

Academic Study

The Palestinian Authority's Policies Towards the Palestinian Resistance

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Introduction

The Palestinian *Intifadah* that erupted on 9/12/1987 helped in bringing the Palestinian issue back to the international scene and resurrected armed resistance as a potential solution to the problem of the occupation. The *Intifadah*, which lasted until the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993, brought control of the resistance back to the Palestinian interior in the West Bank (WB) and the Gaza Strip (GS), to involve all sectors of the Palestinian people, including the Islamic movement, which had a strong and effective participation.³

As already discussed in chapter 10, Israel focused on the security issue, which is the core of its agreements with the Palestinians, and it considers its security above anything else. It made sure that the Palestinian security was employed in favor of Israel's security, where security coordination and maintenance of calm in the Palestinian-controlled territory are the bases.

From the outset, the Palestinian signatories of the Oslo Accords committed themselves to renounce "terrorism" and abandon all acts of violence. They pledged to "assume responsibility over all PLO elements and personnel in order to assure their compliance, prevent violations and discipline violators," according to the letter of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)'s recognition of Israel sent by PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on 9/9/1993.⁴ Since agreements on autonomy are temporary and ultimately

¹ This study is an academic study that was published in the Arabic book of al-Zaytouna "The Palestinian National Authority: A Study of the Experience and Performance 1994–2013," edited by Dr. Mohsen Moh'd Saleh, 2014.

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³ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Palestinian Issue: Historical Background and Contemporary Developments* (Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, Beirut, 2014), p. 108.

⁴ 107 Israel-PLO Mutual Recognition, Letters and Speeches, 10 September 1993, site of Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Historical Documents, vol. 13–14: 1992–1994, 10/9/1993, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/mfadocuments/yearbook9/pages/107%20israel-plo%20mutual%20recognition-%20letters%20and%20spe.aspx>

followed by a final stage of negotiations on core issues, any progress depended on Israel's consent and "generous concessions." Thus, the Palestinians were compelled to respond to Israeli pressure in order to achieve any progress in the negotiations, no matter how flimsy. However, Israel delayed the implementation of its agreements with the Palestinian Authority (PA), for some Palestinian parties opposing the Oslo Accords, led by Hamas, considered themselves unconcerned by such agreements and continued to resist the Israeli occupation. Israel conditioned the resumption of the implementation of Oslo on the termination of resistance efforts.

Things evolved to the point of Israel and its allies pushing the PA to crush the Palestinian opposition forces, especially Hamas, hitting their infrastructure and educational, charitable and social institutions. Willingly or not, the PA found itself engaged in the fight against Hamas and the Palestinian factions of resistance to Israel. It was thus implementing its obligations to the peace process, affirming its influence on the Palestinian arena, and encouraging the Israelis to proceed with the peace process. Consequently, Israel succeeded in portraying Hamas, Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine (PIJ) and the other Palestinian opposition factions as an obstacle that the PA must overcome or even neutralize in order to achieve Palestinian national goals.⁵

In a study published by the Strategic Studies Institute (SSI), at the US Army War College, Stephen C. Pelletiere states that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres decided to entrust Yasir 'Arafat and the PLO with acting as police officers to suppress the *Intifadah* and crush the resistance.⁶

The PA's efficiency against resistance was supposed to correspond to Israel's wishes and achieve what it had failed to accomplish for 27 years!⁷ Consequently,

⁵ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *Al-Tariq ila al-Quds: Dirasah Tarikhiyyah fi Rasid al-Tajrubah al-Islamiyyah 'ala Ard Filastin mundhu 'Usur al-Anbiya' wa hatta Awakhir al-Qarn al-'Ishrin* (The Road to Jerusalem: A Historical Study of the Islamic Experience in the Land of Palestine Since the Time of the Prophets until Late Twentieth Century), 5th edition (Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 2014), p. 207.

⁶ Stephen C. Pelletiere, "Hamas and Hizbollah: The Radical Challenge to Israel in the Occupied Territories," site of Strategic Studies Institute (SSI), The U.S. Army War College, 10/11/1994, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil>

⁷ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *Al-Tariq ila al-Quds*, p. 207.



the internal security aspect took a significant share of the PA's budget and energy, as it worked to establish a strong police to ensure calm and security in the WB and GS.⁸

First: The PA's Policies Towards the Palestinian Resistance 1994–2000

The Palestinian resistance factions were subjected to joint Palestinian and Israeli pressure after the signing of the Oslo Accords and the introduction of autonomy in the PA-controlled territory. This hindered the Palestinian resistance operations, and led to friction and clashes between Palestinian Authority Security Forces (PASF) and the Palestinian resistance. With every operation undertaken by the Palestinian resistance factions against Israel, the PA launched a wide campaign of arrests in the ranks of the Palestinian resistance factions in general, and in the ranks of Hamas and PIJ in particular.⁹

Israel took advantage of the PA's security pledges and extorted the PA to hit the resistance factions, especially Hamas and PIJ. The resistance factions disregarded the Oslo Accords and continued their operations against Israel, arguing that the ceiling of the Oslo Accords did not meet the minimum requirements of the Palestinian national project, insisting that resistance be pursued until the implementation of better terms. The PA considered this a challenge to its authority and a breach of its obligations, which shattered the image of the envisioned Palestinian state.¹⁰ In an interview with *Der Spiegel*, PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat promised to fight those "enemies of peace" who took to "violence" as a means for opposition, stressing that what he obtained after the signing of the "Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip" in Taba, was a birth certificate of a Palestinian state.¹¹ It was a clear indication that 'Arafat would fight anyone who tried to halt the Palestinian state project. He also

⁸ "The Palestinian Authority: The Security Forces and Other Armed Elements," *The Estimate*, vol. XII, no. 21, site of *The Estimate.com*, 20/10/2000, <http://theestimate.com/public/102000.html>

⁹ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *Al-Tariq ila al-Quds*, p. 209.

¹⁰ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Complexity of the Palestinian Authority Decision-Making Process 1993–2003*, unpublished study, p. 14. (in Arabic)

¹¹ *Al-Mashriq* newspaper, 10/10/1995.

announced that the PA would continue to cooperate with Israel in order to prevent more “self-immolation operations.”¹²

Nonetheless, the resistance factions asserted their continued armed operations against Israel. Yet, they affirmed that Palestinian blood represented a red line, thus, refraining from any confrontations with the PA that could lead to civil war.¹³

Citing Yasir ‘Arafat, Planning and International Cooperation Minister Nabil Sha‘th stated that the PA refused the price of a “civil war” for imposing its authority.¹⁴ He also said that their deep concern for national unity and their fear of a potential civil war represented their *Achilles heel* that prevented a violent response to those who violated the peace process,¹⁵ thus accusing the Palestinian resistance.

Sha‘th also accused the Islamic opposition of not giving the PA the opportunity to achieve peace. He said that the Islamic opposition did not comply with the cessation of military operations against Israel and had not even given the PA the slightest chance to protest to Israel and tell it that the PA could not control the opposition’s operations, for these come from the WB and the resistance insisted on announcing its operations in GS. According to Sha‘th, Israel connected everything to security, because the Israelis felt as if they were deceived by not attaining security, whenever their death toll rose. He stressed that the PA considered that the security response was not the best solution to solve the problem. He demanded more political and economic support from the Israeli authorities, which would convince the Palestinian people that they had a stake in

¹² *Al-Hayat* newspaper, London, 23/8/1995.

The overwhelming majority of Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims consider these operations to be “martyrdom operations” while most Israelis and western writers and media describe them as “suicide operations”. We used the word “self-immolation” in this report to be as neutral as possible. However, such terms may need more discussion.

¹³ Jawad al-Hamad et al., *Dirasah fi al-Fikr al-Siyasi li Harakat al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyyah (Hamas): 1987–1996* (A Study of Political Thought of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas): 1987–1996), Series of Studies (20), 3rd edition (Amman: Center for Middle East Studies, 1999), pp. 246 and 270.

¹⁴ “Interview of the Palestinian National Authority’s Planning and International Cooperation Minister on clashes in Gaza Between Palestinian Police Members and Supporters of “Hamas” and “Islamic Jihad”, Gaza, 19/11/1994,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Institute for Palestine Studies, Beirut, no. 21, Winter 1995, p. 173, citing *al-Hayat*, 20/11/1994. (in Arabic)

¹⁵ “Interview of the Palestinian National Authority’s Planning and International Cooperation Minister on the Stalled Negotiations to Implement the Oslo Accords, Gaza,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, no. 21, Winter 1995, p. 192, citing *al-Hayat*, 13/2/1995. (in Arabic)



peace, and therefore pressure the Islamic opposition and all the forces that wanted to violate the peace process. Hence, it would help in stopping operations that threaten Israel.¹⁶

The PA accused Hamas of using mosques to incite people against it and store weapons,¹⁷ and of plotting war against the PA and preparing for the assassinations of President ‘Arafat¹⁸ and Musa ‘Arafat, head of the PA Military Intelligence.¹⁹ However, Hamas denied this and accused Tayeb ‘Abdul Rahim, Secretary-General of the Presidential Office, of issuing fraudulent data on behalf of Hamas and Ezzedeen Al-Qassam Brigades, and fabricating documents. Hamas affirmed its rejection of the principle of political assassination and the use of violence to resolve differences among its people. It also confirmed that its holy war (*jihad*) was directed against the Israeli occupation, and its belief that the PA was playing a dangerous game by confronting the Palestinian people, its institutions, and combatant forces.²⁰ Hamas Spokesperson Ibrahim Ghushah said that there were vigorous PA attempts to change Hamas and convert its work from “*jihad*” to political.²¹

However, Head of the Political Department of the PLO and Secretary of Fatah’s Central Committee Faruq Qaddumi affirmed the Palestinian people’s right to resistance as long as their land was occupied, and criticized the PA’s action against Palestinian militants.²² He also stressed the right of Hamas to adopt all forms of resistance against Israel, and opposed any repressive action against Hamas, which he described as part of the Palestinian National Movement.²³ He also said that Israeli violence must be matched with Palestinian and Arab violence, and stressed that Hamas and PIJ operations were part of the resistance against the occupation.²⁴

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Addustour* newspaper, Amman, 18/5/1995.

¹⁸ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *Al-Tariq ila al-Quds*, p. 212.

¹⁹ *Asharq Alawsat* newspaper, London, 22/8/1995.

²⁰ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *Al-Tariq ila al-Quds*, pp. 212–213.

²¹ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Complexity of the Palestinian Authority Decision-Making Process 1993–2003*, p. 16.

²² *Addustour*, 13/3/1996.

²³ *Addustour*, 21/8/1995.

²⁴ *Alrai* newspaper, Amman, 15/4/1996.

Among the bloodiest incidents that took place was the massacre committed by the Palestinian police on 18/11/1994 against worshipers who were planning to go out on a peaceful march after Friday prayers from the Palestine Mosque in Gaza to the house of “Martyr Hisham Hamad.” 13 worshipers were killed and more than 200 were wounded on a day which became known as the “Black Friday Massacre.” Hamas accused the PA of masterminding the massacre in order to seek “to please Israel” to prove that it was able to suppress the Palestinian resistance in a manner that was impossible for Israel to emulate.²⁵

Commenting on this, Nabil Sha‘th, said that police officers were defending themselves, and questioned the reasons behind the explosion of the political situation at a time when the PA was close to taking the reins of power in the WB from the Israeli authorities, in reference to the resistance factions that were working to block the peace process. Sha‘th pointed out that President ‘Arafat was able to take down the “Fatah movement cadres,” who were considered a militia, i.e., “a militia confronting another militia,” stressing that President ‘Arafat rejected civil war.²⁶

Musa ‘Arafat, head of the PA Military Intelligence, rejected Hamas’s accusations that the PASF tortured and humiliated detainees after the arrest of a number of the movement’s leaders in GS in June 1995. He claimed that the heads and beards of “political prisoners” were shaved for hygiene reasons, to prevent the spread of disease.²⁷

In August 1995, the PA and Hamas submitted two projects for national reconciliation, which included halting military operations against Israel, with Hamas emphasizing that this would be for a limited period to be agreed upon by the parties “in order to preserve national unity.”²⁸ In December 1995, a PA-Hamas dialogue was held in Cairo under the chairmanship of Salim Al-Za‘nun, representing the PA, and Khalid Mish‘al, representing Hamas. The PA sought to include Hamas in the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) elections, and persuade it to stop its operations against Israel, while exercising its opposition

²⁵ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *Al-Tariq ila al-Quds*, pp 209–210.

²⁶ “Interview of the Palestinian National Authority’s Planning and International Cooperation Minister on clashes in Gaza Between Palestinian Police Members and Supporters of “Hamas” and “Islamic Jihad”, Gaza, 19/11/1994,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, no. 21, Winter 1995, p. 173. (in Arabic)

²⁷ *Majalla* magazine, London, 11/11/1995.

²⁸ *Asharq Alawsat*, 3/8/1995.



under the ceiling of the Oslo Accords, without prejudice to the PA's obligations to the peace process. However, Hamas refused to participate in the elections, while promising not to disrupt them by force, stressing the continuation of armed operations against Israel,²⁹ which is what 'Arafat referred to when saying that Hamas did not halt its military operations during this period.³⁰

However, most of the Palestinian security campaigns against Hamas and PIJ took place in March and April 1996 after a series of resistance operations rocking Israel, following the death of the leader in Ezzedeen Al-Qassam Brigades, Yahya 'Ayyash,³¹ where the infrastructure of the two movements was targeted. Both the Israeli Army Chief of Staff Amnon Lipkin-Shahak and the head of Israel Security Agency—ISA (*Shabak*), Ami Ayalon praised the “systematic” move carried out by 'Arafat against Hamas.³²

According to press reports, 'Arafat formed a committee to make recommendations and to present a vision of how to fight Hamas after it reacted strongly to the assassination of 'Ayyash. The committee submitted its report to 'Arafat in March 1996 as “the deliberations and recommendations of the Joint Emergency Committee.” The report, which was published by Jordanian magazine *Assabeel* on 23/4/1996 and by *Al-Ussbu' Al-'Arabi* magazine on 6/5/1996, acknowledged that PASF knowledge of Hamas was limited. The recommendations included three axes:³³

First Axis: To liquidate the military infrastructure of Hamas (Al-Qassam Brigades) and continue the Israeli security cordon until the end of the Israeli elections (end of May 1996), in addition to security cooperation with the Israelis, and the liquidation of several Al-Qassam Brigades leaders at spaced intervals, under the guise of individual or Israeli violations. Also, this axis involved seeking to penetrate the Al-Qassam Brigades' secret organizations to monitor and control its actions and methods of recruitment and mobility.

Second Axis: To dismantle the political ability of Hamas by showing the multiplicity of religious visions about the political course of the Palestinian issue,

²⁹ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *Al-Tariq ila al-Quds*, p. 214.

³⁰ *Asharq Alawsat*, 13/1/1996.

³¹ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, “The Palestinian Resistance During Half a Century (1/2),” *Albayan* magazine no. 132, December 1998.

³² *Alrai*, 18/4/1996.

³³ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *Al-Tariq ila al-Quds*, p. 211.

and to show the contradictions in the political discourse between the Hamas leaders themselves. This was in addition to accusing Hamas leaders of dreamy idealism and isolating “moderate” Hamas figures by portraying them as having limited vision, average intelligence, impulsiveness, and who can easily be controlled. This required dialogue with such people and not with Hamas members who have strategic visions, in addition to strengthening the position of the moderates by handing them platforms and public institutions.

Third Axis: To shake the presence of Hamas abroad, especially in Jordan. Although the PA denied issuing this document, pro-Hamas circles confirmed it. Moreover, a careful reading of the document suggests that it was indeed drafted by a PA security committee, especially for those familiar with the PA’s background and performance on the ground.³⁴

In the wake of the Sharm el-Sheikh conference, which was held on 13/3/1996, after the Hamas response to the assassination of ‘Ayyash, the participants in the conference stated that they “reemphasize their strong condemnation of all acts of terror in all its abhorrent forms.” Moreover, they called, “to exert maximum efforts to identify and determine the sources of financing for these groups and to cooperate in cutting them off.”³⁵ The PA tried to direct a severe blow to Hamas, when the PASF arrested more than two thousand of the movement’s leaders and activists.³⁶

According to Khalid Salam, economic assistant to ‘Arafat, the PA asked a two-day meeting of 27 nations that was held in 28/3/1996 in Washington, for ³⁷\$1 billion to confront Hamas. It would use the money to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people, and for the control of schools, clinics and social services controlled by Hamas.³⁸

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ UN: Meetings and Press Releases, Secretary-General, Statements and Messages, UN to Take Part in Group to Prepare Recommendations on Implementing Summit of Peacemakers’ Decisions, SG/SM/5922, 13/3/1996, site of United Nations (UN), <http://www.un.org/press/en/1996/19960313.sgsm5922.html>

³⁶ Mohammad Yassin, Family of Martyrs, site of Islam Online, 6/6/2004, <http://www.islamonline.net/arabic/famous/2004/06/article02.SHTML>

³⁷ US Dollar.

³⁸ *Al-Hayat*, 28/3/1996.

See Chronological Review of Events Relating to the Question of Palestine, Division for Palestinian Rights, 31/3/1996, site of United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL), <https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/C7CF148A0ED18504852563300063FD90>



Muhammed Jihad, member of Fatah's Central Committee, denounced PASF practices against the Palestinian resistance movements, particularly Hamas, describing these actions as "repressive and unjustified." He also said that Hamas was an integral part of the Palestinian national movement, and that the PA should not implement repressive measures against it.³⁹

Khalid Mish'al, head of Hamas' political bureau, accused the PA of putting the interests and demands of Israel before the Palestinian people's interests, national unity, and the cohesion of its social fabric. Mish'al considered that the future of the relationship between Hamas and the PA, and even between the Palestinian people and the PA was not comforting, because the PA exploited it to the benefit of its relationship with the enemy, and subjected it to the "Zionist mood and priorities."⁴⁰

On 24/9/1996, Israel opened a tunnel under *al-Aqsa* Mosque, which led to the outbreak of clashes between Palestinians, who rose to defend *al-Aqsa* Mosque, and the Israeli police. As a result, 62 Palestinians were killed and 1,600 others were wounded; and 14 Israeli soldiers were killed, and 50 others were wounded. The incidents lasted three days (25–27/9/1996), an *Intifadah* that included most Palestinian towns and villages.⁴¹ The *al-Aqsa* tunnel *Intifadah* led to the Palestinian police's intervention to defend the Palestinians, as they opened fire on the Israeli army for the first time since the implementation of the Oslo Accords.⁴²

In an interview with *Maariv* newspaper, the Israeli army Chief of Staff, Amnon Shahak, said that the demonstrations were organized and had led to the deterioration of the situation, which changed the status of the Israeli relationship with the Palestinians. He added that this required the Israelis to stop and think about how they would continue on their path, and that there was a need to try to communicate with the Palestinian leadership in order to achieve calm. During his field tour at the height of the unrest, Shahak said, "It is evident that 'Arafat and the PA leaders lost control of things, and I can't imagine that they had wanted the

³⁹ *Asharq Alawsat*, 14/4/1996.

⁴⁰ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *Al-Tariq ila al-Quds*, p. 215.

⁴¹ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *Dirasat Manhajiyyah fi al-Qadiyyah al-Filastiniyyah* (Systematic Studies on the Palestinian Issue) (Kuala Lumpur: Fajar Ulung, 2003), p. 326.

⁴² *Alrai*, 29/9/1996.

situation to evolve to the point of gunfire.” Shahak made the threat that the Israeli army would enter the territory of the PA if necessary to stop the problem.⁴³

British newspaper *The Observer* reported that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu asked President ‘Arafat for an urgent meeting. The latter responded that the Palestinians were committed to the peace process, but that the people were angry at not seeing any progress.⁴⁴ He and Netanyahu met on 1/10/1996 in Washington, with the latter refusing to close *al-Aqsa* tunnel and suggesting the formation of a committee to discuss the matter.⁴⁵ Hamas said in a statement that the Washington summit represented a new failure for Oslo’s authority, which had agreed to participate in a celebratory summit to help the “Zionists” resolve their predicament.⁴⁶

In response to *al-Aqsa* tunnel *Intifadah*, Palestinian resistance movements demanded the PA and ‘Arafat end the course of negotiations and return to armed resistance, and ignite a new *Intifadah*. According to Hamas Spokesperson Ibrahim Ghushah, “The Palestinians have turned their backs to Oslo Accords, which brought them nothing but grief.” He stressed that “through the new *Intifadah* that began today, we can conclude that the Palestinians have decided to continue to resist the occupation. We hope that ‘Arafat will follow the Palestinian people with their *Intifadah* and resistance.” He believed that further talks between ‘Arafat and Netanyahu would not be fruitful.⁴⁷

In Damascus, PIJ Secretary-General Dr. Ramadan ‘Abdullah Shallah and the Secretary General of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), Nayef Hawatmeh agreed that “a new popular *Intifadah* is making its way in the occupied territories.” Hawatmeh confirmed in a statement that “the people’s *Intifadah* will not be shackled under pressure from Netanyahu and the US administration, who spilled the blood of our youth and who are demanding the self-governing authority to deter and stop it.” As for Shallah, he pointed out that things have now become controlled by the street and its reactions to the oppression it had undergone lately. He was surprised that the PASF arrested more than a dozen members of the movement on 25/9/1996, and expressed his

⁴³ *Al-Quds al-Arabi* newspaper, London, 28/9/1996.

⁴⁴ *Al-Aswaq* newspaper, Amman, 1/10/1996.

⁴⁵ *Addustour*, 4/10/1996.

⁴⁶ *Alrai*, 4/10/1996.

⁴⁷ *Al-Hayat*, 27/9/1996.



belief that ‘Arafat was not interested in stepping up on a large scale. He added that Arafat’s authority was trying to catch up with the people and contain events, so as not to worsen the situation and thus, lead to an explosion that cannot be absorbed.⁴⁸ Al-Quds radio, affiliated with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (PFLP-GC), demanded the escalation of action “against the occupation and the complying authority.” A PFLP spokesperson said that what was happening confirmed “the fragility of the so-called peace process.”⁴⁹

As for ‘Abbas Zaki, Fatah’s Central Committee member stated that the *Intifadah* that swept the country emphasized the futility of the peace process, where things were back to square one.⁵⁰

Palestinian resistance factions in general, and Hamas in particular, have suffered at the hands of Palestinian security campaigns from 1996 until the outbreak of *al-Aqsa Intifadah* in September 2000. In 1997 and 1998 Hamas only carried out two self-immolation operations, in addition to several operations that did not affect the general course of the peace process and negotiations.⁵¹

The Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR) noted that the PA detained Palestinian citizens “for their political beliefs and affiliation with Islamic groups opposing the peace process with Israel,” under pressure and attempts at blackmail by the US and Israel. The center also said that the PA closed down more than 20 licensed Islamic institutions, and all but two of these offices were sealed on a single day, on 25/9/1997.⁵²

The assassination of Muhyiddin al-Sharif, one of the leaders of Al-Qassam Brigades, on 29/3/1998 in Ramallah, was one of the significant events that affected the relationship between the PA and Hamas. Palestinian officials announced that their investigation showed that the assassination was in the context of “internal fight and competition” in Al-Qassam Brigades. They accused Brigades member ‘Adel ‘Awadallah of assassinating Sharif, but this was rejected

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Al-Hadath*, 30/9/1996.

⁵¹ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Complexity of the Palestinian Authority Decision-Making Process 1993–2003*, p. 17.

⁵² The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), *Annual Report 1997*, 31/12/1997, pp. 29 and 38, http://www.pchrgaza.org/files/Reports/English/pdf_annual/ann_rep_97.pdf

by Hamas, which announced its intention to conduct its own investigation. Moreover, Hamas accused the Israeli intelligence service of killing Sharif.⁵³

The Palestinian Intelligence Forces arrested ‘Imad ‘Awadallah, ‘Adel’s brother, against the backdrop of the assassination of Sharif, who was then able to escape from prison on 15/8/1998. According to the PCHR, a special force of Israeli soldiers carried out the killings of the two brothers, ‘Imad and ‘Adel ‘Awadallah, who died on 10/9/1998. However, the website of the Media Office of Al-Qassam Brigades stated that the assassination of Sharif came in the context of a series of assassinations, arrests and prosecutions carried out by the PA against Hamas and other Palestinian forces. It pointed out that the field developments that followed the assassination proved the existence of close security coordination between the PASF and Shabak aimed at eliminating the movement. ‘Imad ‘Awadallah was arrested then his escape was orchestrated after a tracking device was planted on him. He was then followed and assassinated along with his brother ‘Adel ‘Awadallah.⁵⁴

More than 100 citizens were arrested in 2000 in the GS for political reasons. One of the most significant operations was the crackdown by PASF on 4/3/2000 in the al-Shati refugee camp and the Shuja’iyya neighborhood in the GS, which affected dozens of supporters of Hamas and PIJ. The crackdown followed a military operation by five members of Al-Qassam Brigades on 2/3/2000 in the town of al-Taybeh within the territories occupied in 1948.⁵⁵

Following the outbreak of *al-Aqsa Intifadah* on 28/9/2000, the PA ceased arresting people based on their political beliefs, releasing most political detainees in its jails and detention centers after the Israeli occupation forces shelled Palestinian security centers in Gaza City on 12/10/2000.⁵⁶

⁵³ PCHR, *Annual Report 1998*, 31/12/1998, pp. 36, 46 and 50,
http://www.pchrgaza.org/files/Reports/English/pdf_annual/ann_rep_98.pdf

⁵⁴ Site of Ezzedeen Al-Qassam Brigades – Information Office,
<http://www.qassam.ps/aboutus.html>

⁵⁵ PCHR, *Annual Report 2000*, 31/12/2000, p. 70,
http://www.pchrgaza.org/files/Reports/English/pdf_annual/ann_rep_00.pdf

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 70–71.



Second: The PA's Policies Towards the Palestinian Resistance 2000–2007

Al-Aqsa Intifadah erupted amid Palestinian despair and frustration due to the negotiations, which did not achieve the stated goal of a Palestinian state, the restoration of the occupied territories, or the return of refugees. The provocative visit of Ariel Sharon, the head of the Likud Party, to *al-Aqsa Mosque* on 28/9/2000 was the spark that ignited the *Intifadah*. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak supported Sharon by providing him with 600 soldiers to accompany him, further mobilizing 3,000 troops and Policemen in Jerusalem and its districts.⁵⁷

Since the PA was unable to resist or thwart the sweeping *Intifadah*, it tried to take advantage of it politically to achieve negotiated gains. The *Intifadah* gave new impetus and confidence to resistance factions, which encouraged members demanding armed resistance in the Fatah movement to participate in the *Intifadah*. Consequently, the Fatah-affiliated al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades played a significant role, especially in operations carried out in the WB and GS. Put another way, the resistance factions, led by Hamas, succeeded during the *al-Aqsa Intifadah* in dragging the PA, and many Fatah members, toward the resistance. They were also able to impose the *Intifadah* on the PA, as well as disrupt the peace process.⁵⁸

PA President Yasir 'Arafat seemed supportive of the *Intifadah*, despite repeated condemnation of resistance operations against civilians on both the Palestinian and Israeli sides. An increasing number of PASF defended people against repeated Israeli attacks.

The Israeli government considered the PA to be a “terrorist entity,” and Sharon spokesperson Raanan Gissin even said that “‘Arafat has not stopped being a bin Laden”. This was despite ‘Arafat’s declaration before the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in November 2001, that they “unilaterally declared an immediate, comprehensive cease-fire,” and “have exerted maximum

⁵⁷ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Palestinian Issue: Historical Background and Contemporary Developments*, p. 128.

⁵⁸ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Complexity of the Palestinian Authority Decision-Making Process 1993–2003*, pp. 17–18.

efforts to sustain it.” Moreover, he asserted the PA’s belief in “peace as a strategic irreversible option.”⁵⁹

Israel also accused ‘Arafat of failing as a leader, and blamed him for what was happening because he did not take action to stop what it called “terrorism.” Voices within the Israeli government called for ‘Arafat’s expulsion, assassination, or arrest and trial. Israeli forces surrounded him at the presidential headquarters in late March 2002, after the invasion of WB towns. After a thirty-month siege, ‘Arafat’s health deteriorated and he died on 9/11/2004. There are suspicions surrounding his death, as medical tests conducted by the Vaudois University Hospital Center, Switzerland, at the end of 2013, revealed that the cause of his death was polonium poisoning. This is while Russian experts have questioned this cause through the samples they analyzed.⁶⁰

Al-Aqsa Intifadah led to new PA obligations towards Israel, such as preventing resistance operations, collecting their weapons, and arresting members of the resistance factions. Most of the politically motivated arrests were stopped and most political prisoners were released. In an interview with Voice of Palestine Radio on 16/6/2001, the head of the Preventive Security Forces in the WB, Colonel Jibril al-Rajjub, said that the PASF would not arrest any Palestinian unless they breached the PA’s security laws.⁶¹

After Israel’s assassination of PFLP Secretary General Abu ‘Ali Mustafa, on 27/8/2001 in Ramallah, the PFLP assassinated Israeli Tourism Minister Rehavam Ze‘evi on 17/10/2001 in Jerusalem. Israel hastened to blame ‘Arafat for this. As a gesture of “goodwill,” ‘Arafat sent a letter to the US government in which he stressed that the people wanted by Israel for Ze‘evi’s assassination would be investigated and brought to trial. The PASF arrested the suspects, including the new Secretary General of the PFLP, Ahmad Sa‘adat, and the defendants were sentenced to imprisonment for 18 years for their participation in Ze‘evi’s

⁵⁹ Site of Information and Culture Department in GS – Fatah, 4/12/2013, <http://www.fateh-gaza.com/ar/?Action=Details&ID=343> (in Arabic); site of Chicago Tribune, 15/9/2001, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2001-09-15/news/0109150150_1_saeb-erekat-president-bush-called-sharon-palestinian; and UN, 10–16/11/2001, <http://www.un.org/webcast/ga/56/statements/011111palestineE.htm>

⁶⁰ Palestinian Authority, site of Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, http://www.mofap.gov.ps/new/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=35&catid=30&Itemid=32 (in Arabic); and site of British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), 7/11/2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-24851883>

⁶¹ *Asharq Alawsat*, 17/6/2001.



assassination. However, Israel ignored the trial and demanded that the accused be brought to trial in Israel.⁶²

After the resignation of Mahmud ‘Abbas as prime minister on 6/9/2003, Mohammad Dahlan emerged in the Ahmad Qurai‘ government and then disappeared again. He reappeared in the summer of 2004 and urged his followers to create chaos in GS, declaring that he was leading the reform movement and fighting corruption. Some saw these acts as an attempted coup against ‘Arafat. Dahlan accused him and authority officials of squandering and manipulating \$5 billion of foreign aid, saying that this money had vanished, and that ‘Arafat had Palestinian blood on his hands.⁶³ However, the facts did not bear out Dahlan’s claims, and Dahlan himself pursued this campaign at a time when he was accused by many of being “steeped in corruption.” The issue appeared to be nothing but a cover to achieve political goals, especially as it came after the crisis that emerged when Mahmud ‘Abbas formed the government. The conflict at the time focused on security powers and ‘Abbas’ calls to abandon the *Intifadah*, stop the resistance and disarm, in order to meet the conditions of the Roadmap. This was in addition to the emergence of a movement within the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, who were backed by ‘Arafat, which pressured ‘Arafat to make reforms against corruption and collaborators with Israel, and appoint prominent national figures to protect the resistance and the *Intifadah*.⁶⁴

The head of Israeli Military Intelligence Aharon Ze’evi Farkash described Dahlan’s move as premature, which he said accounted for its failure, and that Dahlan’s ambition overweighed his abilities, where he made his move without the forces that were under his authority.⁶⁵

After the death of President ‘Arafat on 9/11/2004, ‘Abbas called on the Palestinian factions to stop attacks against Israel to enable the election of ‘Arafat’s successor.⁶⁶ On 9/1/2005, Palestinians in the WB and GS elected

⁶² Information and Culture Department in GS – Fatah, 4/12/2013, <http://www.fateh-gaza.com/ar/?Action=Details&ID=343> (in Arabic); site of Alawaba News, 20/4/2002, <http://www.alawaba.com/news/arafat-offers-put-suspected-killers-zeevi-trial-palestinian-court>; and BBC, 25/4/2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1950292.stm

⁶³ *Al-Watan* newspaper, Kuwait, 1/8/2004.

⁶⁴ Site of Alarab News, 20/8/2004, <http://alarabnews.com/alshaab/2004/20-08-2004/38.htm>

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Asharq Alawsat*, 18/11/2004.

‘Abbas as the PA president. After he was sworn in, on 15/1/2005, he immediately began work with Israel to apply the Roadmap.⁶⁷

In February 2005, ‘Abbas participated in a conference prepared by Egypt in Sharm El Sheikh, which led to a Palestinian-Israeli declaration on a mutual cessation of “all acts of violence,”⁶⁸ which was criticized by Palestinian factions. ‘Abbas signed an agreement with the George W. Bush administration and the Sharon government in March 2005 on the formation of the US security coordination team that would train and equip the PASF, and oversee security coordination between the occupation and the PA. ‘Abbas also signed the Cairo Agreement with the resistance factions in March 2005, which led to the declaration of a Palestinian truce unilaterally until the end of the year, with an emphasis on the right of the Palestinian people to resist occupation.⁶⁹

After meeting with leaders of Palestinian factions in Damascus on 22/8/2005, Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmad Qurai‘ affirmed that there was no dispute over the weapons of the resistance. However, the Israeli withdrawal from the GS was used as a pretext to push for the disarmament of the resistance factions in the GS. At the end of August 2005, the Palestinian Ministry of Interior issued a statement saying that the oneness and legitimacy of the PA left no room for any doubt or waver by factional elements.⁷⁰

In September 2005, two internal blasts occurred in GS, the first at the home of a Hamas militant, and the second during a celebration march for Hamas. As a result, 21 civilians were killed. The explosions led to escalations in Gaza City and a dispute between Hamas and the Interior Ministry. When Hamas revealed the identity of its military leaders in GS, the interior minister described the move as “disregarding any authority or legitimacy... and that

⁶⁷ The Road Map, site of Aljazeera.net, 20/3/2005,

<http://www.aljazeera.net/specialcoverage/coverage2005/2012/3/8/%d8%ae%d8%a7%d8%b1%d8%b7%d8%a9-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%b7%d8%b1%d9%8a%d9%82> (in Arabic)

⁶⁸ President Mohammad Abbas’ Speech at the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit (8 February 2005), 8/2/2005, UNISPAL, <https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/082617960CDB7E168525707B0046A4C4>; and Statement by PM Ariel Sharon at the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 8/2/2005,

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/pressroom/2005/pages/statement%20by%20pm%20sharon%20at%20sharm%20el-sheikh%20summit%208-feb-2005.aspx>

⁶⁹ Cairo Accord (March 2005), site of Al-Akhbar English, March 2005,

[http://english.al-akhbar.com/sites/default/files/Cairo%20Accord%20\(March%202005\)_0.pdf](http://english.al-akhbar.com/sites/default/files/Cairo%20Accord%20(March%202005)_0.pdf)

⁷⁰ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh and Basheer Nafi (eds.), *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2005* (Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies & Consultations, 2007), p. 33.



there is a parallel authority.” After threats from ‘Abbas to confront Hamas, escalation of the intra-Palestinian dispute, and the intensification of Israeli attacks on GS, Hamas leader Mahmud al-Zahhar, declared that the movement had taken the decision to stop attacks on Israel from the GS.⁷¹

Al-Qassam Brigades, al-Quds Brigades, and al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades had announced the end of the truce at the end of 2005, and threatened to respond violently to every Israeli attack.⁷² This was in parallel with President ‘Abbas’s calls for the continuation of the truce.

On 19/1/2006, after the escalation of Israeli operations against the resistance, a PIJ member blew himself up on a bus in Tel Aviv, killing two Israelis and wounding 22. The PA condemned the operation and ‘Abbas described the perpetrators as “rogues.”⁷³

After the PLC election results were announced in January 2006, the gap widened between the approaches of Fatah and Hamas. The Fatah movement insisted on maintaining the gains obtained through its leadership of the PA since its inception in 1994, and on committing to the peace process in line with the international community’s views. This was announced in a speech by President Mahmud ‘Abbas to the Palestinian people following the results of the elections, declaring that he was an elected president whose mandate was based on negotiations and peaceful resolution of the conflict with Israel.⁷⁴ As for Hamas, which was now the ruling party, it insisted on its right to its powers as the largest parliamentary bloc, and to implement the political reform it had promised voters. It rejected any compromise on the political rights of the Palestinian people, and refused to acknowledge the existence of Israel as a state on any part of the Palestinian territories.⁷⁵ Al-Qassam Brigades avoided embarrassing the government and President ‘Abbas and did not initially participate in the

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 33–34.

⁷² *Al-Khaleej* newspaper, al-Shariqa, 1/1/2006.

⁷³ *Al-Hayat*, 20/1/2006.

⁷⁴ Site of Arabs 48, 27/1/2006, <http://www.arab48.com/display.x?cid=6&sid=7&id=34415>

⁷⁵ Change and Reform bloc, Electoral Program for the 2nd Legislative Elections of 2006, site of Hamas’s Change and Reform bloc in Palestinian Legislative Council, Gaza, 2006, <http://www.islah.ps/new/index.php?page=viewThread&id=128>

responses of the resistance forces against the Israeli attacks, which were confined for the most part to missile bombardment operations.⁷⁶

On 17/4/2006, PIJ carried out a self-immolation operation in Tel Aviv, killing eight Israelis and wounding 65. ‘Abbas condemned the operation, describing it as “despicable,” and saying that it harmed the Palestinian people.⁷⁷

Al-Qassam Brigades, in conjunction with the al-Nasser Salahuddin Brigades, the military wing of the Popular Resistance Committees, and the Army of Islam (*Jaish al-Islam*), carried out the Dispelled Illusion operation on 25/6/2006, which resulted in the capture of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. Israel took advantage of the abduction to launch Operation Summer Rain on GS. However, Israel’s war with Hizbullah in Lebanon in July and August 2006 halted the operation.

During the Israeli aggression on Lebanon, ‘Abbas said that Israel offered a truce in GS, in exchange for the resistance stopping rocket fire.⁷⁸ He met with the factions in GS to reach a new truce, which he failed to secure, but nevertheless he announced the renewal of the truce, while the factions denied its agreement.⁷⁹

‘Abbas described the attacks as futile and criticized the resistance factions, after the Israeli forces invaded the northern GS in November 2006, under the pretext of stopping rocket fire.⁸⁰ The Palestinian factions condemned his remarks, which they viewed an attempt to cover up Israeli aggression.⁸¹

In February 2007, Fatah and Hamas signed the Mecca Agreement under the auspices of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). This led to the formation of a national unity government. The letter of appointment addressed by ‘Abbas to Isma‘il Haniyyah, included the following: “I ask you to respect international resolutions and agreements signed by the PLO.” Haniyyah announced his acceptance of the letter of appointment⁸² and delivered a speech to the PLC that was considered to be a summary of the new government’s program. In it, he referred to the forms of resistance, including popular opposition to the

⁷⁶ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh (ed.), *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2006* (Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies & Consultations, 2010), p. 40.

⁷⁷ Palestinian News and Information Agency (WAFA), 17/4/2006, <http://www.wafa.pna.net/body.asp?id=84620>

⁷⁸ *Al-Hayat*, 24/7/2006.

⁷⁹ *Al-Hayat*, 18/8/2006.

⁸⁰ *Assafir* newspaper, Beirut, 9/11/2006

⁸¹ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2006*, p. 41.

⁸² *Al-Hayat al-Jadida* newspaper, Ramallah, 16/2/2007.



occupation, and talked about stabilizing the truce and expanding it to become comprehensive, reciprocal and simultaneous, in exchange for the Israeli occupation's commitment to halt operations on the ground.⁸³

'Abbas sought to provide arms to the PASF, over which he tightened his grip, to face the resistance movements, under the pretext of policing. *Haaretz* newspaper revealed on 7/6/2007 that Senior Fatah officials had asked Israel to ratify Egyptian arms shipments, including dozens of armored cars, hundreds of armor-piercing RPG rockets, thousands of hand grenades, and millions of rounds of ammunition for small caliber weapons.⁸⁴ Of course, Israel would not have agreed to that, and General Keith Dayton himself would not have sought this if the PA was intending to use this weapon against Israel.

In addition, it was revealed that many meetings and discussions were secretly taking place with the participation of officials from the PA and Fatah, under the guise of protecting the peace process by toppling the rule of Hamas for its refusal to accept the Quartet's terms. This eventually has a huge impact on the explosion of the internal Palestinian situation.

Moreover, *The Sunday Times* newspaper revealed that a meeting was held on 8-9/2/2006 between Israeli and Palestinian officials in Texas, headed by Edward Djerejian, former US ambassador to Israel, where they discussed ways to marginalize Hamas.⁸⁵ *The New York Times* newspaper also published information about a US-Israeli plan to isolate the PA and cause the suffering of the Palestinian people to force it to topple the Hamas government.⁸⁶

A report prepared by Wolf Reinhardt from German newspaper *junge Welt* on 14/6/2007 accused President Bush of a long-term plan to destabilize the internal Palestinian situation, and of inciting members within Fatah to kill Hamas military faction leaders. He based these accusations on Keith Dayton's statement during a hearing of the US Congress Committee on the Middle East in late May 2007, in

⁸³ Palestinian National Information Center, 17/3/2007, http://www.pnic.gov.ps/arabic/gover/ministry_2007_11.htm

⁸⁴ Avi Issacharoff and Amos Harel, Fatah to Israel: Let Us Get Arms to Fight Hamas, *Haaretz* newspaper, 7/6/2007, <http://www.haaretz.com/fatah-to-israel-let-us-get-arms-to-fight-hamas-1.222473>

⁸⁵ *The Sunday Times* newspaper, 19/2/2006

⁸⁶ Steven Erlanger, "Us and Israelis are said to talk of Hamas Ouster," *The New York Times* newspaper, 14/2/2006.

which he confirmed the existence of a strong influence by the US on Fatah.⁸⁷ David Rose also stated in a *Vanity Fair* report that the magazine was in possession of secret documents validated by US and Palestinian sources that revealed a secret plan approved by Bush and implemented by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Deputy National Security Adviser Elliott Abrams, in coordination with the forces led by Muhammad Dahlan, to “provoke a Palestinian civil war,” and “remove the democratically elected Hamas-led government from power.”⁸⁸

Third: The PA’s Policies in Ramallah Towards the Palestinian Resistance After the Hamas Takeover of GS 2007–2013

Hamas fought what it called a decisive battle with the “collaborationist coup-plotting faction in Fatah” in mid-June 2007. The attempts to derail the national unity government, which was formed after the Mecca Agreement, led to a heightened armed confrontation that ended with the control of the government headed by Isma‘il Haniyyah in GS, while the Palestinian presidency and the government formed by Salam Fayyad dominated the WB.

Hamas claimed that its actions aimed at blocking what it called the “Zionist category hiding amidst certain forces, who launch their operations from and get trained in these forces’ headquarters.” Hamas stressed in its statement that it “does not antagonize any of these forces, but rather only targets the category that hides in their ranks.”⁸⁹ Khalid Mish‘al, head of Hamas’ Political Bureau, said that the first step in a national consensus is to solve the security issue, rebuild the PASF based on nationalism, and cleanse them of corruption and suspicious members,⁹⁰ in reference to security coordination with Israel.

Hani al-Hassan, member of Fatah’s Central Committee, believed that Hamas had eliminated the Dayton affiliates and plots within Fatah, and that it was not

⁸⁷ Arabs 48, 15/6/2007, <http://www.arabs48.com/display.x?cid=6&sid=54&id=46221>; and U.S. Assistance to the Palestinians, Hearing Before the Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia of the Committee on Foreign Affairs House of Representatives One Hundred Tenth Congress, 23/5/2007,

<https://democrats-foreignaffairs.house.gov/legislation/hearings/us-assistance-palestinians>

⁸⁸ David Rose, “The Gaza Bombshell report,” *Vanity Fair* magazine, April 2008, <http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2008/04/gaza200804>

⁸⁹ *Asharq Alawsat*, 14/6/2007.

⁹⁰ *Al-Hayat*, 22/7/2007.



directed against Fatah itself.⁹¹ Moreover, the Palestinian Interior Ministry Spokesperson Khalid Abu Hilal, accused the US and Israel of supporting a coup-plotting faction with money and weapons, to drown the Palestinian people in a civil war, which would help in the implementation of Israeli schemes. He said that they have always known that America's support to armed parties against one another is not for nothing, but the price it wanted was to distract the Palestinian people in a civil war and implement Israeli schemes aimed at undermining the rights of the Palestinians.⁹²

Amid division, the Palestinian presidency set a series of procedures aimed at Hamas and the resistance factions in WB. In September 2007, *Yedioth Ahronoth* newspaper mentioned that the PASF arrested, in July and August, more than a thousand members of Hamas.⁹³ Hamas also reported that the movement in WB was the target of 1,007 attacks by the PASF and Fatah between 11/6–31/8/2007.⁹⁴

Moreover, 'Abbas also took a series of decisions to prevent a repeat of the GS experience in WB, including the dismantling of Al-Qassam Brigades. He issued a decree on 26/6/2007 for the dismantling of all militias and military or paramilitary formations. The decree also asked the government to end the phenomenon of all armed groups and confiscate their weapons,⁹⁵ thus paving the way for a security plan prepared in the Interior Ministry, headed by General 'Abd al-Razzaq al-Yahya. The plan targeted Fatah, Hamas, the PIJ and other factions. This in fact was the implementation of the Road Map that stipulated the dismantling of all resistance cells.⁹⁶

⁹¹ Without Borders program, The Future of the Conflict Between Fatah and Hamas, Aljazeera.net, 27/6/2007, <http://www.aljazeera.net/programs/pages/339af9e3-1c57-45b0-ab71-e34c0d851b07> (in Arabic)

⁹² *Asharq Alawsat*, 14/6/2007.

⁹³ *Al-Khaleej*, 6/9/2007.

⁹⁴ The Media Office of the Islamic Resistance Movement – Hamas, Attacks by Fatah and the Palestinian Security Forces Against the Hamas Movement in the Occupied WB, site of The Palestinian Information Center (PIC), 4/9/2007, <http://www.palestineinfo.info/ar/default.aspx?xyz=U6Qq7k%2bcOd87MDI46m9rUxJEpMO%2bi1s7m9FQhIT%2f%2bbPBrh9bwrK1HI3akLLUHarsCGjyTAu9o9iWQYyHp0jGJ9w69m5SXYqQ1YwjTHS4cYIn89tgqHwSWy7TWcKw95dhBG%2fKpLNf8M%3d>; and a report issued by Hamas, Attacks by Fatah and the Palestinian Security Forces Against the Islamic Resistance Movement "Hamas" in the Occupied Bank During the Month of Holy Ramadan, 17/10/2007.

⁹⁵ Wafa, 26/6/2007, <http://www.wafa.ps/arabic/body.asp?id=54651>; and Ma'an News Agency, 26/6/2007, <http://www.maannews.net/ar/index.php?opr=ShowDetails&ID=72543>

⁹⁶ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh (ed.), *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2007* (Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies & Consultations, 2010), p. 67.

‘Abbas also sought to dry up Hamas’s sources of funding and close its institutions by issuing a presidential decree on 22/6/2007 giving the interior minister the powers to dissolve previously licensed associations.⁹⁷

During 2008, the security measures of Fayyad’s government against Hamas in WB continued under the pretext of preventing the use of illegal weapons, and that Hamas was seeking to overthrow the PA’s legitimacy. Fayyad said that the Authority “is keen on preserving political pluralism but rejects any security pluralism.”⁹⁸ However, he revealed his government’s policy in dealing with Hamas, saying that as long as the situation was what it was in Gaza, Hamas would be viewed as an anti-Authority organization, and the government would act accordingly.⁹⁹ The Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki revealed that Fayyad’s government took a decision on 5/5/2008 to confiscate all the weapons of the resistance, which he dubbed ‘the militias,’ as well as the weapon of anyone who did not belong to PASF.¹⁰⁰ This decision was part of the implementation of the first provision in the Roadmap.

The PA insisted that it had no political detainees, or as Hebron Area Commander Brigadier-General Samih al-Saifi said, that the arrest of resistance activists does not constitute a political arrest but rather the arrest of armed groups that may belong to any party and that carry any weapon. He added that weapons other than those of the PASF were illegal.¹⁰¹

As a result, the PA deployed, with Israel’s approval, security officers in Jenin, Nablus, Hebron and Bethlehem, and succeeded in dismantling several resistance cells and thwarting bombing operations against Israel. Although it focused on hitting the civilian and military infrastructure of Hamas, it also sought to hit and dismantle all the armed wings of the resistance factions, including *al-Aqsa* Martyrs Brigades of Fatah, al-Quds Brigades of the PIJ among others.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ Reuters News Agency, 22/6/2007, http://ara.today.reuters.com/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=topnewsstoryID=2007-06-22T142049Z_01_OLR251157_RTRIDST_0_OEGTP-MID-SECURITY-MA7.XML (in Arabic); and *al-Hayat*, 23/6/2007.

⁹⁸ *Al-Khaleej*, 23/4/2008.

⁹⁹ *Addustour*, 8/8/2008.

¹⁰⁰ *Al-Khaleej*, 6/5/2008.

¹⁰¹ *Asharq Alawsat*, 28/10/2008.

¹⁰² Mohsen Mohammad Saleh (ed.), *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2008* (Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies & Consultations, 2010), p. 62.



A report conducted by Shabak and published in early 2008 praised the earnest work of the PASF, which were able to confiscate 120 rifles and guns. It even detained members of non-military organizations within Hamas, including charities.¹⁰³ Brigadier General Yoav Mordechai, chief of the Civil Administration in the WB, noted that the security coordination broadened, and that meetings were held between Israeli and Palestinian officers.¹⁰⁴ He said that Israel was fighting a real battle against the civil and social wings of Hamas and was strongly working against the various civil and military Hamas institutions in WB.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, Yuval Diskin, head of the Israeli Intelligence Agency, described security cooperation with the PA “excellent, especially in combating terrorism” and shutting down 60 institutions connected to Hamas.¹⁰⁶

Hamas accused the PASF in WB of involving Israeli and American agents in the interrogations of detained activists, and blamed them for the death of detainees. Indeed, Hamas Spokesperson Fawzi Barhum considered that ‘Abbas and Fayyad carried the full legal and ethical responsibility for the death of Sheikh Majd al-Barghouthi, who died while in the custody of the Palestinian General Intelligence Service (GIS) in February 2008, and for the lives of all political prisoners in the PA’s prisons.¹⁰⁷ However, the Palestinian Attorney-General’s report confirmed that the direct cause was a natural death caused by chronic disease.¹⁰⁸

PIJ movement also denounced PA practices in Ramallah, and the fact that PASF were guarding the security of Israel. Sheikh Khodor Habib, a leader of the movement, stressed that the resistance’s weapons were legitimate and unsoiled, and must be defended and protected, without prejudice.¹⁰⁹ On 1/7/2008, the PIJ also accused the PASF of coordinating with Israel to arrest and murder its

¹⁰³ Barak Ravid and Avi Issacharoff, Shin Bet: PA Has Arrested 250 Hamas Operatives, *Haaretz*, 7/1/2008, <http://www.haaretz.com/shin-bet-pa-has-arrested-250-hamas-operatives-1.236712>

¹⁰⁴ *Al-Sharq* newspaper, Doha, 24/1/2008.

¹⁰⁵ *Addustour*, 13/9/2008.

¹⁰⁶ Ahmad Budeiri, Wave of “political” West Bank arrests, BBC, 22/10/2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7683951.stm

¹⁰⁷ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 8/4/2008.

¹⁰⁸ *Al-Hayat al-Jadida*, 9/4/2008.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

activists, following the Israeli assassination attempt of Najat ‘Alaa Abu al-Robb, a military commander in the movement, after being surrounded by the PASF.¹¹⁰

Although the PASF focused on attacking the civilian and military infrastructure of Hamas, they sought to hit and dismantle all the armed wings of the resistance factions. Anyone involved with weapons and explosives was a target for arrest, explained Major General Hazem ‘Atallah, the Palestinian police commander in WB.¹¹¹

Minutes of a meeting between Israeli and Palestinian officers revealed by a senior analyst in *Yedioth Ahronoth*, Nahum Barnea, show that security coordination between the PA and the Israeli Security Forces aimed to destroy Hamas, the “common enemy” of both parties. The Palestinian Commander of the General Security Service Abu al-Fath said during the meeting that “There is no rivalry between us... We have a common enemy.”¹¹²

According to the minutes, Majid Faraj, head of the Palestinian Military Intelligence, who was also present, said, “We’ve decided to put all our problems on the table. Everything is above board: there are no more games. Hamas is the enemy. We have decided to go to war against it. I am telling you, there will be no dialogue with them: whoever tries to kill you, kill him first. You made a *hudna* with them. We didn’t.” He added, “Every name of a Hamas institution you give us is handled. You recently gave us the name of 64 institutions, until today, we have finished dealing with 50 of them. We closed some. In others, we changed the management. We have also laid a hand on their funds.” Israel gave the PA the details of 150 bank accounts that were suspected of being connected to “terror organizations,” the PA closed 300 accounts. “Once we used to think 1,000 times before entering a mosque,” explained Faraj. “Today we enter every mosque when necessary.”¹¹³

On 12/11/2008, Hamas issued statistics on 616 of its political detainees with the PA, including 35 liberated prisoners, explaining that there were 2,921

¹¹⁰ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 2/7/2008.

¹¹¹ Ahmad Budeiri, op. cit.

¹¹² Aisling Byrne, ‘Businessmen posing as revolutionaries’: General Dayton and the “new Palestinian breed,” site of Conflicts Forum, 2009, <http://www.conflictsforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/generaldayton2.pdf>

¹¹³ Ibid.



political arrests in WB between 10/6/2007 and 11/11/2008.¹¹⁴ Hamas accused ‘Abbas and the government in Ramallah of trying to crush the resistance factions.

Palestinian human rights organizations confirmed the occurrence of political arrests in WB. According to Sha‘wan Jabarin, director of Al-Haq organization, there were 270 detainees in WB, and that “Physical torture is practiced with the utmost severity.”¹¹⁵ The Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights noted 28 complaints concerning torture and ill-treatment during November 2008 alone.¹¹⁶

‘Abbas accused Hamas of implementing regional agendas in conjunction with Iran and al-Qaeda, and of seeking to create an “obscurantist emirate” in GS, describing the rockets of the resistance as “absurd.” He stressed that he would not allow the extra-judicial bearing of arms in WB from anyone, be they from Fatah or Hamas, further stating that the notion that the arms were for the resistance was a “big lie that fools no one.”¹¹⁷ He also accused the Palestinian factions of trading money, weapons and drugs.¹¹⁸

For its part, the Palestinian government in GS was able to provide cover for the resistance movements. The transfer and “smuggling” of arms to the Strip continued, while other arms were manufactured there. However, the bind in which the government found itself made the actions of Hamas and the resistance factions essentially defensive.

In a memorandum dated 6/1/2008, Hamas proposed its plan to resolve the Palestinian division crisis. Hamas considered that the PA, regardless of its administrators, unqualified and incapable of managing the resistance project, and that it is wrong to link the resistance with its military wings and weapons to the PA. Therefore, the PA should not monopolize weapons or disarm the resistance. According to Hamas, there should be coordination between the factions to manage the conflict with Israel, in addition to coordination with the PA government through an appropriate mechanism. Muhammad Nazzal, a member

¹¹⁴ Site of Albian Center for Information, 13/11/2008, <http://www.albian.ps/ar/portal/01942ed0-9740-47f1-beef-0577d59f78d3.aspx>

¹¹⁵ Ahmad Budeiri, op. cit.

¹¹⁶ Reuters, 4/12/2008, <http://ara.reuters.com/article/topNews/idARACAE4B30N220081204?sp=true> (in Arabic); and *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 5/12/2008.

¹¹⁷ *Al-Hayat*, 27/2/2008.

¹¹⁸ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 12/11/2008.

of Hamas' Political Bureau, has revealed the six-point proposals made by Khalid Mish'al, to the KSA leadership that corresponded generally to the previous memorandum.¹¹⁹

The issue of “abiding by the commitments made by the PLO,” including the approval of the international Quartet terms, which provided for the renunciation of violence—i.e., any resistance action—represented an obstacle to the implementation of the Yemeni Initiative for Palestinian reconciliation. Yemeni President ‘Ali ‘Abdullah Saleh put forth an initiative for the Resumption of Inter-Palestinian Dialogue and ending of internal split on 9/8/2007, and was amended on 9/2/2008. A new provision was added and included President ‘Abbas’s most important condition for dialogue, which was “to abide by the commitments made by the PLO.” It also included the conditions of the international Quartet that require stopping resistance to Israel, which was at the core of the dispute between the PLO and Hamas delegations regarding dialogue (19–23/3/2008).¹²⁰

PASF dealt harshly with the demonstrations and protests in WB against the Israeli aggression in GS (27/12/2008–18/1/2009). They confined them and prevented them from raising slogans of support to Hamas and from friction with the Israeli forces. They also arrested several activists from Hamas, PFLP and DFLP, and others who participated in the demonstrations.¹²¹

The military wings of most Palestinian factions in GS took part in resistance against the Israeli aggression, and many Fatah leaders interacted with them. Moreover, Fatah suspended its 44th anniversary celebrations. ‘Abbas Zaki, PLO representative in Lebanon, said that Fatah members are potential “martyrs,” and “the resistance will be victorious.”¹²²

Hamas accused PASF of a continuous campaign against it, which was intensified during the aggression on GS. It also accused it of preparing lists of “shelling-worthy” targets and handing them to Israel’s Security Agency. Security Forces in GS seized correspondence between former PASF officers in Gaza and security leaders who fled to WB, indicating that the leadership in Ramallah asked

¹¹⁹ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2008*, pp. 36–37.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 37–39.

¹²¹ *Al-Hayat*, 3/1/2009; and *Asharq Alawsat*, 8 and 10/1/2009.

¹²² *Al-Mustaqbal* newspaper, Beirut, 5/1/2009.



for urgent reports and detailed maps about the homes of leaders in Hamas and Al-Qassam Brigades, in addition to alleged weapons storehouses. Security Forces in GS arrested a number of those officers affiliated with Fatah, who then gave detailed confessions of their actions.¹²³

Israeli newspaper *Maariv* claimed on 12/5/2009 that a document prepared in the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs Office reported that high-ranking officials put great pressure on Israel to topple the Hamas rule in GS during the Israeli aggression.¹²⁴ However, the PA denied the *Maariv* report.¹²⁵ Moreover, according to Wikileaks, the Israeli government headed by Ehud Olmert “tried to coordinate Operation Cast Lead with both Fatah and Egypt.” A cable from the US embassy in Tel Aviv revealed that the Israeli defense minister, Ehud Barak, said that the Israeli “had consulted with Egypt and Fatah prior to Operation Cast Lead, asking if they were willing to assume control of Gaza once Israel defeated Hamas.” According to the cable, Barak also pointed out that he “received negative answers from both.”¹²⁶

‘Abbas had criticized the non-renewal of the truce by Hamas and the Palestinian factions. He believed that “it is not possible to end the truce.” Regarding the diplomatic and political campaign to support the invasion of GS, he said that the PA cannot accept or agree to the invasion of Gaza, or even to air or artillery strikes. He said it was categorically rejected, because it affects the Palestinian people and their interests. He added that the PA was also against the futile rockets fired from time to time, and that efforts will be made so that neither of these would happen.¹²⁷

¹²³ PIC, 22/1/2009, <http://www.palestine-info.info/ar/default.aspx?xyz=U6Qq7k%2bcOd87MDI46m9rUxJEpMO%2bi1s7%2b%2bH3ieD3NKNahQOdhtJHY3d9miGoenihb%2fjveP6SggqdwgPjmr5e%2bXM5pXskFauXxt9ujBiMws8K2W0DzaLRycu2MhPtRrJThc6f8hfjBNU%3d>; and *Alghad* newspaper, Amman, 13/5/2009.

¹²⁴ Sama News Agency, 12/5/2009, <http://samanews.com/ar/index.php?act=post&id=42426>

¹²⁵ *Al-Khaleej*, 13/5/2009.

¹²⁶ Barak Ravid, *Palestinians: Gaza War Claim Exposed by WikiLeaks Is Untrue*, *Haaretz*, 29/11/2010, <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/palestinians-gaza-war-claim-exposed-by-wikileaks-is-untrue-1.327669>

¹²⁷ *Al-Hayat*, 24/12/2008.

‘Abbas blamed Hamas more than Israel for the war. According to his adviser, Nimr Hammad, Hamas leaders were “partners” in the Israeli crime against GS, and “Hamas must understand what it means to do rash actions.”¹²⁸

Nevertheless, the PA froze peace negotiations with Israel,¹²⁹ and ‘Abbas stated, “We will not accept for Hamas to be destroyed so that we can take its place, and our sole concern is to stop the assault on the Palestinian people. The only way to end the division is dialogue, and dialogue only.”¹³⁰ He called on Hamas to agree to the Egyptian cease-fire initiative, saying that the party that rejects it “will be responsible for the bloodshed.”¹³¹

In June and December 2009, PASF conducted two broad arrest campaigns against Hamas supporters. According to Hamas, in June, 474 of its supporters were arrested and 555 raids were carried out,¹³² then in early December 2009, 550 Hamas supporters were arrested.¹³³ PASF also admitted that they had seized \$8.5 million from Hamas members in the last few months of 2009, on the grounds that these funds were being used to build a security force for Hamas in WB.¹³⁴

After the Security Forces had killed two members of Al-Qassam Brigades in Qalqilya on 31/5/2009, Prime Minister Salam Fayyad said that Palestinian forces had done their national duty, and the PA was determined to enforce public order and the rule of law.¹³⁵ And according to the Minister of the Interior, the PA would not allow outlaw groups to tamper with the security of the homeland and its citizens.¹³⁶ As for Hussein al-Sheikh, head of the liaison office for the PA Ministry of Civil Affairs, he said that the Al-Qassam Brigades in Qalqilya were

¹²⁸ Aljazeera.net, 28/12/2008, www.aljazeera.net/news/pages/900d403b-357a-4f35-bfad-547944842ecf (in Arabic)

¹²⁹ Reuters, 29/12/2008, <http://ara.reuters.com/article/topNews/idARACAE4BSOCJ20081229> (in Arabic)

¹³⁰ *Al-Hayat al-Jadida*, 6/1/2009.

¹³¹ *Al-Hayat*, 11/1/2009.

¹³² *Felesteen* newspaper, 3/7/2009.

¹³³ *Felesteen*, 16–17/12/2009.

¹³⁴ Ma’an, 5/7/2009, <http://www.maannews.net/arb/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=174149&MARK=%D8%B9%D8%AF%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B6%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%8A>

¹³⁵ *Al-Hayat al-Jadida*, 1/6/2009.

¹³⁶ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 5/6/2009.



liquidated because they were threatening all the agreements and understandings with Israel.¹³⁷

PASF Spokesperson Major General ‘Adnan al-Damiri, accused Hamas leaders of public incitement against its groups and members, saying that what happened in Qalqilya was the result of such incitement. He disclosed the arrest of Hamas security groups operating under the name of “Majd Apparatus,” who gather intelligence on PA’s security institutions, adding that these groups admitted to photographing Palestinian security sites to attack them.¹³⁸

Hamas accused the PASF of fabricating charges against its members who were killed,¹³⁹ and said that the crime was only in the context of the PA declared war against the resistance in WB, which is an implementation of the Road Map security part.¹⁴⁰

On 25/6/2009, Khalid Mish‘al, head of Hamas’ Political Bureau, stated that what was happening in WB was a quelling and comprehensive campaign to eradicate Hamas and the resistance forces in WB, unparalleled since 1967. He pointed to US Lieutenant General Dayton’s speech at the Washington Institute on 7/5/2009, announcing the building of “new men,” and “dismantling” the resistance in WB.¹⁴¹ Moreover, Hamas representative in Lebanon, Usamah Hamdan, announced on 2/8/2009 that the number of detainees in WB had reached 1,143, including 878 Hamas members.¹⁴²

A US report by Nathan Thrall revealed that “in 2009, Palestinian and Israeli forces took part in 1,297 coordinated activities, many of them against militant Palestinian groups, a 72 percent increase over the previous year [2008].”¹⁴³

¹³⁷ *Felesteen*, 1/6/2009.

¹³⁸ *Al-Hayat al-Jadida*, 1/6/2009.

¹³⁹ *Felesteen*, 9/6/2009.

¹⁴⁰ *Felesteen*, 1/6/2009.

¹⁴¹ PIC, 25/6/2009, <http://www.palestine-info.info/ar/default.aspx?xyz=U6Qq7k%2bcOd87MDI46m9rUxJEpMO%2bi1s7kWVY32kmt0BxLEgL1TwOX02%2b2EPTnhIkVD3DmkvyHqYkg8MIYIGY5eO%2bvXcy5b0Kd0LEmZEF2dQSF0dt50%2baSLako4b%2bpvTDWcuDzKWB06o%3d>; and see Program of the Soref Symposium Michael Stein Address on U.S. Middle East Policy, site of The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 7/5/2009, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/html/pdf/DaytonKeynote.pdf>

¹⁴² Aljazeera.net, 2/8/2009, <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/4E36AEB1-FEFD-4926-9F61-A17481AA57F0.htm>

¹⁴³ Nathan Thrall, “Our Man in Palestine,” *The New York Review of Books* magazine, New York, vol. 57, no. 15, 14/10/2010, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2010/10/14/our-man-palestine/>

The PA considered armed resistance harmful to the Palestinian national project, and Fayyad condemned two Palestinian resistance operations in Hebron in June and August 2010, killing an Israeli policeman and four settlers. He warned against what he described the risk of being drawn into a cycle of violence, which, experience had shown, would be harmful to national interests, serving the Israeli settlement project.¹⁴⁴ Fayyad announced his rejection of what he called “the continued exploitation” of the suffering of the Palestinian people, under empty slogans, to serve factional and regional agendas that were incompatible with the Palestinians’ higher interests. He stressed that such actions were contrary to Palestinian national interests and the strategic vision adopted by the PA, which combined the political struggle, led by the PLO on the one hand, and the completion of the State of Palestine’s institutions and infrastructure, in addition to the promotion of peaceful popular resistance to the occupation, on the other.¹⁴⁵

Fayyad explained his vision in dealing with what he called the violence and incitement in a meeting with representatives of 65 Jewish companies, religious and social leaders in a “private home” in Manhattan, New York. He said that violence “has to be dealt out of the equation permanently regardless of what happens in the peace process.” Security, he said, was a vital interest both for Israelis and Palestinians and those who used violence to advance their agendas needed to be prosecuted and punished through due process.” Fayyad affirmed that his government was committed to an “incitement-free environment,” stressing that the use of places of “worship to whip up hatred was particularly inadmissible.”¹⁴⁶

In contrast, Hamas insisted on its adherence to resistance despite being part of the government, and tried to combine its platform as a resistance party and the requirements of governance in GS, with all that entailed in terms of the security balance with Israel. This resulted in an undeclared truce with Israel in GS, where most military wings in GS cooperated to establish a genuine truce. However, the flow of arms continued into GS, in addition to the digging of tunnels for defense and preparing for any future aggression.

¹⁴⁴ *Asharq Alawsat*, 16/6/2010.

¹⁴⁵ Wafa, 31/8/2010, <http://www1.wafa.ps/arabic/index.php?action=detail&id=84523>

¹⁴⁶ Fayyad Meets with Jewish Leaders, site of Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 22/9/2010, <http://www.jta.org/2010/09/22/news-opinion/the-telegraph/fayyad-meets-with-jewish-leaders>



The Haniyyah government launched an extensive campaign against collaborators with Israel. The Interior Ministry announced that it was able to detect spy networks that were using websites and taking advantage of citizens' needs to recruit them, noting that it was conducting an awareness-raising campaign to counter this.¹⁴⁷ GS Minister of the Interior Fathi Hammad said that the Internal Security Forces had discovered new methods of Israeli penetration, and had succeeded in combating their agents.¹⁴⁸

Interior Ministry spokesman Ihab al-Ghusein, reported that collaborators who penetrated the resistance factions by joining their ranks were arrested.¹⁴⁹ The death sentence was carried out against two defendants accused of collaborating with Israel, leading to the killing of many resistance fighters and the injury of others.¹⁵⁰

As a result of PA policies against Palestinian resistance fighters, Shabak was able to announce, for the first time in over 20 years, that it no longer had a list of wanted persons in WB. The head of Shabak, Yuval Diskin, said that PASF is "as perhaps at the strongest point it has been in 16 years," and that "it was demonstrating a great deal of 'motivation' and 'determination' in preventing attacks, including arresting hundreds of Hamas activists."¹⁵¹

The Israeli government revealed in its report before the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) in Brussels, that the Israeli forces carried out 2,968 joint operations with the PASF in WB in 2010, compared to 1,297 operations in 2009, an increase of 129%. They also held 686 joint meetings in 2010, compared to 544 meetings in 2009, an increase of 26%. This was in addition to the contribution of the Palestinian forces in handing over 623 Israelis after they inadvertently entered the PA areas in the WB.¹⁵² The Shabak annual report noted that the joint

¹⁴⁷ *Al-Hayat*, 13/4/2010.

¹⁴⁸ *Al-Hayat*, 19/10/2010.

¹⁴⁹ Palestinian National Authority, Council of Ministers Presidency, site of the General Secretariat, Gaza, 26/9/2010, <http://www.pmo.gov.ps>

¹⁵⁰ *Alghad*, 16/4/2010.

¹⁵¹ *The Jerusalem Post* newspaper, 13/9/2010, <http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Diskin-Expect-more-terrorism-with-progress-in-talks-187869>

¹⁵² State of Israel, Measures Taken by Israel in Support of Developing the Palestinian Economy and Socio-Economic Structure, Report of the Government of Israel to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC), Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 13/4/2011, <http://mfa.gov.il/mfa/Pages/default.aspx>

security operations by the PASF and Israel reduced Palestinian attacks against Israelis in WB and East Jerusalem to “their lowest numbers since 2000.”¹⁵³

A report issued by the Information and Decision Support Center in the Palestinian Ministry of Planning in GS accused the Authority in Ramallah of carrying out more than 3,000 “abductions” on political grounds in 2010, adding that about 1,404 cases of detention were of released prisoners.¹⁵⁴

There was an increase in political summons and arrests of resistance activists in 2011, and continued violations of public and private freedoms in WB, including employment discrimination based on political and factional affiliation, and the prohibition of mass and factional gatherings and marches with the use of force, in line with the security commitments of the Oslo Accords. During an interview with the official Israeli Hebrew-language radio Reshet Bet on 14/3/2011, ‘Abbas said that “he will not allow a third *Intifadah* or security chaos in the Palestinian territories as long as he is the president of the PA.”¹⁵⁵ He also stressed this point during a meeting with a number of Israeli writers and intellectuals in Ramallah on the existence of “good coordination” in what he called the prevention of “terrorism” and the preservation of peace.¹⁵⁶

‘Azzam al-Ahmad, member of Fatah Central Committee, said that “security coordination takes place in accordance with a signed agreement between us and the Israelis. They are doing their duty, and so are we.” He added that the resistance was not a specific concept among Palestinians, and they have unanimously agreed that this was not the time for it. He stressed that there was only the resistance that is led by Fatah and the PLO factions, which is a peaceful, diplomatic and popular and can tackle the issue of settlements.¹⁵⁷

Amos Gilad, head of the political and security department at the Israeli Ministry of Defense, also stressed the importance of Palestinian security coordination and security forces in providing security to Israel. He said that security coordination with the PA, especially the various Palestinian intelligence

¹⁵³ Nathan Thrall, *op. cit.*

¹⁵⁴ Palestinian National Authority, Ministry of Planning, 27/2/2011, <http://www.mop.ps/ar/arabic/?action=detail&id=66>

¹⁵⁵ Tuesday’s Daily Summary 3/15/2011, site of Jerusalem Media and Communications Centre (JMCC), 15/3/2011, <http://www.jmcc.org/dailiesdetails.aspx?id=6885>

¹⁵⁶ *Haaretz*, 21/10/2011.

¹⁵⁷ Quds Press International News Agency, London, 28/9/2011, <http://www.qudspress.com/?p=117110>



forces, in addition to ‘Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad renouncing violence against Israel, have brought safety. He added that the PA was fighting Hamas and other organizations, because they are fully aware that certain Palestinian organizations could dismantle the PA.¹⁵⁸

Chief of the Civil Administration in the WB, Moti Almoz, stressed the need for continued security coordination as a vital interest to both parties, as it was the only way to rein in resistance in WB.¹⁵⁹ In the same context, he noted that amongst the achievements of the security coordination in late August and early September 2011 was the discovery by the Israeli security forces of some pro-Hamas resistance cells in the WB that were planning to launch resistance operations inside Israel.¹⁶⁰

Moreover, Major General Nitzan Alon, General Officer Commanding (GOC) Central Command in the Israeli army, revealed on 11/3/2012 that, since 2009, the PASF in WB had arrested 2,900 members of the Palestinian resistance. He said that Israel was satisfied with the PASF operations against the “terrorist cells,” adding that they had thwarted a “terrorist” plot in Qalqilya to abduct an Israeli citizen in February 2012.¹⁶¹

According to Major General Avi Mizrahi, GOC Central Command in the Israeli army, the PASF were aware that their interests lay in the continuation of security coordination. He stressed that he did not expect an armed *Intifadah*, because the PASF would not allow it, especially since they had succeeded in damaging the structure of Hamas.¹⁶²

According to Israeli Channel 10, the number of arrests carried out by PASF in WB during 2007–2011 were much higher than those carried out by the Israeli army during the same period. PASF arrested 13,721 Palestinians from Hamas, while the Israelis carried out 9,756 arrests in the same period.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 17/9/2011.

¹⁵⁹ PIC, 29/9/2011, <http://www.palestine-info.info/ar/default.aspx?xyz=U6Qq7k%2bcOd87MDI46m9rUxJEpMO%2bi1s7ieS6T8VOtj%2fgLN71p1Z%2b4S93RUYwzBOSzcc9t1SNxcNDvtAOun05aPfKpKhO9IIJs6DF3mOPhmiSy80ZIr0mzEpgYKeQiE3cyvZiq%2buuuY%3d>

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ *The Jerusalem Post*, 11/3/2012.

¹⁶² PIC, 16/7/2011, <http://www.palestine-info.info/ar/default.aspx?xyz=U6Qq7k%2bcOd87MDI46m9rUxJEpMO%2bi1s7w2y3ZIOtg3ej3aB6ZQT4aUzad2o7V7ECbqAJc1hbGA9ZSBmz%2fyNIVyoaZIt439zIyF%2fDdxtnmk7qlUmr2EAf9Daqny5NJThdUwxNUXNmM8%3d>

¹⁶³ Hebrew Sources: Authority Security Forces Surpassed Israel in Arresting Hamas Supporters, Felesteen Online, 1/1/2013. (in Arabic)

As for Hamas, its media office issued a report accusing the PASF in the WB of arresting 805 of its cadres and supporters during 2011, including 350 prisoners, who were released from Israeli prisons. In addition, Israel arrested 160 Hamas members immediately after their release from PASF prisons.¹⁶⁴

The GS government played an important role in Shalit's deal, struck between Hamas with Israel. Prime Minister Isma'il Haniyyah stressed that the completion of the deal was a strategic turning point in the struggle with Israel, and had provided a lesson on how the struggle could be ended. He said that Hamas, backed by the government, did not start the Shalit's deal talks based on a factional vision, but rather based on national interests and values.¹⁶⁵ He also pointed out that the deal had achieved 75% of the demands made by the resistance.¹⁶⁶

Although it generally welcomed it, the PA in Ramallah made no secret about its concerns and criticisms of the deal. Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki questioned the timing of the deal, suggesting that Hamas and Israel may have planned it to embarrass the PA.¹⁶⁷ The Minister of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs 'Isa Qaraqe' described the deal as "improvised and factional," adding that it excluded veteran prisoners and leaders who have a symbolic dimension, such as Ahmad Sa'adat and Marwan al-Barghouthi. Qaraqe' blamed Hamas for secretly negotiating the deal alone, without consulting anyone or requesting information relating to prisoners. He considered the non-release of all the female prisoners a mistake and indicative of naiveté.¹⁶⁸ PASF Spokesperson Major General 'Adnan al-Damiri accused Hamas of exploiting the deal to pass partisan agendas and undermine Fatah in WB,¹⁶⁹ while Haniyyah's government condemned the PASF summoning of released prisoners in WB, describing this, along with al-Damiri's accusations, as a "moral collapse."¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁴ *Assabeel*, 16/1/2012.

¹⁶⁵ Haniyyah: The Deal is a Strategic Turning Point in the Struggle, Felesteen Online, 18/10/2011. (in Arabic)

¹⁶⁶ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 14/10/2011.

¹⁶⁷ *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 14/10/2011.

¹⁶⁸ *Asharq Alawsat*, 18/10/2011.

¹⁶⁹ Palestinian Press Agency (Safa), 23/10/2011, <http://www.safa.ps/ara/index.php?action=showdetail&seid=61960>

¹⁷⁰ *Addustour*, 24/10/2011.



Palestinian-Israeli security coordination continued in 2012, prompting Shabak Chief Yoram Cohen, to pay tribute to ‘Abbas, describing him as “the Palestinian figure who is most committed to bilateral agreements with Israel.” *Maariv* quoted Cohen saying that ‘Abbas controls the PASF in WB, which cooperate with us on the security and political level in order to protect the Jewish people in Israel.¹⁷¹ Chief of General Staff of the Israeli army Lieutenant General Benny Gantz also pointed out that the PASF led the Israeli army to act against “terrorism.”¹⁷²

According to Hamas, 813 of its supporters were arrested in WB in 2012, including 382 released prisoners.¹⁷³ Hamas added that, in the same year, the PASF returned 28 Israelis who entered the areas under its security and civilian control. Moreover, Hamas mentioned that of those released by the PASF, Israel arrested 121 Hamas members.¹⁷⁴ The former GIS official Fahmi Shabana said that 25% of prisoners were detained due to PA officials known for their official and personal security coordination with Israel.¹⁷⁵

In a statement released on 18/6/2013, the Committee for the Families of Political Prisoners and Detainees in WB stated that more than 15 thousand Palestinians had been detained and summoned in WB since 2007.¹⁷⁶

Fourth: The PA’s Policies in Ramallah Towards the Peaceful Popular Resistance

The popular resistance option adopted by Salam Fayyad was not a novelty for the Palestinian people, and it would be wrong to restrict the struggle of the Palestinian people to this option if it has other options. In 1886, Palestinian peasants resisted the Zionist project through the expulsion of the Jews from the village of *al-Khdeira* (Petah Tikva) from which they were forcefully evacuated after it was purchased by Jewish settlers. Moreover, the Nabi Musa Uprising is

¹⁷¹ Site of Akka For Israeli Affairs, 4/1/2013, <http://www.akka.ps/ar/?event=showdetail&seid=17929>

¹⁷² Sama, 18/12/2012, <http://www.samanews.com/index.php?act=Show&id=145651>

¹⁷³ Quds Press, 4/1/2013, <http://www.qudspress.com/?p=135730>

¹⁷⁴ Shabak Praises ‘Abbas for His Contribution in the Protection of Israelis, Felesteen Online, 4/1/2013.

¹⁷⁵ Felesteen Online, 30/7/2012, <http://www.felesteen.ps/details/38142/.htm>

¹⁷⁶ *Assabeel*, 19/6/2013.

considered the first popular *Inifadah* in Palestine, its first spark having been ignited in Jerusalem on 4/4/1920.¹⁷⁷

Among the noteworthy examples of resistance by Palestinians is the *Inifadah* of December 1987, which included all sectors, movements and age groups of the Palestinian people, and which lasted until the formation of the PA in May 1994. After that, it lost a lot of its impetus and daily popular public participation.¹⁷⁸

The outbreak of the *al-Aqsa Inifadah* in September 2000 had a profound impact on Palestinian history, as it dealt a severe blow to the peace process. It was characterized by broad popular participation in all parts of occupied Palestine by all Palestinian movements. The Palestinian people proved to be resilient in the face of repression throughout the *Inifadah*.¹⁷⁹

The popular resistance option has shown signs of regaining some of its theoretical momentum in recent years, in light of the thwarted armed resistance in WB and the state of relative calm in GS. The fact, which made popular resistance a matter of consensual solution at this sensitive stage in the Palestinian history.¹⁸⁰

The Palestinian government in WB supported peaceful popular resistance and called for its activation, after the stalled negotiations due to hardline Israeli policies adopted by the Israeli government headed by Benjamin Netanyahu. President Mahmud ‘Abbas remained supportive of the idea, based on the following considerations:¹⁸¹

1. Exerting pressure on Israel through the re-activation of the popular engagement is a nuisance for Israel’s policies and plans.
2. Covering the failure of negotiations by suggesting only those resistance options, which would ultimately be limited to peaceful popular resistance.
3. Attracting international attention to mitigate Israeli intransigence and settle the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

¹⁷⁷ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, *Dirasat Manhajiyyah fi al-Qadiyyah al-Filastiniyyah*, pp. 268–330.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ Al Zaytouna Centre for studies and Consultations, Palestinian Popular Resistance: The Scenarios and Challenges, Strategic Assessment series (43), 26/3/2012, <http://eng.alzaytouna.net/2012/04/09/strategic-assessment-43-palestinian-popular-resistance-the-scenarios-and-challenges/> (in Arabic)

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*



‘Abbas stressed his support for peaceful popular resistance, saying that popular resistance in Bil‘in and Ni‘lin formed a model of heroism and sacrifice all over the world, and that this kind of struggle was recorded in history, as it is real and legitimate.¹⁸² Moreover, ‘Abbas called for popular resistance to provide him cover to request recognition from the UN for an independent Palestinian state.¹⁸³ He said that Palestinians have tried armed resistance and it turned out to be futile, or at least it had been in the past. They started the armed struggle, but the general Arab, international, and domestic circumstances imposed the adoption of peaceful popular resistance, and this was a common position between the PA and Hamas.¹⁸⁴

Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, also encouraged peaceful popular resistance, in line with the government’s 2009 program to declare a Palestinian state in 2011. Furthermore, Fayyad said that the project was moving forward along three tracks: the first is the PLO’s political effort and the government’s institution building. The second was the promotion of peaceful popular resistance to end the occupation, while the third was establishing a Palestinian state with its capital in East Jerusalem, on the 1967 borders.¹⁸⁵

The opening of the Fifth Conference of the Peaceful Popular Resistance took place in Bil‘in in Ramallah, in the presence of the UN Secretary General Representative Robert Serry, and Arab and foreign ambassadors and consuls. Fayyad explained to the attendees that “the National Project depends on three major principles, the first is the peaceful popular resistance, the second is the national efforts and the third the political efforts of the PA to establish the state on the WB, GS and east Jerusalem as its capital.”¹⁸⁶

During the Bil‘in ceremony celebrating the Israeli authorities’ modification of the Separation Wall that confiscates about 2,300 donums of village land, Fayyad said that popular resistance would yield slow but guaranteed results, with the

¹⁸² Wafa, 19/10/2010, <http://www.wafa.ps/arabic/index.php?action=detail&id=88405>

¹⁸³ Aljazeera.net, 28/7/2011, <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/pages/8a75f2e0-d905-439e-b631-06abbf08b4bb>

¹⁸⁴ ‘Arafat was Assassinated and There is no Authority in Fact, ‘Abbas: I Will Not Nominate Myself, and Armed Resistance Did Not “Benefit,” Felesteen Online, 26/1/2013.

¹⁸⁵ *Al-Hayat*, 31/8/2010.

¹⁸⁶ *Al-Hayat al-Jadida*, 22/4/2010; and site of Xinhua News Agency, 22/4/2010, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2010-04/22/c_13261762.htm

support of the whole world. He believed that the modification of the wall represented a definite start to the collapse of the occupation.¹⁸⁷

While Fayyad's government supported peaceful popular resistance, it fought all other forms of resistance, with Fayyad condemning the resistance operation that killed an Israeli police officer south of Hebron. He warned against "the risk of being drawn into the cycle of violence, which experience has shown that it harmed the national interests, and served the Israeli settlement project." He called for the protection of the path of peaceful popular resistance against the settlements and Israeli practices, which was—in addition to engaging in the process of building state institutions—the basic lever to support the political struggle led by the PLO.¹⁸⁸

Fayyad participated in the Palestinian olive harvest in 2010, focusing on the villages of Iraq Burin, south of Nablus, and Deir al-Ghusun north of Tulkarem, two of the villages that are constantly exposed to attacks by settlers. He said that the olive tree symbolizes the Palestinian people's attachment to their land, and that the smallest olive tree would remain deeper rooted than any settlement or wall.¹⁸⁹

The PA also called for a boycott of Israeli settlement products, and on 14/2/2010 published a blacklist of more than 200 products from the Israeli settlements.¹⁹⁰ Fayyad himself participated in the distribution of leaflets urging Palestinians to boycott the products of settlements, saying that the products undermined the Palestinian economy.¹⁹¹

Fifth: Managing the Issue of the Prisoners and Detainees in Israeli Jails

On 9/1/2005, in his electoral program for PA presidency, Mahmud 'Abbas announced, "The release of prisoners from the prisons of the Israeli occupation forces is at the top of our national agenda." Adding that it "is a prerequisite for the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace. We will continue demanding

¹⁸⁷ Aljazeera.net, 25/6/2011, <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/pages/2d06d28f-c0d1-40cc-8157-348b7f215e0d>

¹⁸⁸ *Asharq Alawsat*, 16/6/2010.

¹⁸⁹ *Al-Hayat al-Jadida*, 10/10/2010.

¹⁹⁰ *Al-Bayan* newspaper, 15/2/2010.

¹⁹¹ Reuters, 27/5/2010, <http://ara.reuters.com/article/topNews/idARACAE64Q11E20100527?sp=true> (in Arabic)



their release in order to create the appropriate conditions for the resumption of the peace process.”¹⁹²

The issue of prisoners was linked to the peace process since its inception at the Madrid Conference in 1991. Israel worked on classifying prisoners into categories and grades, distinguishing between one detainee and another, while there was a complete absence of any Palestinian strategy for dealing with the file of prisoners. Palestinian negotiators were caught up in the divisions and criteria set and determined by Israel, despite a Palestinian declaration—during Cairo meetings in November 1993 to discuss the withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho—that no agreement would be signed with Israel if it did not present guarantees, written pledges, and a timetable for the full release of Palestinian prisoners. But what happened was the opposite: accords and agreements were signed without the release of prisoners, or the occurrence of a real release process led by the Palestinian side.¹⁹³

There were around 12,500 Palestinian prisoners when the Oslo Accords were signed. The Israeli governments dealt with the issue of the release of prisoners on the premise of the so-called “goodwill gestures” and according to Israel’s internal standards. Moreover, there were around 10,500 Palestinian prisoners when the Cairo Agreement (Gaza–Jericho) was signed on 4/5/1994. Article 20 of the agreement, titled “Confidence Building Measures,” stipulated that “upon the signing of this Agreement, Israel will release, or turn over, to the Palestinian Authority within a period of 5 weeks, about 5,000 Palestinian detainees and prisoners, residents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.” Israel released 4,450 prisoners and did not comply with the agreed number, forcing the released prisoners to sign a document pledging to refrain from “all acts of terrorism and violence.”¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² President Abbas’ Electoral Program for the 2005 Presidential Elections, site of Mahmoud Abbas, <http://president.ps/eng/general.aspx?id=118> (in Arabic)

¹⁹³ Fuad al-Khuffash, “Documented Historical Study: Oslo Releases are Real Setbacks to the Prisoners and Their Families,” site of Ahrar Center for Prisoners Studies and Human Rights, 14/9/2012.

¹⁹⁴ Ma’mun Kiwan, *The Palestinian Prisoner Movement...Continued Struggle for Freedom, Al-Khaleej*, 10/5/2005 (in Arabic); and Agreement on Gaza Strip and Jericho Area, Article 20 “Confidence Building Measures,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 4/5/1994, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/agreement%20on%20gaza%20strip%20and%20jericho%20area.aspx>

There were about six thousand Palestinian prisoners when the Taba Agreement (Oslo Accords 2) was signed in Washington on 28/9/1995. Article 16 of Oslo Accords 2 entitled “Confidence Building Measures” stipulated in section one that “Israel will release or turn over to the Palestinian side, Palestinian detainees and prisoners, residents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip” in three stages:¹⁹⁵

First stage: this would “take place on the signing of this Agreement.” Israel was scheduled to release 1,500 prisoners, including all female Palestinian prisoners. But Israel released only 882 prisoners, including 375 civilian prisoners who were arrested on the basis of criminal backgrounds. Only one female prisoner was released, as the others refused to leave prison because of the reservations placed by Israel on certain female prisoners.

Second stage: this would “take place prior to the date of the elections,” i.e., PLC elections in 1996. Israel was scheduled to release 1,200 prisoners, but it released 782 prisoners on 10/1/1996 and 260 prisoners on 11/1/1996.

Third stage: would take place during the final status negotiations.

The Wye River Memorandum signed on 23/10/1998 in Washington did not include any written text on the release of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails. It only dealt with an Israeli pledge with a US guarantee to work for the release of 750 Palestinian prisoners in three groups. On 20/11/1996, Israel released 250 prisoners, including 94 political detainees and 156 criminal detainees.¹⁹⁶

There were clear texts in the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum, which was signed on 4/9/1999, concerning the issue of the release of prisoners. It stipulated, “The Government of Israel shall release Palestinian and other prisoners who committed their offences” prior to 13/9/1993, and who were arrested prior to 4/9/1994, i.e., before the Declaration of Principles and the establishment of the PA, in three stages. Israel released the first group of 199 prisoners on 9/9/1999, and then released a second group of 151 prisoners on 15/10/1999, including those

¹⁹⁵ Abdul Nasser Ferwana, “Comprehensive Study of the Numbers and Conditions of the Prisoners in the Israeli Prisons,” al-Quds Information Report No. 5, 16/4/2007, site of Al-Quds International Institution, <http://www.alquds-online.org/index.php?s=15&ss=22&id=224> (in Arabic); and The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 28/9/1995, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/the%20israeli-palestinian%20interim%20agreement.aspx>

¹⁹⁶ Ma'mun Kiwan, *op. cit.*



with lifetime and long-term sentences, and Arab prisoners.¹⁹⁷ However, Israel did not comply with other items such as agreeing on the names or releasing all of those arrested prior to the Declaration of Principles and the establishment of the PA.

The prisoners' release was eventually halted because of the outbreak of *al-Aqsa Intifadah*, during which their number increased to more than 11 thousand. In implementation of the Roadmap obligations, the prisoners' release was resumed with the appointment of Mahmud 'Abbas as the first Palestinian Prime Minister. Israel released 337 whose prison sentence were nearing completion on 6/8/2003. It also released 500 Palestinian prisoners on 21/2/2005; 398 on 2/5/2005; 256 on 20/7/2007; and then 91 on 24/9/2007 as a gesture of "goodwill" for the holy month of Ramadan.¹⁹⁸

After vigorous Palestinian claims, Israel agreed to release 441 Palestinian prisoners on 3/12/2007, following the Annapolis Conference in November 2007. Great pressure was exerted on the PA to prioritize prisoners and only go to the conference after obtaining guarantees for the release of a large group of prisoners, especially those with long sentences. However, this did not happen, as more than half of the released prisoners were those who were going to be released in 2008, for a total of 243 Palestinian prisoners. The list did not include any female or male prisoner from among the earlier prisoners.¹⁹⁹

On 14/8/2013, Israel released 26 Palestinian prisoners²⁰⁰ out of 104 prisoners arrested before the implementation of the Oslo Accords. They were being released in four batches for "strategic considerations," as Prime Minister Netanyahu put it. The release was one of the terms for the resumption of US-sponsored Palestinian-Israeli negotiations.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ Abdul Nasser Ferwana, op. cit.; and 34 The Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum-Text and Speeches at the Signing Ceremony, 4 September 1999, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Historical Documents, vol. 18: 1999–2001, <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/MFADocuments/Yearbook13/Pages/34%20The%20Sharm%20el-Sheikh%20Memorandum-%20text%20and%20speech.aspx>

¹⁹⁸ Fuad al-Khuffash, op. cit.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Celebrations in Gaza, West Bank for freed Palestinian prisoners, site of The Times of Israel, 14/8/2013, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/abbas-welcomes-freed-palestinian-prisoners-in-ramallah/>

²⁰¹ Arabs 48, 29/10/2013, <http://www.arabs48.com/?mod=articles&ID=103286>

On 30/10/2013, President ‘Abbas stressed during his meeting with the second batch of released 26 prisoners that there would be no agreement as long as there remained one prisoner behind bars.²⁰² Abdul Nasser Ferwana, head of the Census Department of the Ministry of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs, stated that after the release of the third batch of 26 prisoners on 30/12/2013, the list of “earlier prisoners” would become 30 Palestinian prisoners. He pointed out that the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum signed on 4/9/1999, had included a clear provision on the release of all of the prisoners in a timely manner.²⁰³

Minister of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs ‘Isa Qaraqe‘ said that the release date of the fourth batch of the earlier prisoners would be on schedule in March 2014.²⁰⁴ However, Israel has to date still not released those prisoners. The Israeli Justice Minister responsible for the negotiations file, Tzipi Livni, announced on 3/4/2014 that Israel would not release the fourth batch of 26 prisoners due to “Palestinians’ unilateral application to UN conventions and treaties.”²⁰⁵

Thus, 9,084 prisoners were released within the framework of negotiation deals between the PA and the Israeli side, which Israel dubbed “goodwill gestures,” including 581 criminal prisoners and 8,503 security prisoners. Unlike other batches, the last batches of released prisoners were the only ones that included Palestinians who killed Israelis.²⁰⁶

Summary

Since the signing of Oslo Accords, the PA has worked on the implementation of all the arrangements with Israel regarding the security issue, including the prevention of resistance. It has vowed to impose security, and to take all necessary measures to prevent attacks and incitement.

The Israeli side skillfully used this card to push the PA to repress resistance factions. Whereas Palestinian resistance factions considered themselves

²⁰² Wafa, 30/10/2013, <http://www.wafa.ps/arabic/index.php?action=detail&id=162459>

²⁰³ *Al-Hayat al-Jadida*, 31/12/2013.

²⁰⁴ *Al-Mustaqbal*, 5/1/2014.

²⁰⁵ *The Jerusalem Post*, 3/4/2014, <http://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Israel-cancels-fourth-prisoner-release-347471>

²⁰⁶ Al-Khuffash: 8,451 prisoners have been released since the signing of the Oslo Accords, Ahrar Center for Prisoners Studies and Human Rights, 13/9/2013.



unconcerned by the Oslo Accords and continued their operations against Israel, arguing that the Oslo Accords did not meet the minimum requirements of the Palestinian national project. Consequently, the PA considered this a challenge to its authority and a threat to the envisioned Palestinian state. Thus, it promised to fight those “enemies of peace,” who took “violence” as a means for opposition. The PA even pursued its agenda through cooperation with Israel. However, it refused to allow a civil war to be the price for imposing its authority, and the resistance factions considered the Palestinian blood sacred and a red line.

Throughout the early years of the PA, the resistance factions were not able to impose their program, but were able to significantly influence Palestinian political decisions and disable the peace process. They were able to take the reins after the outbreak of *al-Aqsa Intifadah* at the end of 2000. Security coordination decreased, and the resistance factions participated in the *Intifadah* with al-Aqsa Brigades, the armed wing of Fatah movement. Yasir ‘Arafat was accused of supporting the *Intifadah*, and was besieged by the Israeli army, and was ultimately killed because of those positions.

The declaration of the Roadmap; the assassination of ‘Arafat; the election of ‘Abbas as PA chairman; the victory of Hamas in the elections; the appointment of Dayton to be in charge of the security file; and the Hamas takeover of GS, all represented important junctures in the escalation of security coordination.

Termination of security coordination was at the top of Hamas’s priorities during rounds of national dialogue, considering it a condition for the success of the dialogue. However, the response of the PA and Fatah was always that the security coordination process came under the obligations of the peace agreements. These disagreements continue at the time of writing, as the resistance factions see it as targeting their project, while the PA consider it to be an irreversible commitment.

As an alternative to the armed resistance option, the PA put forward the option of peaceful popular resistance, which started to gain momentum in recent years. The resistance in WB was thwarted because of PA’s measures, security coordination, in addition to the lull in GS and the stalled peace process. This turned the popular resistance into a common denominator and the consensual solution available to the Palestinian factions.

The issue of prisoners, which is an important part in the history of the Palestinian resistance, has been linked to the peace process since its inception. However, the lack of a Palestinian strategy in dealing with this issue made the Palestinian negotiator subject to the divisions and criteria set by Israel, despite the Palestinian declaration that no agreement would be signed with Israel if it did not present a timetable for the comprehensive release of Palestinian prisoners. However, the opposite happened, and the agreements were signed without the release of most of the prisoners. There even remain prisoners from before the Oslo Accords who are still in Israeli prisons.

The key questions are: How long will the armed resistance remain futile in the PA's eyes, without being used as a lever to obtain Israeli concessions, or at least to ensure Israel's implementation of its obligations? Must the door of the armed resistance be closed and all those involved be criminalized? This is likely if the PA insists on continuing to tread the path of peaceful negotiations, which has so far only brought it and the Palestinian people further settlement building and Judaization, and which the PA has so far been keen to resume again and again without guarantees, still not seeing them as futile negotiations.



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