with the torching of Joseph's Tomb, is primarily triggered by the

clashes in July between Palestinian demonstrators and Israeli security forces, over the status of the Temple Mount / Noble Sanctuary.

January 2015

Israel

- On 3 January Israel announces that it will block the transfer of 105 million euros in taxes collected on behalf of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and which are paid monthly to the Palestinian government, in retaliation for President Mahmoud Abbas' request on 31 December 2014 for Palestinian membership of the International Criminal Court.
- On 5 January Israel's Arab parties announce plans to run as a single bloc in the presidential elections of 17 March, thus avoiding their exclusion from the Knesset (Parliament). The move follows a modification in the electoral system that raises the minimum percentage of votes needed for representation from 2% to 3.25%, aimed at reducing the high level of parliamentary fragmentation that hinders the country's governability, according to the former Finance Minister Yair Lapid, who instigated the changes.
- On 6 January an Israeli military court hands down three life sentences to the Hamas member Hussam Hassan Kawasme, thought to be the mastermind in the kidnapping and murder of three young Israelis in the West Bank in June 2014, which triggered the Protective Edge military offensive launched on the Gaza Strip.
- On 6 January Naim Qassem, Hezbollah's deputy secretary-general, confirms the news published in December 2014 in the Lebanese media that a spy working for Israel has been discovered in the ranks of the Shiite party-militia. Mohammad Shawraba, a high-ranking official from Hezbollah's unit 910, was arrested in October 2014 and had been spying for Israel since 2007. He also helped to sabotage five Hezbollah operations against Israeli interests abroad and cooperated in the murder of Imad Mughniyah in a bomb attack in Damascus in 2008.

- On 8 January a device planted in the Israeli Embassy in Montevideo explodes causing material damage only. Days later, Uruguay expels a prominent diplomat from the Iranian Embassy in Uruguay suspected of being involved in the attack.
- On 17 January the Israeli government criticizes the ruling of the International Criminal Court prosecutor Fatou Bensouda to open a preliminary examination of possible war crimes committed by Israel in the Palestinian territories.
- On 18 January Hezbollah claims that an Israeli helicopter has attacked one of its command centres in Quneitra, the Golan Heights, a town controlled by the Syrian regime and close to the border with Israel. At least six members of the Lebanese Shiite militia were killed in the attack that may have been targeting Abu Ali Tabtabai, thought by Israel to be Hezbollah and Iran's mastermind in the attacks on Israeli territory. Among the dead are Jihad Mughniyeh, son of the former Hezbollah military chief Imad Mughniyeh, who was killed six years ago by a bomb blast in Damascus, and Mohammed Issa, a high-ranking official of the organization.
- On 23 January an agreement is signed by four Israeli Arab parties – Raam (United Arab List), Taal (Arab Movement for Renewal), Balad (National Democratic Assembly) and the Jewish-Arab Hadash (Democratic Front for Peace and Equality) – to run as a coalition in the elections on 17 March.
- On 27 January the Israeli Air Force attacks various Syrian army artillery posts in the Golan Heights, in retaliation for missiles fired from this area at Israel.
- On 29 January the Israeli army fires four shells and around a hundred artillery rounds at southern Lebanon in retaliation for a Hezbollah rocket attack which left two Israeli soldiers dead.

Palestine

- On 6 January the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, announces that from 1 April 2015 Palestine will be a member of the International Court of Justice, thus enabling the PNA to press charges against the Israeli government for war crimes, although its membership will also mean that Palestinian militant

groups can also be tried for the same crimes.

- On 18 January seven leading members of the self-proclaimed Islamic State (Daesh) in Palestine, who were plotting attacks against Israel, are arrested by the authorities.
- On 19 January 500 Daesh supporters demonstrate for the first time in Gaza in support of Daesh and to protest against the caricatures of Muhammad published by Charlie Hebdo. Hamas deploys a large number of police officers in view of the rising tensions.
- On 19 January the EU Council announces that it will appeal the ruling of the European Court of Justice on 17 December, which called the European Council to remove Hamas from the list of terrorist organizations because of procedural defects at the time of its inclusion.
- On 27 January the UN announces the suspension of its assistance programme for Gaza's reconstruction after damages caused by Israel's Protective Edge offensive in the summer of 2014 due to a lack of funds and international donors' failure to meet their pledges.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 21 January at least nine people are injured after being stabbed by a Palestinian man from Tulkarem on a bus in Tel Aviv.

February 2015

Israel

- On 2 February the chairman of the Jewish Agency Natan Sharansky announces that 15,000 French Jews may make *aliyah* (immigration to Israel) in 2015, double the number for 2014, due to the climate of growing insecurity for Jews in France.
- On 12 February, in response to an appeal filed by the leader of the Zionist and ultra-conservative Yisrael Beiteinu (Israel Our Home) and Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, Israel's Central Elections Committee suspends the electoral candidacy of the Arab-Israeli deputy Haneen Zoabi, from the Arab Joint List, for defending terrorism. On

the same day, another candidacy, that of the right-wing extremist Baruch Marzel is also annulled by the Committee after accepting an appeal from the Coalition Against Racism. Both decisions are repealed on 19 February by the Supreme Court.

- On 15 February, following the previous day's jihadist attack on Copenhagen's main synagogue, Benjamin Netanyahu urges European Jews to make *aliyah* (immigration to Israel) to guarantee their security and warns that the "wave of attacks will continue." He announces the Israeli government's imminent allocation of 40.6 million euros to encourage *aliyah* throughout Europe, but particularly in Ukraine, France and Belgium.
- On 27 February the Israeli Attorney General Yehuda Weinstein orders a preliminary investigation to be opened, after the elections on 17 March, into the alleged mishandling of public funds for the official and private residences of the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Palestine

- On 1 February Serbia announces that it granted citizenship to Mohammed Dahlan in 2013, PNA President Mahmoud Abbas' former security chief and, today, his political rival since being expelled from Fatah and losing his parliamentary immunity in 2011 under charges of corruption and murder. Close relatives of Dahlan, who are exiled in the United Arab Emirates, as well as some of his supporters, also obtained Serbian citizenship.
- On 23 February an anonymous jury issues a verdict against the PNA and PLO for their role in six terrorist attacks in Israel, which took place between 2002 and 2004, and in which numerous US citizens were killed and injured. The verdict, which was passed in the Federal District Court in New York under the US 1991 Anti-Terrorism Act, sentences the PNA and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) to pay 218.5 million dollars in damages to around 40 plaintiffs.
- On 28 February the Cairo Court for Urgent Matters rules in favour of designating the Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas, which has controlled the

Gaza Strip since 2006, as a terrorist organization. The ruling comes a month after the armed wing of Hamas, the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, was also designated as a terrorist group by the court. On 4 March 2014, the same court temporarily banned all the movement's activities in Egypt and ordered the seizure of its offices.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 24 February a Palestinian citizen is shot dead by Israeli soldiers during a raid on the Deheishe refugee camp, south of Bethlehem.

March 2015

Israel

- On 2 March the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu arrives in the US on an official visit during which he speaks before the Congress, on 4 March, in opposition to the nuclear negotiations with Iran.
- On 7 March tens of thousands of people demonstrate against Benjamin Netanyahu and his government's politics in Rabin Square in Tel Aviv under the slogan "Israel wants change," 10 days ahead of the legislative elections.
- On 17 March Israel holds legislative elections with a high turnout of 71% and won by Benjamin Netanyahu's conservative Likud party with 23.4% of the votes (30 seats). With 18.67% (24 seats) Hamahane Hazioni (Zionist Union) comes second, a centre-left alliance formed by Tzipi Livni's Hatnuah (The Movement) and Havoda (Labour Party) led by Isaac Herzog. The Joint List of Israel's Arab political parties led by Ayman Odeh finishes in third place with 10.54% of the votes (13 seats).

Palestine

- On 8 March the PNA security forces arrest three Palestinians in Ramallah for vandalizing a monument in honour of Muaz Kasasbeh, the Jordanian pilot captured and burnt alive on 3 January in Syria by Daesh. On 8-9 March the PNA carries out a large-scale raid against Hamas and Islamic Jihad in the West

Bank, in which 80 people are arrested, despite the PLO announcing on 6 March that it will no longer cooperate with Israel in matters of security. This action against Hamas is aimed at avoiding possible anti-Israel attacks that would further heighten tensions amid Palestine's internal struggle. For its part, Hamas relates the arrests with the arrest in the Strip of Husam Zidan, a prominent Fatah leader, released on 9 March.

Peace Negotiations

- On 16 March the EU appoints the Italian Fernando Gentilini, current director for Western Europe, Western Balkans and Turkey in the European External Action Service as the new envoy for the Middle East, a post that has been vacant since early 2014, with the commitment to reactivate the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians.

April 2015

Israel

- On 1 April Barack Obama announces he has reached a common understanding for signing a framework agreement between Iran and the G5+1 – US, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia and China – under which Tehran renounces any possible military application of its nuclear programme. In exchange for Iran's commitment to allow its nuclear facilities to be controlled by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the six world powers lift the economic sanctions on Iran. This agreement, reached despite a fierce campaign against it by Israel and Saudi Arabia, is a prelude to a definitive agreement, which will continue to be negotiated in Geneva in July. In this respect, the Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu insists on the need for any final agreement with Iran to include a "clear and unambiguous Iranian recognition of Israel's right to exist," something which is not contemplated in the interim agreement.
- On 20 April the Israeli President Reuven Rivlin grants the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu a two-week extension starting on 22 April to complete the formation of his next cabinet.

- On 27 April at least three members of an armed commando unit, with possible connections to Hezbollah, are shot dead by the Israeli army while trying to plant an explosive device on the border between Syria and Israel. The thwarted attack was an attempted response to an earlier attack, on 24 April, attributed to Israeli fighter jets, on a military base in the Syrian town of al-Qalamoun, near the Lebanese border, where Hezbollah allegedly had a secret depot of *Scud C* missiles.

Palestine

- On 1 April Palestine officially joins the International Criminal Court, paving the way towards Israelis being tried for war crimes or crimes linked with the occupation of the Palestinian Territories.
- On 6 April the Palestinian authorities announce that they have submitted the paperwork to the International Criminal Court to try to accelerate the results of the preliminary examination opened by the body into possible war crimes in Palestine.
- On 6 April thousands of Palestinians take to the streets of Gaza to denounce Daesh's capture of the Yarmouk refugee camp in Damascus. For his part, the PNA President Mahmoud Abbas calls the international community to help put an end to the human tragedy taking place in Yarmouk
- On 20 April, following orders of the Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah, the PNA ministers in political dialogue with Hamas in Gaza withdraw from the negotiations and begin their return to the West Bank due to major differences regarding the delayed salary payments to 43,000 public workers in the Strip.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 8 April two Israeli soldiers are stabbed close to the West Bank settlement of Shilo by a Palestinian citizen who is shot dead by one of the two soldiers.
- On 10 April a Palestinian is shot dead by Israeli soldiers in violent clashes in Beit Ummar, a village near Hebron. The unrest began after a funeral for a prisoner arrested in November 2013 for his involvement in Islamic Jihad attacks

and released by Israel on 21 January after his health had severely deteriorated due to illness.

- On 27 April the United Nations publishes the international investigation into the conflict between Israel and Hamas in the summer of 2014, which reports that the *Tsahal* (Israeli army) launched seven attacks against UN facilities being used as shelters in the Gaza Strip during the conflict and which left 44 Palestinians dead and 227 injured. The report also accuses Palestinian militants from Gaza of hiding weapons and launching two attacks from empty UN schools in the Strip.

May 2015

Israel

- On 3 May there is violent unrest in Tel Aviv between Beta Israel demonstrators (Jews of Ethiopian origin) and the police. The clashes, which leave at least 63 injured, began during a protest called by the Beta Israel community – 2% of the country's population – to denounce their discrimination and sparked by a video posted on the Internet in which an Israeli policeman can be seen beating a soldier of Ethiopian origin.
- On 4 May the Israeli Foreign Minister and leader of Yisrael Beiteinu, Avigdor Lieberman confirms that his party will not form part of the new coalition government led by Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party. In this respect, Lieberman condemned Netanyahu's lack of commitment to end the Hamas regime in Gaza and protect settlement construction in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.
- On 7 May 50 days after his election victory, Benjamin Netanyahu manages to secure the 61 seats needed to ensure his fourth term, thanks to an agreement *in extremis* with the centrist Kulanu party (All of Us), the religious Zionist Bayit Yehudi (The Jewish Home) and the ultra-orthodox parties Shas – Shomrei Sfarad – (Sfarad's guards of the Torah) and Yahadut Hatorah (United Torah Judaism).
- On 12 May in a measure without precedent in Israel, the District Court of

Jerusalem sentences the former secretary general of Fatah's Jerusalem branch Omar Shalabi to nine months' imprisonment for "praising and inciting acts of terrorism" in around ten *Facebook* posts.

- On 14 May after an intense and difficult negotiation with Likud's hardliners Benjamin Netanyahu presents the composition of the new coalition government, the most conservative since the 1990s and his fourth government as Prime Minister. The cabinet receives the approval of the Knesset (Parliament) with 61 votes in favour and 59 against.
- On 18 May Benjamin Netanyahu suspends the ban on Palestinians using the same bus routes as Israelis in the West Bank.
- On 25 May the former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert is sentenced by the Jerusalem District Court to eight months in prison for aggravated fraud and abuse of trust for accepting bribes from the US businessman Morris Talansky, in what has come to be known as the "cash envelopes" scandal. This sentence repeals an acquittal in 2012 and adds to another six-year jail sentence handed down to Olmert by the Supreme Court in May 2014 in the *Holyland* housing project corruption case.
- On 31 May the Ministerial Committee for Legislation approves the reactivation of a draft law toughening sentences for throwing stones or other objects at police or public transport vehicles. The bill provides for sentences of up to 20 years in prison.

Palestine

- On 13 May the Vatican announces an agreement with Palestine that supports the creation of two states as a solution to the Palestinian conflict. The announcement coincides with the confirmation of the PNA President Mahmoud Abbas' visit to the Vatican on 16 May.
- On 27 May Amnesty International condemns the war crimes committed by the Hamas government in the Gaza Strip against Palestinian civilians accused of collaborating with Israel during the Israeli Protective Edge offensive against the Strip in August 2014.

Peace Negotiations

- On 27 May the former British Prime Minister Tony Blair submits his resignation to the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon as envoy for the Middle East peace process for the end of June. Blair, who accepted the post in 2007, took the decision following Washington and Brussels' unease concerning his management at the head of the International Quartet on the Middle East – US, EU, Russia and United Nations.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 27 May the Israeli Air Force attacks various Islamic Jihad targets in Gaza in retaliation for a Grad missile fired at Ashdod, the first Palestinian militants have launched from the Strip since the summer of 2014.

June 2015

Israel

- On 4 June the Israeli government asks the French government, which controls 25% of its shares in *Orange*, to explain the decision taken by the CEO of the French telecommunications multinational Stéphane Richard to pull out of Israel at the end of its contract with the Israeli franchise *Partner*, owned by multimillionaire Haim Saban. It is widely believed by the public and Israeli politicians that the decision responds to *Orange's* alliance with a pro-Palestine campaign in favour of boycotting Israeli interests.
- On 23 June a group of around 150 Israeli Druze lynch a Syrian militant in the Golan Heights who was being evacuated by an Israeli army ambulance, together with others left injured by the Syrian conflict. Since the rebel groups against the regime in Damascus took control of various Druze-majority areas in the Golan Heights, this community has been calling on Israel to intervene more forcefully to expel the Syrian militants and avoid a Druze massacre.
- On 29 June the Israeli army intercepts the ship *Marianne* in international waters and escorts it to Ashdod. The vessel was leading Freedom Flotilla III towards the port of Gaza to break Is-

rael's maritime blockade on the Palestinian enclave.

- On 29 June the Israeli government approves the expansion of the five-metre fortified fence on the Egyptian border to include a new section along the border with Jordan from Eilat, in the Red Sea, to the Timna airport. The decision is prompted by the government's concern at the increase in the number of illegal immigrants as well as armed jihadists trying to reach Israel through Jordan because of the Egyptian border fence.

Palestine

- On 6 June a court in Cairo annuls the verdict given by the Court for Urgent Matters in February which designated Hamas as a terrorist organization in Egypt.
- On 16 June the PNA President Mahmoud Abbas announces the resignation of the unity government formed by Fatah and Hamas just a year ago and asks the Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah to form a new cabinet. The resignation, which represents a serious setback to the inter-Palestinian reconciliation process, is owed, according to the secretary general of Fatah's Revolutionary Council Amin Maqbul, to the government's inability to operate in the Gaza Strip, controlled entirely by Hamas.
- On 30 June the Gaza attorney general orders the offices to be closed of the Strip's only mobile telephone operator *Jawwal*, due to the company's failure to pay taxes.

Peace Negotiations

- On 21 June the French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius arrives in Israel to present yet another "plan to reactivate negotiations with the Palestinians" and is met by opposition from the Israeli government, which describes as an "imposition" the attempt to gather Israeli and Palestinian support to submit a proposal to the Security Council that sets an 18-month negotiating timeframe to resolve the conflict.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 4 June Israel carries out airstrikes on Hamas and Islamic Jihad facilities in

response to the previous day's launch from the Gaza Strip of two missiles into Ashkelon and Netivot by the Omar Brigades, a self-proclaimed group with links to Daesh. The action, which constitutes a violation of the ceasefire between Israel and Gaza, is an act of revenge for Hamas' killing of one of the members of the Brigades and to demand the release of around a hundred militants arrested and jailed by Hamas.

- On 7 June Israel carries out more airstrikes on the Gaza Strip in response to more missiles fired into southern Israel by the Omar Brigades.
- On 10 June a member of Hamas is killed during an Israeli border police raid in Jenin, the West Bank.
- On 14 June Israel defends its offensive on the Gaza Strip in the summer of 2014 through the publication of a report drawn up by its Foreign and Justice Ministers, which claims that Hamas and other armed Palestinian groups fired at civilian targets from mosques and clinics, hid weapons in schools in Gaza and used Palestinian civilians as human shields in their attacks on Israeli civilians.
- On 19 June a young Israeli is murdered by a Palestinian citizen from Hamas' Ezzedein al-Qassam Brigades while he was visiting the Ein Buvin water spring close to the Jewish settlement of Dolve in the West Bank.
- On 21 June an Israeli police officer is stabbed in the back by a young Palestinian Hamas member outside the Damascus Gate in Jerusalem's Old City.
- On 23 June the report by the United Nations Human Rights Committee on the 2014 war in Gaza points to serious violations of human rights, both by Israel and the armed Palestinian groups.
- On 25 June for the first time since joining the International Criminal Court, the PNA presents documents accusing Israel of war crimes in Gaza and the West Bank.
- On 26 June Israeli soldiers shoot a Palestinian man dead after he opened fire on a border checkpoint in the West Bank.
- On 29 June a Palestinian opens fire on a group of Israelis near a Jewish settlement in the West Bank injuring at least four of them. Hours earlier, a Palestinian woman wounds an Israeli sol-

dier with a knife at the Rachel border crossing, between Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

- On 30 June four young Israelis are injured by shots fired from a car near the Shvut Rachel settlement in the West Bank, in the fifth Palestinian attack in the last ten days.
- On 30 June Jader Adnan, an Islamic Jihad member jailed in Israel, ends a hunger strike begun 55 days earlier, after the Israeli government and Adnan's lawyer, Jawad Boulos, agree on his release within two weeks. Islamic Jihad had warned Israel that Adnan's death would put an end to the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip.

July 2015

Israel

- On 2 July the Israeli authorities report that 4,685 Jews arrived from Russia during 2014, more than double the figure of any of the previous 16 years. Jerusalem estimates that the influx of Jews arriving from Europe, especially from Russia, will continue to rise in 2015 and the coming years.
- On 24 July the Israeli Parliament approves tougher penalties for stone-throwers, a recurring practice in Palestinian demonstrations, with prison sentences of up to 20 years.
- On 28 July the US announces that on 20 November 2015 it will free the US-Israeli spy Jonathan Pollard after serving 30 years in prison in North Carolina. Pollard was arrested in 1985 and sentenced in 1987 to life imprisonment for spying on the US for the Israeli intelligence agency, a charge not recognized by Jerusalem until 1998. Both the Israeli and US governments deny that Pollard's release is Israel's 'compensation' for the controversial agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme.
- On 28 July clashes break out in the Beit El settlement near Jerusalem when security forces evict 200 young settlers barricaded in two buildings. At least 50 of them are arrested during the evacuation, carried out following a Supreme Court ruling that the so-called Draynoff Houses were illegally built and must therefore be demolished.

- On 28 July an Israeli drone kills two members of a militia allied with the Syrian army and Hezbollah in the Druze town of Hader, Quneitra. One of the dead is Samir al-Quntar, one of the most wanted Hezbollah terrorists in Israel.
- On 30 July the Parliament authorizes the forced feeding of prisoners declaring hunger strike if the practice is deemed to be endangering the prisoner's life.
- On 30 July at least six people are stabbed by an ultra-orthodox Israeli during the Gay Pride parade in Jerusalem.

Palestine

- On 1 July Daesh broadcasts a message to the government of Hamas in Gaza which condemns its lack of commitment to apply Islamic religious law in the Strip and the contacts established with Israel to achieve a 10-year ceasefire in exchange for the possibility of a port in Gaza. Daesh also threatens Hamas with erasing it from the face of the earth, as it does Fatah and the State of Israel. This threat coincides with the appearance of leaflets attributed to Daesh in which it promises to "massacre" Arab Christians if they do not leave Jerusalem before the end of Ramadan.
- On 2 July Palestinian police in the West Bank arrest dozens of Hamas members accused of endangering Palestine's internal security.
- On 19 July five cars belonging to local Hamas and Islamic Jihad leaders are destroyed in an explosion in Gaza City attributed to Daesh.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 7 July a year after the 50-day conflict in the summer of 2014 between Israel and Hamas over 100,000 people are still waiting to be rehoused after their homes were destroyed in the Gaza Strip. Furthermore, of the 5.4 billion dollars pledged in the international donor conference to help Palestine and especially Gaza, only a third has been transferred due to a lack of understanding between Fatah and Hamas.
- On 16 July Israeli warplanes bomb Hamas targets in Gaza in response to a missile launched into southern Israel hours earlier from the Strip and attributed to al-Qaeda supporters.

- On 26 July, day of the Jewish Tisha B'Av festival that commemorates the destruction of the Temple, violent unrest is reported in the Temple Mount / Noble Sanctuary after dozens of Palestinians attempt to block access points to prevent Jews from visiting the site, saying that the Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa Mosque are exclusively for Muslims. The Palestinian action, motivated by accusations against the Israeli government for planning a 'Judaization' of the Temple Mount to satisfy the ultra-orthodox Jewish factions that demand free access to pray on the site, prompts Israeli police and soldiers to enter to ensure access for Jewish visitors, who are bombed by stones and molotov cocktails.
- On 31 July Jewish assailants set fire to a Palestinian home in Duma, close to Nablus in the West Bank, killing a baby in the fire.

August 2015

Israel

- On 17 August Benjamin Netanyahu appoints the Minister Danny Danon, from Likud's more conservative wing, as the Israeli envoy to the United Nations days after appointing Dani Dayan, an advocate for Israeli settlements and opponent to the creation of a Palestinian state, as ambassador to Brazil. These appointments add to those of the former Italian MP turned Israeli national Fiamma Nirenstein as Israeli ambassador in Rome and Netanyahu's spokesman Mark Regev as ambassador in London.
- On 19 August the Supreme Court of Israel temporarily releases the Palestinian prisoner Mohammed Allan, after his defence reveals that he is suffering brain damage from a hunger strike staged in protest against his indefinite administrative detention.
- On 20 August Israel launches missiles into the Syrian region of Quneitra in response to two Syrian missiles that landed in the Golan Heights.

Palestine

- On 23 August Mahmoud Abbas announces that he will resign as

member of the PLO but will remain at the head of the PNA's presidency.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 1 August the United Nations Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) reports a 70% increase in the infant mortality rate in Gaza between 2008 and 2013, and considers the Israeli blockade on the Strip as one of the main causes.
- On 6 August at least four people are killed and 43 injured in Gaza after a device explodes left over from the conflict with Israel in the summer of 2014.

September 2015

Israel

- On 9 September the Israeli government outlaws two Islamist groups formed by men (Murabitun) and women (Murabitat) which often guard the access points to the Noble Sanctuary / Temple Mount to demonstrate against Jews visiting the site and try to block their way.

Palestine

- On 2 September the latest report on Gaza published by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) warns that in just five years the Gaza Strip could become uninhabitable due to the ongoing cycle of conflicts with Israel, Israel's blockade on Gaza and Hamas' economic policy.
- On 11 September the UN General Assembly approves a resolution that allows the Palestinian flag to be flown at the United Nations headquarters.
- On 22 September protests break out in Bethlehem and other places in the West Bank following the beating of a minor by Palestinian police officers on 18 September, while dispersing demonstrators trying to reach Israeli soldiers at the border post close to Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem. The protests come amid rising opposition to the PNA President Mahmoud Abbas, accused by many Palestinians of acting as an agent of the US and criticized for his security cooperation with Israel, which, in turn,

accuses the Palestinian President of inciting violence in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Peace Negotiations

- On 29 September the PNA President Mahmoud Abbas announces during his address before the UN General Assembly that Palestine will no longer be bound by the 1993 Oslo Accords, which he says are not observed. Abbas also reminds the assembly that the accords stipulated that their terms would be applied within a period of five years, culminating with the full independence of a Palestinian state and the end of Israeli occupation.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 1 September tensions rise in the West Bank following a gunfight between Israeli soldiers and Islamic Jihad militants in Jenin, which began when Israeli troops entered the town and the neighbouring refugee camp to arrest Islamic Jihad and Hamas leaders.
- On 14 September, on the eve of the Jewish New Year, violent clashes erupt leaving dozens injured on the Temple Mount / Noble Sanctuary when police burst into the al-Aqsa Mosque to evict a group of hooded demonstrators.
- On 16 September the Israeli government announces that it is toughening sentences for throwing stones and molotov cocktails at Israeli soldiers and members of the security forces. The measure comes after Israeli citizen Alexander Lebelovitch was killed on 13 September after a stone was thrown at his car in Jerusalem, causing him to lose control of his vehicle. Clashes continue in the Old City between Israeli police and Palestinian demonstrators.
- On 18 September unrest on the Temple Mount / Noble Sanctuary increases during the Day of Rage called by several Palestinian groups against the Jewish presence in the area.
- On 18 September in response to the launching of five missiles into Sderot and Ashkelon, the Israeli Air Force attacks three positions of Hamas' armed wing in the north of the Gaza Strip. No one is injured by the attacks.
- On 20 September King Abdullah II

of Jordan warns Israel of a "religious war" in the Middle East, as a result of the Israeli security forces' incursions into the Temple Mount / Noble Sanctuary in Jerusalem.

- On 27 September after several days of relative calm, violent clashes break out again in the Old City of Jerusalem, while in New York, Israel and Palestine discuss the possibility of resuming US-brokered peace negotiations.

October 2015

Israel

- On 19 October the Israeli Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked pushes for a criminal code reform in the Knesset that will allow prison sentences to be handed down to minors over the age of 12 for crimes of terrorism.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 2 October an Israeli couple are murdered in their car in Huwara, the West Bank, a hot spot for clashes between Palestinians and Israeli settlers. Hamas and the Popular Resistance Committees describe the murder as "heroic" and carried out by the "brave resistance."
- On 3 October two Israelis are stabbed to death by a Palestinian citizen in the Old City of Jerusalem while on their way to the Western Wall. The attacker, who warned on his *Facebook* account the previous day that "the Third Intifada has erupted," is shot down by Israeli police. Islamic Jihad claims responsibility for the murder, which is also praised by Hamas. For their part, Arab shopkeepers in the Old City declare a strike in protest against the death of the young Palestinian.
- On 4 October a Palestinian is killed in clashes with Israeli Soldiers in Tulkarim, the West Bank, where tensions have been mounting since September due to the unrest in the Old City of Jerusalem and East Jerusalem.
- On 4 October Israel closes access to the Old City to Palestinian non-residents for the first time since the end of the second intifada (2000-2005).
- On 5 October two youths are shot

dead by Israeli police in Tulkarem and Bethlehem during another day of violence that leaves more than 150 Palestinians injured.

- On 5 October Israel announces the arrest of the members of the Hamas cell led by Ragheb Ahmad Muhammad Aliwi, responsible for the murder on 2 October of an Israeli couple in the West Bank, which triggered the spiral of attacks and unrest in the region.
- On 5 October the climate of violence in the West Bank and Jerusalem extends to Jaffa next to Tel Aviv, when clashes break out during an Arab-Israeli demonstration.
- On 6 October a young Palestinian woman stabs and injures an Israeli on the Temple Mount / Noble Sanctuary, who in turn shoots and seriously wounds the woman.
- On 7 October in the face of more fighting in the streets of East Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nablus and Qalandia, the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas calls for calm, insisting that he does not “want an armed confrontation with Israel,” in efforts to prevent a possible third intifada.
- On 7 October Israeli police shoot a Palestinian after the man stabbed and injured a soldier in the city of Kiryat Gat. On the same day there are other stabbings carried out by Palestinians on Israelis in Jerusalem and Petah Tikva, against the backdrop of an escalation in violence dubbed the ‘stabbing’ or ‘car’ intifada, as there have also been several incidents of Israelis being run down. The wave of attacks began during the unrest in July at the Temple Mount / Noble Sanctuary between police and Arab demonstrators.
- On 8 October an Israeli is injured when he is stabbed by a Palestinian at a tram stop. Hours later, another Palestinian stabs several Israelis in front of the Azrieli shopping centre in Tel Aviv. A similar incident occurs in the settlement of Kiryat Arba, in Hebron, and in Shuafat, East Jerusalem, new clashes are reported. In Afula, northern Israel, at least two Israelis are injured, also from stabbings. In light of the current situation, Israeli police chiefs and the mayor of Jerusalem recommend that anyone with a weapons license should carry a gun with them for security. Benjamin

Netanyahu bans Israeli ministers and deputies from visiting the Temple Mount / Noble Sanctuary, in a decision criticized by both Jewish and Arab deputies but which aims to stop the escalation of violence.

- On 9 October six Palestinians from the Gaza Strip are shot dead by Israelis and more than 60 are injured in skirmishes during a popular march towards the Green Line, organized after the Muslim Friday prayer. These are the first Palestinians killed in Gaza since the escalation of violence that began on 1 October in the West Bank, where the unrest continues.
- On 9 October coinciding with the Day of Rage called by Hamas, new stabbings are carried out by Palestinians in Dimona – southern Israel –, Afula – in the north –, Kiryat Arba – Hebron – and Jerusalem.
- On 13 October another day of Palestinian attacks against Israeli citizens unfolds. Most incidents occur in Jerusalem where three Israelis are killed and more than 20 injured.
- On 15 October Israel orders the partial closure of Arab neighbourhoods in Jerusalem but fail to stop the violence in and around the capital.
- On 16 October hundreds of young Palestinians set fire to the alleged site of the mortal remains of the biblical patriarch Joseph in Nablus.
- On 16 October another Friday of Rage leaves a wake of violence in the West Bank. A Palestinian stabs an Israeli soldier before being shot in Hebron. Another Palestinian is killed and 12 more injured by Israeli gunfire in clashes with the army in the north of the Gaza Strip close to the Erez border crossing.
- On 19 October two Israelis are killed and another six injured in a Palestinian attack in the Beersheva central bus station.
- On 19 October Israel begins construction of a wall in East Jerusalem to separate the Israeli neighbourhood of Armon HaNatziv, faced with the increase in violence in the area.
- On 20 October the Israeli army arrest the Hamas leader in the West Bank, Sheikh Hassan Yousef, who calls for a new intifada “against occupation and in defence of al-Aqsa.”

- On 21 October another day of violence in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza coincides with the arrival of the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on an official visit. Despite stepping up security measures, Israel is unable to halt the wave of protests and attacks by Palestinian citizens against Israeli soldiers, citizens and settlers. The demolition of the family house of Maher al-Hashlamoun, member of the Islamic Jihad who, in 2014, killed an Israeli settler in Hebron, ends with clashes breaking out in Beit Dawwa in which a young Palestinian is shot dead while trying to stab a soldier. Another Palestinian is killed by army gunfire in Gush Etzion after running over two soldiers. A third Palestinian is killed in clashes in Hebron.
- On 22 October two Hamas sympathizers from Hebron try to board a school bus in Beit Shemesh armed with knives. After being repelled they attempt to enter a synagogue where they are shot down by Israeli police officers.
- On 23 October an Israeli soldier is injured in another stabbing close to the Israeli settlement bloc of Gush Etzion, in the West Bank.
- On 25 October an Israeli soldier is seriously injured when he is stabbed by a Palestinian citizen on a road to the north of the Kiryat Arba settlement, close to Hebron. This attack is added to another five carried out in the last two days at different points of the West Bank.
- On 29 October two Palestinians are shot dead by Israeli police in Hebron, after they try to stab two Israeli soldiers.

November 2015

Israel

- On 9 November the US President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu put an end to months of tension over the Iranian nuclear programme in a public joint conference in Washington in which Obama unveils a new 10-year military aid package for Israel and defends Israel’s right to respond to the attacks carried out by armed Palestinian groups.

- On 11 November the European Commission's decision to remove *Made in Israel* labels from products entering Europe from the Palestinian territories occupied in the 1967 six-day war sparks a diplomatic crisis between Brussels and Jerusalem.
- On 11 November 24 Hamas members are arrested by Israeli security forces in the north of the West Bank accused of forming part of a terrorist network.
- On 17 November Israel outlaws the Northern Faction of the Islamic Movement in Israel for inciting hatred and violence against Israelis, having close links with Hamas, rejecting Israeli institutions and the country's right to exist and calling for the establishment of an Islamic caliphate in its place.
- On 30 November two Israeli minors are found guilty by a court in Jerusalem for the murder of the Palestinian teenager Mohammed Abu Khdeir, in July 2014, in retaliation for the murder of three young Israelis in Hebron. Both incidents caused the spiral of violence that led to the Israeli army's Operation Protective Edge offensive in Gaza in the summer of 2014.

Palestine

- On 4 November it has been 20 days since the Egyptian army began bombing and flooding the network of smuggling tunnels used to transport weapons and other supplies to the Gaza Strip from Egypt.
- On 10 November, coinciding with the 11th anniversary of the death of Yasser Arafat, Hamas hands over control of the *rais'* home in Gaza to Fatah, the party he led and Hamas' main political rival.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 5 November Israeli security forces kill a Palestinian citizen trying to attack a group of soldiers at a bus stop in the Gush Etzion settlement.
- On 6 November a Palestinian woman attempting to ram her car into a group of Israeli soldiers is shot dead by the same group. In Bethlehem, a Palestinian demonstrator from the Christian minority is seriously injured

by police gunfire during a protest. Another Palestinian citizen is killed in Gaza during clashes between demonstrators and Israeli soldiers close to the border fence. On the same day, three Israelis are injured by Palestinian aggressors in three separate incidents, two in the Cave of the Patriarchs – close to Hebron – and the third in the vicinity of the Israeli Beit El settlement.

- On 11 November two Palestinian children aged 11 and 14 from the Palestinian Shuafat refugee camp attack and injure a security guard on the tram in Jerusalem. Shortly afterwards, a Palestinian citizen attempts to stab an Israeli policeman in the Old City of Jerusalem, who shoots and kills his attacker. The Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Yaalon rules out the outbreak of a third intifada describing the more than 70 stabbings, car rammings, and shootings committed by Palestinians in the last month as a "wave of terror."
- On 13 November two Israelis are murdered in an armed Palestinian attack on a road to the south of the West Bank settlement of Otniel.
- On 19 November a Palestinian man stabs and kills two people in Tel Aviv. Another three people are killed in another shooting attack in Gush Etzion, the West Bank.
- On 22 November there is another day of violence in the West Bank shortly before the visit of the US Secretary of State John Kerry to Jerusalem and Ramallah. An Israeli is stabbed to death at a bus stop in Gush Etzion by a Palestinian who is then shot dead by an Israeli soldier. On the same day, a Palestinian, who attempted to stab an Israeli at a military border post in Hawara, in the north of the West Bank, is run down and killed by the vehicle of Gershon Mesika, a known leader of the Israeli settlements in the West Bank. In Kfar Adumim, close to Jerusalem, a Palestinian man attempts to run over an Israeli and then attacks him with a knife before being shot dead.
- On 27 November two Palestinians ram their respective vehicles into Israeli soldiers in two separate attacks in the West Bank, after which they are shot down by the soldiers.

December 2015

Israel

- On 6 December the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announces the appointment of the current national security adviser and former deputy chief of the external intelligence agency Yossi Cohen as the new director of Mossad.
- On 10 December Egypt releases Uda Tarrabin, an Arab-Israeli prisoner held for 15 years accused of spying for Israel, in exchange for the release of two Egyptians held in Israel.
- On 18 December Israel and Turkey reach an agreement in principle to normalize relations that have deteriorated considerably since Recep Tayyip Erdogan came to power, the 2008 war in Gaza and Israel's attack on the Turkish flotilla heading for the Gaza Strip in 2010. The rapprochement between Ankara and Jerusalem was initiated in a secret meeting held in January 2015 in Zurich between the Turkish Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Feridun Sinirlioglu, the Israeli national security adviser – and recently appointed Mossad chief – Yossi Cohen and Benjamin Netanyahu's special envoy Joseph Ciechanover.
- On 20 December the Israeli Interior Minister Silvan Shalom (Likud) announces his resignation and withdrawal from public life after being accused of sexually harassing different women.
- On 21 December the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon expresses his grave concern over the exchange of missile attacks between Israel and Lebanon, which constitutes a violation of Security Council Resolution 1701, under which there is a ceasefire between the two countries. The attacks were prompted by the previous day's death of Samir Kuntar, a prominent Hamas leader, in what Damascus claims was an Israeli airstrike.
- On 29 December the Israeli Supreme Court sets 15 February 2016 as the date for former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to start serving his prison sentence, convicted in May 2014 for accepting bribes in the *Holyland* housing project corruption scandal. The Court partially accepts an appeal made by

Olmert's defence and reduces his sentence from six years to one and a half.

Palestine

- On 6 December Hamas accuses the PNA of preventing the reopening of the Rafah border crossing with Egypt, by failing to support Hamas' demands of Cairo.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 6 December two Israelis are injured in Jerusalem after being run down and then stabbed by a Palestinian assailant who is shot dead by the police.
- On 7 December a Palestinian citizen stabs an Israeli in Hebron leaving him seriously wounded. After the stabbing, the aggressor is killed by police gunfire.
- On 14 December a Palestinian motorist drives into a bus stop injuring 11 people. The man is shot down by Israeli police.

- On 18 December Israeli soldiers shoot down a Palestinian man trying to ram them with his car in Silwad. Another Palestinian is shot and killed during clashes in Ramallah, the West Bank. A third Palestinian is shot dead in the Gaza Strip during protests on the Israeli border.

Sources

Al-Masry al-Youm
Affaires Stratégiques
 Agencia EFE
 Al-Jazeera
 Associated Press
 BBC World
 Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
 Chatham House
Courier International
El Mundo
El País
 Euronews

Europe Media Monitor
 FRIDE
Haaretz
Il Corriere della Sera
 International Crisis Group
 International Relations & Security Network
 IRIS
Le Figaro
Le Monde
L'Orient Le Jour
 Medarab News
 Observatorio Político Electoral del Mundo Árabe y Musulmán (OPEMAM)
 Press Releases of the European Commission
 Press Releases of the Spanish and Belgian presidencies of the EU
 Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty
 Reuters
 Ria Novosti
 RTVE
The New York Times
The Washington Post
 United Nations News Centre