

There hasn't been much news of this in the Western media so far, but apparently the European Union has [resumed](#) [direct aid](#) to the Palestinian Authority. The Quartet, comprised of the EU, US, UN and Russia, imposed the economic boycott of the Palestinian Authority after Hamas was elected into the government nearly a year and a half ago. The Quartet insisted Hamas, who's charter still calls for the destruction of Israel, recognize the Jewish state's right to exist, end violence and honour previous agreements made by the PLO. Hamas has so far agreed to none of this. Earlier this year, a Palestinian unity government was formed between Hamas and Fatah, the West hoping that the influence of Fatah would cause Hamas to moderate its stance. Both terrorist organizations expected the economic boycott to be lifted immediately, but Javier Solana, the High Representative for the European Common, Foreign and Security Policy, stated that the judgement to lift the boycott would be based on deeds and not words. Clashes between Hamas and Fatah have continued since then, but despite this the EU has agreed that payments can be resumed as long as the money is seen to be being used responsibly.

**Quote:** *"Under the project launched Monday, the €4 million will be paid in instalments until June 2009 and training will be provided in both the Ramallah and Gaza City offices of the finance ministry by accountancy firm Ernst & Young. "This support for the ministry ... will help me ensure that we work in accordance with the best international standards, and that the government can give every Palestinian taxpayer the assurance that their money is being legally and honestly spent," Fayad said in a statement. With this program, "the EU is resuming its support of the Palestinian Authority [PA] in a direct manner by the finance ministry," Fayad said in a press conference after the signing. Despite the freeze on direct aid, EU aid in 2006 - extended indirectly through a mechanism that avoided the Hamas-led government - increased on the previous year to reach around €700 million.*

In other news, European states such as Holland are seeking a more pro-active role in the Middle East conflict. Several prominent Dutch politicians have signed a [petition](#) calling on the Netherlands parliament to demand their government recognize Hamas, and apply more pressure to Israel to abide by international law.

**Quote:** *"The petition appeared in several daily papers, and featured signatures of many other opinion shapers from across the political board. "The government must help break the impasse. With the Arab League," the petition read. In addition, the document included an implicit demand that Holland recognize Hamas: "The Netherlands must engage in dialogue with all the relevant parties."*

The Hague, the seat of government in Holland, also houses the [International Court of Justice](#), which has been given legal authority by the UN to preside over matters of international law. The Hague, most notably condemned Israel for its construction of the peace wall, and demanded that it be dismantled. The Hague does not have the authority to enforce its decisions.

**Quote:** *"On December 8, 2003, the General Assembly (GA), in a special emergency session adopted a Palestinian-initiated resolution sending the issue of Israel's security barrier to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague for an advisory opinion on the question: "What are the legal consequences arising from the construction of the wall being built by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory." The Palestinian Authority and supporters had attempted to have the Security Council pass such a resolution, however these efforts were unsuccessful, and they turned instead to the General Assembly, where anti-Israel resolutions are routinely supported by the majority of member nations. The resolution passed 90-8, with 74 countries abstaining.*