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UNSCO Press Brief

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Diplomacy:

The monitoring committee of the Arab League will meet today in Doha to discuss the Palestinians' plan to ask the UN for international recognition of a state of their own. PA Chairman Abu Mazen will present to the monitoring committee the advantages and disadvantages of taking that course of action. High-ranking Israeli government officials said that it still wasn't clear if the Palestinians will pursue recognition via the UN in September. The officials estimated that 118 states of the 193 UN member states would support the Palestinian proposal. (Israel Radio)

Boycott law:

The EU expressed its concern about the boycott law and its possible impact on freedom of speech in Israel. In a statement it said that it recognized Israel's sovereignty and the legislative process, it was nonetheless worried about the effect that this could have on the freedom of Israeli citizens and organizations to express opinions non-violently. The statement also said that the EU would continue to discuss the matter. (Israel Radio)

Right-wing Israeli MP's have warned judges not to overturn a controversial new ban on the boycott of Israel or Jewish settlements, insisting it was backed by Israel's public as well as parliament. The legislators were responding after left-wing activists said they would challenge the law before Israel's courts and legal experts warned the law would be unlikely to survive judicial scrutiny. Two members of PM Netanyahu's Likud party said in response that they were proposing legislation to make future court appointments subject to confirmation by the Knesset. (AFP)

After PM Netanyahu admitted Wednesday he backs the newly approved Boycott Law, the PA is now threatening to boycott any Israeli company that will heed it. The PA Economic Minister Hassan Abu Libdeh has said that "Palestinians plan to boycott Israeli companies that will obey the Boycott Law." According to Abu Libdah, "the decision made by the Israeli government to approve this law proves Israel is setting the ground for the option of one, bi-national state." Abu Libdah accused the Israeli government of using the law to attempt, bto

force a certain reality, to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state. It's part of the mechanism of the occupation." (Maan News)

After succeeding in passing the boycott law, the right wing is preparing for its next Knesset battle next Wednesday about an investigative committee to examine funding for left wing organizations. Yisrael Beiteinu made it clear yesterday that if the Likud were to oppose the bill and shoot it down, it planned political retribution in the Knesset against its right wing allies. (Maariv)

West Bank violence:

A Palestinian student who died Wednesday in the occupied West Bank was shot before being arrested by Israeli soldiers, witnesses in his refugee camp said. Ibrahim Sarhan was already bleeding profusely as soldiers surrounded a house in Al-Farah camp near Nablus, refusing to allow ambulances to approach the area, witnesses told Ma'an. Israeli army officials said an explosive device was hurled at troops who were in the area with the intention to arrest Sarhan and others. They say soldiers opened fire when Sarhan attempted to evade arrest, and that he immediately treated by army medics after being shot (Maan News)

B Gaza:

The Israeli Air Force Btargeted tunnels in the northern and southern parts of the Gaza Strip in response to rocket fire the previous day, according to a statement released by the IDF Spokesperson's Unit. Direct hits were confirmed. Aircraft hit two smuggling tunnels in the southern Gaza Strip and a tunnel used for what it termed bterrorist activity in the northern Gaza Strip. Two rockets were fired from Gaza into southern Israel on Tuesday night, causing minor damage to a house. B(Haaretz)

Family Unification:

Israeli Interior Minister Eli Yishai is expected to ask the government next week for a six month extension of the order banning Palestinian family unification. This order significantly limits the ability of an Israeli citizen to live together with a Palestinian spouse. The order's practical meaning is the prevention of unification of hundreds of families, particularly Bedouins in the Negev. Some Knesset members have called it a draconian order and a threat to civil liberties. (Haaretz)

Lebanon:

Former Lebanese PM Saad Hariri made a verbal attack upon Hezbollah saying, the groupbs possession of arms was at the root of conflict in Lebanon. Hariri added that indictments issued by the UN-backed tribunal seeking the killers of his father and which accuses four members of the Hezbollah, would never be changed. "If [Hezbollah leader Hassan] Nasrallah comes out in 300 press conferences, [he] will not change the content of the indictment." Hariri added that Lebanon "will pay the price" for Hezbollah's refusal to turn over four of its members indicted in the 2005 assassination of Hariri's father, and he described the current PM Najib Mikati, , as an "agent" of Hezbollah. B(Reuters)

Egypt: B

Egypt has fired almost 600 top police officers as part of a clean up the discredited and widely unpopular police force. The decision, announced by Interior Minister Mansour el-Issawi, meets a key demand by protesters camping out at Cairo's central Tahrir

Square. Of those leaving, 37 are specifically accused of being involved in the killing of protesters during the uprising that ousted Hosni Mubarak. Among those dismissed were 505 major-generals and 82 brigadiers, Egyptian state television reported. Egypt's state news agency also said on that parliamentary elections that had been widely expected to be held in September will now take place a month or two later. (Al-Jazeera)

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