



Academic Paper

# Collaborator Militias in Gaza Strip and Their Role in Israel's Use of Rogue Actors



Ibrahim 'Abdul Karim

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# Collaborator Militias in Gaza Strip and Their Role in Israel’s Use of Rogue Actors

## Abstract

This documentary-analytical study investigates a critical issue that has surfaced throughout the Palestinian-Israeli conflict: the involvement of rogue groups in various forms of “collaboration” with the enemy, both prior to and following the establishment of Israel, and continuing into the present. The study first examines the phenomenon of “collaborators” in Palestine who engaged with Zionist actors and later with Israel, alongside cases of “coordination” with Israel in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (GS), as well as attempts to claim legitimate Palestinian representation.

Subsequently, the study broadens its focus to address the question of the GS militias, which have come to constitute a major challenge to the national resistance project. It outlines the key formations of these militias, their identities, sources of support, and assigned functions. Furthermore, it analyzes selected confrontations with these groups, offers assessments of their relationship with the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah, and reviews resistance campaigns aimed at dismantling them, including the public repudiation of these militias by local clans. The study concludes with forward-looking assessments and projections regarding their prospective evolution.

This study proceeds from the premise that the deployment of rogue groups constitutes one dimension of the broader confrontation with the Zionist project, and that raising awareness of their dangers, and mobilizing efforts to counter them, is essential for safeguarding the Palestinian national liberation project.

## Keywords

Collaborators with Zionism	Village Leagues	Hebron Emirate
	Gaza Strip Militias	



# Collaborator Militias in Gaza Strip and Their Role in Israel's Use of Rogue Actors

Ibrahim 'Abdul Karim<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

Since the earliest stages of its political formation, Israel has consistently pursued efforts to deprive the Palestinian people of national legitimacy by gradually eroding their original identity through a process of “politicide.” To this end, it has relied on a variety of instruments and methods to infiltrate Palestinian society and distort its collective will. Central to this strategy has been the recruitment of rogue groups operating outside the national consensus, tasked with carrying out destabilizing activities that undermine the Palestinian liberation project. This pattern reflects a long-standing Zionist doctrine deeply embedded in Israel's broader conflict-management strategy, one that is fundamentally oriented toward fragmenting the Palestinians and obstructing any trajectory toward unity.

This trajectory can be traced from the *Yishuv* period, through the establishment of the state, followed by Israel's occupation of the West Bank (WB) and Gaza Strip (GS), to the present. Examination of its key developments shows a sustained Zionist/ Israeli strategy of selecting specific groups to carry out assigned tasks within a calculated plan aimed at removing obstacles to the Zionist project. The persistence or expansion of these obstacles could otherwise generate a conflict dynamic marked by an independent Palestinian trajectory that would threaten the project's viability and future.

This documentary-analytical study examines the phenomenon linked to this strategic plan, tracing efforts to construct representative frameworks for Palestinians. It begins with the “emerging state” period, when Zionists gained experience in recruiting “collaborators,” and continues through the post-establishment years under military rule over Palestinians who remained in the homeland (1948–1966). The study then addresses similar attempts following the occupation of the WB and GS, with particular attention to contemporary Israeli efforts to foster alternative leaderships and militias that challenge existing Palestinian Authority (PA) structures, especially those in GS whose military, political and media roles have drawn heightened attention in recent months.

The study of rogue groups in the Palestinian arena is justified by their existence and recent expansion, particularly in the GS, under Israel's patronage and support. Their

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<sup>1</sup> A Palestinian researcher based in Syria, specialized in Israeli affairs, the Palestine issue and the Arab-Zionist conflict. Since 1980, he has been a full-time researcher at Al-Ard Institute For Palestine Studies in Damascus, heading the editorial department from 1994 to 2021. He has lectured in academic and research institutions across Syria and internationally. A member of The Arab Writers Union in Syria: Research and Studies Association since 1995 and the Palestinian Writers Union since 1980. He has published 25 books and hundreds of research papers and studies, among them Academic Papers at Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations.



presence can no longer be ignored, despite the bitterness and psychological strain it causes both individually and collectively, among those deeply rooted in the resistance and opposed in thought, feeling, and action to any forces collaborating with Israel. These groups stand out as a dark stain on an otherwise pristine record of a people who have embedded awareness and resistance into their identity throughout their national struggle.

Against this backdrop, studying this phenomenon may attract criticism, as it could challenge the carefully preserved memory of the Palestinian people, their liberation struggle, and just cause. Nonetheless, it must be addressed courageously, as it concerns a key dimension of the conflict with Israel; both in raising awareness of its policies and in implementing precautionary and punitive measures against those executing its plans. Such efforts protect our national journey and prevent its diversion toward objectives set by Israel, especially in the current context, where discussions are ongoing regarding the “day after” in the GS. In this context, Israel and the US administration are exploring alternative or parallel forces hostile to the resistance and preparing them for integration into present and future arrangements in the GS.

### **First: “Shadow Army” and “Righteous Arabs”.. in the Service of Zionism and Israel**

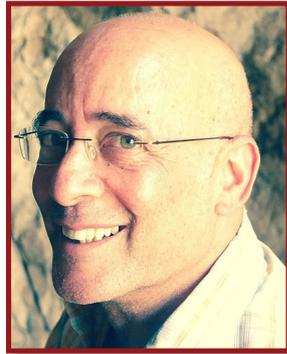
Scholars of modern Arab history in Palestine agree that during the period of building the Zionist settlement project, the Zionists deliberately recruited “collaborating” groups and assigned them political, social and intelligence-related tasks aimed at dividing the Palestinian ranks and undermining the resistance to the Zionist project, which was being led by national actors and leaders.

In addition to what has been published in Arabic sources on this subject, it is useful for research purposes to examine Zionist narratives concerning these groups. Among the most prominent is a book by the Israeli researcher and orientalist Hillel Cohen,<sup>2</sup> which earned him a doctorate under the supervision of the orientalist Moshe Maoz and was published in 2004. The Hebrew book is titled *Army of Shadows: Palestinian Collaborators with Zionism 1917–1948... Intelligence, Policy, Settlement, Assassinations*—364 pages.

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<sup>2</sup> Hillel Cohen is an Israeli researcher and lecturer at the Truman Institute of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and an associate professor in the Department of Islam and Middle East Studies at the same university, specializing in Palestinian affairs. Since 2016, he has served as the director of the Cherrick Center (named after a Zionist thinker) for the Study of Zionism at the Hebrew University. Born in 1961 to a mixed Mizrahi and Ashkenazi family, Cohen learned Arabic through close interaction with Arabs in villages around Jerusalem and in the Jalazun refugee camp (RC), in Hillel Cohen, site of Wikipedia, [https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%94%D7%9C%D7%9C\\_%D7%9B%D7%94%D7%9F](https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%94%D7%9C%D7%9C_%D7%9B%D7%94%D7%9F) (in Hebrew)





**Hillel Cohen**



**Army of Shadows**

The contents of the book (as relevant to this paper) can be briefly summarized, beginning with the description on its back cover, which reads (literally translated):

Thousands of Palestinians, and still others today, have collaborated with the Zionist movement since the early twentieth century: land speculators and secret agents, arms dealers and hired killers, senior politicians and villagers, ordinary citizens, labor leaders and rank-and-file fighters, idealists and con artists alike. They were, in effect, the silver platter upon which the Jewish state was established. Their activities had a decisive impact on Israel's intelligence and military capabilities, on the settlement map, and on the borders of the state, as well as on Palestinian society and its functional capacity. The Palestinian national movement waged a relentless campaign against all who opposed its course, approximately one thousand "traitors" were killed during the Mandate period. Its extreme response alienated wide segments of society, undermined Palestinian social cohesion, and, in effect, served the objectives of the collaborators. Consequently, Palestinians entered the decisive war of 1948 divided, fragmented, and deprived of the will to fight, resulting in the total defeat of the Nakbah. Based on thousands of testimonies and documents, many of which were previously classified, Shadow Army presents a broad gallery of collaborators and facilitators, examining their motives, methods and operations from 1917 to 1948. Its scope extends beyond intelligence operatives to all those interested in the history of the country and Israel's relations with its neighbors, providing insights into the underground processes that have shaped the trajectory of the conflict up to the present day.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Hillel Cohen, *Shadow Army: Palestinian Collaborators in Service of Zionism, 1917–1948—Intelligence, Policy, Settlement, Assassinations*, (Jerusalem: Ivrit Publishing, 2004), [https://www.nli.org.il/he/books/NNL\\_ALEPH990023935010205171/NLI](https://www.nli.org.il/he/books/NNL_ALEPH990023935010205171/NLI) (in Hebrew)

Regarding the nature of the case under study and its place within Israeli approaches toward Arabs, a report published upon the book's release stated: "Palestinian collaborators constitute a central element in Israel's security conception and an essential tool for its intelligence community. They assist in assassinations, arrests, the provision of confidential information, land acquisition, and political manipulation. Dr. Hillel Cohen's new book examines the roots of this phenomenon and its implications for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. According to the author, history would have looked markedly different had it not been for the thousands of Palestinians who collaborated with the Zionist movement from the early twentieth century." It is not coincidental that "Palestinian speakers have long argued that such collaboration was the principal reason for Palestinian weakness in their struggle for national liberation. The Palestinian political system itself would have been different without the collaborators"... "all those interested in the history of Palestine and Israel's relations with its neighbors will gain insight into the underground processes that shaped the trajectory of the conflict up to the present day."<sup>4</sup>

With the establishment of the state, Israeli policy continued to prioritize the identification and cultivation of Arab leaders willing to "collaborate" with the military administration and its successors. The *Nakbah* of 1948 effectively "severed the Palestinian minority's already weak ties to its political leadership," leaving only "a network of traditional feudal villages chiefs." "Israel used the military government to isolate these leaders from each other, and soon Israel had created a patrimonial system of punishments and rewards to ensure allegiance, or at the very least compliance."<sup>5</sup>

Once again, the phenomenon of "collaborators" has attracted significant scholarly attention and was extensively examined in a major and influential book by Hillel Cohen, published in 2006, in Hebrew, titled *Good Arabs: Israeli Intelligence and the Arabs in Israel*. The Hebrew term *tovim* in the title can be interpreted as "good" or "virtuous." Cohen draws upon multiple Israeli archives, including the State of Israel Archives, the Israel Defense Forces Archives, security agency archives, the Haganah Historical Archive, and the Central Zionist Archive. The seven chapters of the book and their subdivisions illuminate the nature of this phenomenon, and are titled as follows: The Beginning of a Remarkable Friendship, The Emergence of the Collaborator/ Informer Class; Communists versus the Authority and Collaborators versus the Communists; Border Invaders, Infiltrators, Smugglers and Spies; Scorched Earth: The Struggle over Land; Searing the Consciousness: Symbols, Missteps and Education; The Blood Pact or Alliance: Arab Soldiers in the Jewish State; and The Big Brother, the District Committees and Intimate Hegemony.<sup>6</sup>



**Hillel Cohen**  
***Good Arabs***

<sup>4</sup> Hadar Farber, The First Research in Israel on Palestinian Collaborators, site of News1, 8/6/2004, <https://www.news1.co.il/Archive/001-D-47686-00.html> (in Hebrew)

<sup>5</sup> Muhammad Zeidan (ed.), "Silencing Dissent," Arab Association for Human Rights, October 2002, site of SCRIBD, p. 6, <https://www.scribd.com/doc/36842028/Silencing-Dissent-English>

<sup>6</sup> Hillel Cohen, *Good Arabs: Israeli Intelligence and the Arabs in Israel – Agents and Operatives, Collaborators and Rebels, Objectives and Methods* (Jerusalem: HaCarmel Publishing, 2006). (in Hebrew)



In this book, the author adopts the perspective of the Israeli authorities, who classify “good Arabs” as those who cooperate with their policies. He examines Arab collaborators, particularly the “minor” ones, and their methods of “extorting” the state, noting that some acted in the interest of their families or villages. Military censorship erased the names of these collaborators. Cohen contends that Israel perceived Arabs who became its citizens almost overnight as a “security threat,” prompting efforts to confiscate their property and shape their consciousness. The intelligence apparatus and its agents served as instruments to achieve both security and political objectives, recruiting collaborators beyond Israel’s borders as well as from within Arab leadership circles. These agents facilitated the confiscation of Arab lands, mobilization of votes for the Mapai party (under Ben-Gurion), the process of Israelization, the construction of an “Israeli Arab” identity, and the systematic erasure of the Palestinian narrative from collective memory.<sup>7</sup>

The author indicates that in 1951, a central committee was established, overseeing three regional committees in the Galilee, the Triangle and the Negev. This central committee was headed by the military governor and included representatives from the police, public security, and the Prime Minister’s advisor for Arab affairs. Among the primary responsibilities assigned to these committees were supporting “positive” Arabs and suppressing “negative” ones. These committees were entrusted with extensive authority over the lives of Arabs, becoming the principal instrument for consolidating the privileges enjoyed by the “cooperative” segment of the population. They wielded powers that affected nearly every aspect of Arab life, including determining who could obtain a building permit or have their home demolished, who would be detained, who could pursue vocational education, who would serve as *mukhtar* or tribal sheikh, who would be employed or dismissed, who could receive agricultural land or pasture, who would endure poverty, and who would be arrested for smuggling versus who was permitted to continue it.<sup>8</sup>

Cohen notes that this policy produced a situation in which, while most Arab citizens were constrained by a tightening military regime—with restricted movement and limited means of livelihood—the leading “collaborators” enjoyed broad mobility and privileges that enabled substantial financial gain. They thus became key intermediaries between Arab citizens and the authorities, a role that brought further benefits. Public opinion generally viewed these “collaborators” as aiding the authorities in exchange for personal advantages at the expense of their community. Yet some attempted to balance accommodating the authorities with preserving local respect, believing they were serving both sides. Hence the popular expression, coined by the communists, “the regime’s tails,” which, however, did not apply uniformly to all of them.<sup>9</sup>

Consequently, Cohen argues that Israeli policy ultimately achieved its aims: preventing the spread of a Palestinian national discourse, fostering political disengagement, and inducing Arabs to impose a self-restraining ban on anything that might provoke the Israeli authorities.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

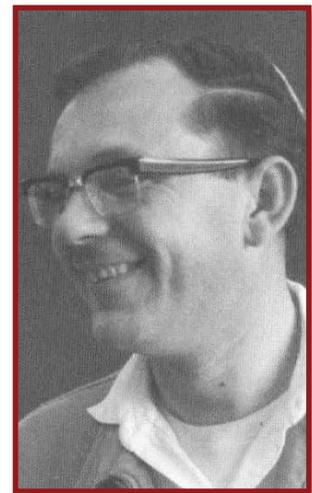
<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.



According to the racist Northern District Commissioner Israel Koenig (ישראל קניג), in a classified memorandum addressed to the government on 30/3/1976 and later exposed by the newspaper *Al HaMishmar*, “The military government...reinforced the dominance of the “notables,” thus integrating itself into an Arab social structure based on extended family clans. The abolition of the military government eroded the authority of these notables and... enabled the younger generation to recognize the power they had acquired.... Moreover, the “rebellion” of the younger generation often forced the older generation to join the ranks of the dissenters, directing their struggle against the state.”<sup>11</sup>



**Israel Koenig**

After the military rule was lifted, Israel’s policy of “taming” Arabs persisted, carried out through its legislative, judicial and governmental institutions, with the Israel Security Agency (*Shabak*), the police, local authorities and groups of “collaborators” playing integrated roles.

However, the national and Islamic-nationalist revival revealed the failures of Israeli efforts to shape popular sentiment and install compliant Arab leaders. By the 1970s and 1980s, new Arab leadership bodies with alternative orientations emerged, including the National Union of Arab University Students, the Committee for the Defense of Arab Lands, the National Committee of Heads Of Arab Local Authorities, and the High Follow-Up Committee for Arab Citizens of Israel.<sup>12</sup>

Within the evolving patterns of political organization, parties and movements emerged across a wide spectrum of orientations; leftist (including mixed communist), nationalist and Islamic. While their platforms and approaches varied, they remained united by overarching national objectives and shared demands. These movements also sought to expose and curtail the phenomenon of Arabs joining Israeli parties, a trend reflected in the outcomes of the last four Knesset elections.

More broadly, the most important lesson drawn from the Israeli experience of fostering “collaborator” leadership among Arabs in the 1948 occupied territories is that the rise of political awareness and a comprehensive national awakening, led by representatives of the Arab community, gave rise to institutions, bodies and initiatives that resisted subservience to the Israeli establishment. These actors carried out popular struggles with strategic flexibility without compromising principles, and with courage tempered by prudence rather than recklessness.

<sup>11</sup> The Koenig Memorandum, site of Matzpen (The Socialist Organization in Israel), <https://matzpen.org/1976-03-01/the-koenig-document/>

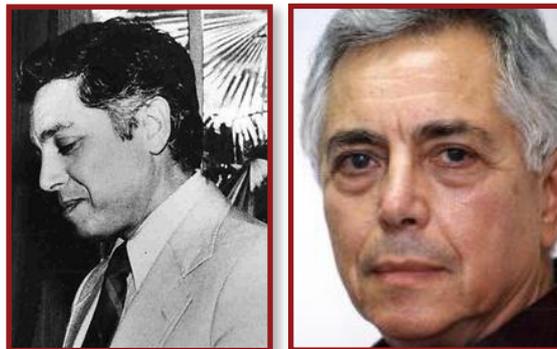
<sup>12</sup> For details: Muhannad Mustafa, “High Follow-Up Committee and the Internal Palestinian Situation”, in “Organizing Palestinians in Israel: The Debate over Rebuilding the High Follow-Up Committee for Arab Citizens,” *Jadal Journal*, no. 15, September 2012, <https://mada-research.org/storage/uploads/2012/10/mohanad-anlaize.pdf>



## Second: The West Bank.. “Village Leagues” and the “Emirate of Hebron”

During the period of Israeli military rule over the 1967 occupied territories, efforts were made to form a subordinate Palestinian representative body in the WB and to co-opt various Palestinian figures into it. These efforts continued after the establishment of the “Civil Administration” under the “Order Concerning the Establishment of a Civil Administration (in Judea and Samaria) (No. 947) of 1981,” issued by the commander of the Israeli forces in the WB, Major General Uri Orr.<sup>13</sup> In effect, the Civil Administration functioned as a façade for ongoing military rule.

Israel’s policy during these two periods enabled the formation of the “Village Leagues,” a Palestinian structure subordinate to Israel and intended to substitute for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The concept originated in 1973 with the establishment of the “Farmers’ League in the Hebron Hills,” which quickly collapsed due to strong public opposition to collaboration with Israel’s military administration. In 1976, Menahem Milson, adviser on Arab affairs to the military administration, professor of Arabic literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and compiler of the New Arabic–Hebrew Dictionary, revived the initiative under the name “Hebron Hills Village League,” later registered as an officially recognized body. This step marked the formal launch of the “Village Leagues” Project, which Israel expanded in the early 1980s to cover all WB villages. It relied on recruiting vulnerable individuals and linking them to officials in the “Civil Administration,” using a mix of coercive, extortive and incentivizing tools, while allowing the leagues to offer “services” intended to attract public support. For example, Israeli authorities often conditioned approval of citizens’ requests, such as exporting surplus goods to the Israeli market, applying for family reunification, obtaining driving licenses, or securing infrastructure services, on the endorsement of the Village Leagues.<sup>14</sup>



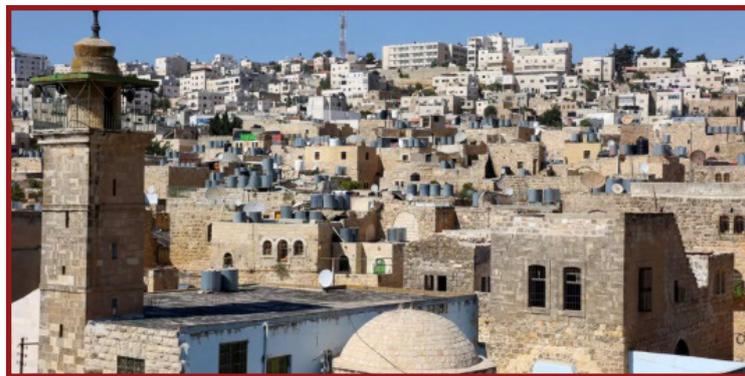
**Menahem Milson**

<sup>13</sup> An Order to Establish a Civil Administration, site of The Palestinian Museum Digital Archive, [https://palarchive.org/index.php/Detail/objects/190359/lang/en\\_US](https://palarchive.org/index.php/Detail/objects/190359/lang/en_US)

<sup>14</sup> Archive of Al-Ard Institute for Palestine Studies in Damascus, paper file classification: Israel and the Palestinians 17/11/10 (Translations of Hebrew newspapers: *Al HaMishmar*, 12/2/1982; *Hotam*, supplement of *Al HaMishmar*, 1/7/1983; *HaOlam HaZeh*, 17/3/1982). For further information, see Yasin Ezzidin, Series of Introductory and Analytical Articles on the “Village Leagues,” site of The Palestine Dialogue Forum, 7/07/2021, <https://paldf.net/f/node/913893>; and Jonathan Kuttub and Raja Shehadeh, *Civilian Administration in the Occupied West Bank: Analysis of Israeli Military Government Order No. 947* (Ramallah: Law in the Service of Man & Al Haq, 1982), [https://www.alhaq.org/cached\\_uploads/download/alhaq\\_files/publications/Civilian\\_Administration\\_in\\_the\\_Occupied\\_West\\_Bank.pdf](https://www.alhaq.org/cached_uploads/download/alhaq_files/publications/Civilian_Administration_in_the_Occupied_West_Bank.pdf)

An examination of the “Village Leagues” experience reveals that, in addition to functioning as operational instruments of Israel’s policy, the authorities deliberately sought to portray them as a Palestinian “collective product.” They also asserted that these bodies constituted the leadership most qualified to represent Palestinians in the “administered areas,” thereby facilitating any future move to involve them in the “autonomy” framework outlined in the Camp David Accords. Nevertheless, the force of Palestinian national sentiment steadily eroded the foundations of the Village Leagues project, ultimately compelling its leadership to suspend its activities in early 1984.

Currently, attention has focused on the reemergence of an old initiative, now with separatist characteristics, through the proposal to establish the so-called “Emirate of Hebron.” *The Wall Street Journal* (WSJ) published an extensive report on 6/7/2025 titled “A New Palestinian Offer for Peace With Israel.” According to the report, the initiative was launched by Sheikh Wadi‘ al-Jaabari (Abu Sanad, 48) and four other leading Hebron sheikhs, later joined by 21 more. The initiative was conveyed in a letter “addressed to Israeli Economy Minister Nir Barkat, a former mayor of Jerusalem, who has brought Mr. Jaabari and other sheikhs to his home and met with them more than a dozen times since February [2025].” They asked him to present it to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, where “their plan is for Hebron to break out of the Palestinian Authority, establish an emirate of its own, and join the Abraham Accords.” The report summarized the message as follows:<sup>15</sup>



**Wadi‘ al-Jaabari**



**Nir Barkat**

<sup>15</sup> Elliot Kaufman, A New Palestinian Offer for Peace With Israel, *The Wall Street Journal* newspaper, 6/7/2025, <https://www.wsj.com/opinion/new-palestinian-offer-peace-israel-hebron-sheikh-emirate-36dd39c3>



- ▶• “The Emirate of Hebron shall recognize the State of Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people, and the State of Israel shall recognize the Emirate of Hebron as the Representative of the Arab residents in the Hebron District,” with direct coordination established between it and the Israeli government.
- ▶• The letter seeks a timetable for negotiations to join the Abraham Accords and “a fair and decent arrangement that would replace the Oslo Accords,” which “have brought upon us the corrupt Palestinian Authority, instead of recognizing the traditional, authentic local leadership.” That would be the clans, the great families that still shape Palestinian society.
- ▶• The establishment of “a joint economic zone on more than 1,000 acres (1 acre equals approx. 4 km<sup>2</sup>) near the security fence between Hebron and Israel. The sheikhs expect it to employ tens of thousands”... “Israel would admit 1,000 workers from Hebron for a trial period, then 5,000 more” and “this number will grow to 50,000 workers or more from Hebron.” “The sheikhs’ letter pledges ‘zero tolerance’ for terrorism by workers, ‘in contrast to the current situation in which the Palestinian Authority pays tributes to the terrorists.’”
- ▶• “The settlers will find much to like in the plan, which breaks from the Oslo Accords’ scheme to divide the land. While the Hebron sheikhs would gain territory, so would the settlers, from the open land in what’s known as Area C,” which falls under Israel’s civil and security control. “These are key details that the letter merely says must be negotiated.”

The report also provided information and statements regarding the Israeli figures associated with the initiative, including:<sup>16</sup>

- ▶• Nir Barkat, who stated, “Nobody in Israel believes in the PA, and you won’t find many Palestinians who do either,” and “Sheikh Jaabari wants peace with Israel and to join the Abraham Accords, with the support of his fellow sheikhs. Who in Israel is going to say no?” He reminded “Israeli officials that the sheikhs have put their lives in peril and operate on a timeline of their own.” He said that Israel must protect them, “The PA is the problem, and they are the solution.”
- ▶• Yossi Dagan, the settler leader for Samaria, said, “he supports and has worked on the plan, and that issues of land can be worked out between people of faith who want peace.” Dagan said that he first met Sheikh Jaabari 13 years ago. “The sheikhs also met Israel Ganz, who leads the settlement council, and with whom Mr. Barkat has worked on potential maps.”

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.





**Yossi Dagan and Jaabari**



**Israel Ganz**



**Mordechai Kedar**

- ▶ The initiative was “the brainchild of Mordechai Kedar, a scholar of Arab culture at Israel’s Bar-Ilan University. Mr. Kedar brought Sheikh Jaabari to Mr. Barkat and watched the partnership bloom.” “For 20 years, he’s been trying to sell the idea of Palestinian emirates, with the West Bank’s seven culturally distinctive cities run individually by their leading clans,” in a manner analogous to the family-based emirates of the Gulf. “Hebron will be the test case for this idea of the emirates,” and it will “lay the groundwork for change in other West Bank cities, perhaps next in Bethlehem, refashioning Israel-Palestinian relations.”

The report also conveyed statements from sheikhs participating in the initiative, most notably Sheikh al-Jaabari, who said: “I plan to cut off the PA. It doesn’t represent the Palestinians. The clans governed their own localities for hundreds of years.” Then “the Israeli state decided for us. It brought the PLO and told the Palestinians: Take this.” He added, “There is an Arab proverb: Only the village’s calves plow its land. This means that a person who lives for decades outside—what does he know about where the springs of water in Hebron are located? The only thing you—‘the PLO—’know about Hebron is collecting taxes.” “We want cooperation with Israel,” “We want coexistence,” and the Oslo Accords “only brought damage, death, economic disaster and destruction.” The PLO “act only to steal the money of the people. They don’t have right to represent us—not them and not Hamas, only we ourselves.” He also said, “There will be no Palestinian state—not even in 1,000 years. After Oct. 7, Israel will not give it.” The PA “can’t protect us, it can’t even protect itself,” warning that “the PA could allow an Oct. 7-style terrorist attack on Israel, after which they expect the West Bank to look like Gaza.” He added “Hebron could be like the Gulf, like Dubai.” “I believe in my path. There will be obstacles, but if we confront a rock, we will have iron to break it.”<sup>17</sup>

Regarding Israel’s positions on the initiative, Yoni Ben Menachem, a journalist, political commentator, Orientalist, and former director general of the Israel Broadcasting Authority, reported, citing political sources, that “Prime Minister Netanyahu convened

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

a security discussion on this matter with the participation of Defense Minister Yisrael Katz, Economy Minister Nir Barkat, the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories [COGAT], Major General Ghassan Alian, and representatives of the Shabak. The meeting addressed the security, political, and international ramifications of adopting this plan. However, the issue remains under review, and no decision has been taken to date.”<sup>18</sup>

Diplomatic Correspondent for i24NEWS, Guy Azriel, revealed that the Shabak “expressed opposition to the move” of “of replacing the PA leadership in the area with local clans and establishing a separate emirate,” “arguing that the PA is a critical partner in the fight against terrorism.”<sup>19</sup>

There is a prevailing view in some Israeli circles that the clans in the WB are far too fragmented to govern effectively or to combat terrorism. Retired Major General Gadi Shamni, who served as Commander of the Central Command between 2007 and 2009, asks, “How will you deal with dozens of armed clans, each governing itself? The Israeli army would be caught in the middle—this would be a disaster.” Shamni rejects the notion that Palestinian national aspirations will simply disappear and that it would be possible to deal with each tribe separately,” arguing instead that “the WB cannot be controlled, nor can life there be administered, without a central authority.”<sup>20</sup>



**Gadi Shamni**

However, Brigadier General (res.) Amir Avivi, founder of the Israel Defense and Security Forum—IDSF) argues that “the PA constitutes a breeding ground for terrorism, through its school curricula and payments to militants.” He further notes that the Shabak may change its stance once it comes under the leadership of the right-wing General David Zini. Avivi also mentions that he has met Sheikh Jaabari several times and regards him as serious, particularly after he succeeded in rallying numerous other sheikhs to his side.”<sup>21</sup>



**Amir Avivi**

<sup>18</sup> Yoni Ben Menachem, The Palestinian Authority Views the “Emirate of Hebron” Plan as the First Stage in Its Collapse, site of Epoch, 9/7/2025, <https://epoch.org.il/news/600840> (in Hebrew)

<sup>19</sup> Guy Azriel, i24NEWS Exclusive: Netanyahu moves toward replacing the PA, site of i24NEWS, 29/8/2025, <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel-at-war/artc-i24news-exclusive-netanyahu-moves-toward-replacing-the-palestinian-authority>

<sup>20</sup> “We Want Peace”: The Palestinian Initiative to Join the Abraham Accords, site of Walla, 6/7/2025, <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3762864> (in Hebrew)

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.



Kobi Michael, a senior fellow at the Institute for National Security and Zionist Strategy (Misgav) and the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) observed in an analysis that the idea’s “eventual implementation is uncertain; nevertheless, its significance lies in normalizing alternative ideas or paradigms to the two-state solution envisioned in the Oslo Accords, which has already lost relevance and calls for a new paradigm.” Moreover, the initiative’s importance does not necessarily lie in its feasibility, which is likely limited, but in the leverage it creates vis-à-vis the PA and the Palestinian leadership. As such ideas enter discourse, which expand the maneuvering space for Israel in addressing Palestinian national aspirations. He also added, “The fact that local leaders representing a large majority of the population are leading such an initiative constitutes a challenge to Hamas and could weaken the organization’s ability to expand its influence in the governorate.” Michael concluded that the initiative, “must be understood within the context of time, space, and the geo-strategic shifts that have occurred since 7 October.... It is not unlikely that the initiative has emerged precisely due to these changed conditions, serving as a harbinger of a new spring in the region.”<sup>22</sup>



**Kobi Michael**

Regarding Palestinian reactions, Israeli reports noted the emergence of “an unprecedented wave of protest emerged, culminating in the overnight arson attack [of al-Jaabari’s vehicle]. Palestinian and Arab media outlets sharply criticized the initiative, describing it as ‘a renewed version of treason’ and warning against a de facto division of the West Bank.”<sup>23</sup>

A distinctive Palestinian initiative also emerged, namely the “Declaration of the Clans of Hebron Governorate,” in which, during a press conference, they completely disavowed the actions of those involved, describing these acts as individual and not representative of the family or its historical positions. During the conference, Nafez al-Jaabari, the clans’ representative at the Hebron Governorate office, stated that the Palestinian people are conscious and vigilant, and that their cause cannot be compromised. In a statement, the al-Jaabari family declared, “We hereby express our complete disavowal and condemnation of the actions of an individual from the family who is unknown to the clan and is not a resident of Hebron. We reaffirm our commitment to Islamic and national fundamentals, as well as to the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, across the full extent of our national territory.”<sup>24</sup> The statement further emphasized, “We will not allow any misguided entity, or any actor driven by dubious agendas, to speak on behalf

<sup>22</sup> Kobi Michael, The Rebellion Emerging from the Tribe: A Crack in the Foundations of the PA or a Sign of Things to Come?, Walla, 7/7/2025, <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3763245> (in Hebrew)

<sup>23</sup> Einav Halabi, Arson Attack on the Vehicle of the Hebron Sheikh Who Sought to Recognize Israel as a Jewish State and Establish the “Emirate of Hebron,” site of Ynet, 9/7/2025, <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hy64ejobxe> (in Hebrew)

<sup>24</sup> The Clans of Hebron Disavow the Letter Calling for Separation from the PA and the Establishment of an Emirate, Snd News Agency, 6/7/2025, <https://snd.ps/p/142199>



of the family or exploit its name for personal gain. We will confront such attempts decisively and will not hesitate to take the appropriate legal and social measures to protect the family's name and reputation.”<sup>25</sup>

Later, the Hebron Governor, Khaled Dudin, met with representatives of the clans and the governorate's notable figures, who emphatically reiterated their categorical rejection of any attempts to establish what is being called the “Emirate of Hebron,” to detach Hebron from the national geography, or to place it under clan rule. They affirmed their full support for Palestinian legitimacy... and declared the withdrawal of all clan, organizational and factional cover from anyone aligning with Israel's schemes.<sup>26</sup>



**Khaled Dudin**

Thus, it can be inferred from an examination of the “Emirate of Hebron” initiative that it belongs to the same political environment that produced the “Village Leagues” project, which fuels Israel's frenzied efforts to create fissures within the Palestinian people. Such divisions serve to diminish the intensity of the primary contradiction with Israel and disperse collective efforts to confront it.

It is noteworthy that, alongside the fragmentation and tensions generated by the Oslo peace process, and the disagreements over the current developments and complexities within the Palestinian arena, this initiative exacerbates the existing crisis in this context. Consequently, it opens a wide gap for Israel to perpetuate its control and impose its dictates and solutions, thereby undermining the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

### **Third: Gaza Strip.. Isolated Incidents and a Network of Collaborators**

Following Israel's occupation of Gaza Strip in 1967, it established a network of collaborators under the military administration, which controlled the population, resources, and crossings while suppressing national and resistance activities. This administration lasted until 1981, when it was replaced by a civilian security administration.

During this period, Israel exploited economic labor, allowing thousands of Palestinians to work inside the “Green Line” to reinforce dependency for political, social and security purposes. These workers were used as intelligence agents to monitor political and resistance activities, with some recruited through financial incentives, blackmail, personal or family pressure, or coercion after detention. The information gathered was then used to arrest activists, dismantle resistance cells, or carry out targeted assassinations.

<sup>25</sup> “Hebron Emirate”.. A Failed Israeli Attempt to Penetrate the Palestinian National Fabric, site of Quds Press, 6/7/2025, <https://qudspress.com/205965>

<sup>26</sup> Clans of Hebron: We Renew Our Allegiance to the Palestinian Leadership, Palestinian News and Information Agency (WAFA), 1/9/2025, <https://www.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/129032> (in Arabic)



Similarly, during the military administration, Israel attempted to co-opt certain prominent figures in GS, either through family or social ties. However, these efforts largely failed collectively, and those who were recruited were treated as isolated cases. Unlike in the WB, where collaborators were structurally organized through Village Leagues, no such systematic network of collaborators existed in GS at the time.

Among the reported details, the collaborators planted by Israeli authorities within Palestinian society in GS carried out a variety of roles, notably:<sup>27</sup>

- ▶● Gathering intelligence to track resistance factions and target their leaders and members.
- ▶● Conducting sabotage operations within resistance networks and national institutions.
- ▶● Reporting on planned resistance operations, thereby protecting Israeli soldiers.
- ▶● Spreading rumors, black propaganda, and discord among citizens and across societal institutions.
- ▶● Launching campaigns to discredit national leaders and question their integrity.
- ▶● Promoting defeatism and despair regarding the effectiveness of resisting Israel.
- ▶● Intimidating potential resistance recruits by demonstrating Israel's capacity to detect them.

It was observed that groups of collaborators, ostracized by society, often congregated with their families at the old Egyptian army camp in southern GS, between Kerem Abu Salem and Rafah. Since the early 1970s, the site had housed Dahaniya village, known as the “village of collaborators,” which attracted those seeking refuge from retribution, particularly during the First *Intifadah* (1987). Israel enclosed the area with a security fence and controlled access until 2005, when it was dismantled during the “Disengagement” from GS, allowing families to relocate into Israeli-controlled territory.<sup>28</sup>

Within GS, the escalation of the collaborator problem increasingly burdened the Palestinian struggle, causing significant harm, particularly given their pivotal role in enabling Israel to eliminate resistance leaders. At the same time, the pursuit of collaborators by resistance security forces, coupled with their presentation to fair trials, occurred alongside growing popular awareness, gradually diminishing their influence throughout the 1980s and beyond. Yet the issue never disappeared; it resurfaced during military campaigns in GS following Hamas and other resistance factions' assumption of

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<sup>27</sup> For details, see A Study on the Phenomenon of Collaborators, site of Saraya.ps, 19/6/2011, <https://tinyurl.com/bdeayt87>

<sup>28</sup> See John Murphy, “Collaborators of Dahaniya Face an Uncertain Fate Following Gaza Withdrawal,” site of Aletihad News Center, 10/5/2005, <http://eti.ae/G6so>; Village of Collaborators Fears Palestinian Retribution after Israel's Withdrawal from Gaza,” site of Alwatan Voice, 3/6/2005, <https://www.alwatanvoice.com/arabic/news/2005/06/03/22868.html>; and Somaya Darwish, Palestinian Families Leave the Village of Collaborators, site of Elaph, 6/8/2005, <https://elaph.com/Web/Politics/2005/8/81652.htm>



governance. The precision and details of these attacks highlighted the extent of intelligence exploited in their execution, in which collaborators were complicit. While these cases generally remained isolated and limited in scale, they escalated to an unprecedented level during the genocidal war waged by Israel on GS in the wake of Operation al-Aqsa Flood.

#### **Fourth: GS Militias: A Grave Functional Precedent**

Israel found an opportunity in the establishment of rogue groups, in the form of armed militias, assigned specific security, logistical and political tasks within the broader objectives of the war on GS. This represents a practical application of what is referred to in political, social and security studies as the “Fifth Column,”<sup>29</sup> that is, a clandestine network of subversive agents that seeks to undermine national cohesion through infiltration, misinformation, espionage, and sabotage.

A review of the numerous publications on these militias allows for the construction of a comprehensive portrait encompassing their identity, structure, functions and effects, as well as other aspects related to them as a grave precedent. Their existence and activities are entirely inconsistent with the Palestinian national approach.

##### **►1. The Idea of Recruiting Militias and Their Enabling Environment**

At the outset of the war on GS, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant came up with the idea to set up a rule of militias and clans in GS, intended to serve as a counterweight to, and a governing alternative to, Hamas, according to Israeli security sources. Although the proposal initially encountered implementation difficulties, it was later discussed within one of the Knesset’s secret committees.<sup>30</sup> Subsequently, the head of the Shin Bet, Ronen Bar, reformulated the idea into operational action, which was approved by Prime Minister Netanyahu and Defense Minister Israel Katz, and endorsed by Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi, the head of Military Intelligence Directorate (Aman) Shlomi Binder, and Major General Ghassan Alian, Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories.<sup>31</sup> The operational premise adopted by the Shabak was to begin with a small cell operating within a limited area of Rafah,<sup>32</sup> as a pilot model intended for replication and gradual expansion.

<sup>29</sup> Fifth Column, site of Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/fifth-column>

<sup>30</sup> Itamar Eichner and Einav Halabi, Escaped from Prison under the Protection of the Air Force; Promised Protection from Hamas, Ynet, 5/6/2025, <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/bjbouljlx> (in Hebrew)

<sup>31</sup> Yossi Melman, ‘What’s Wrong With That?’: How Israel Trained and Armed an ISIS-linked Gazan Militia, site of *Haaretz* newspaper, 11/6/2025, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-06-11/ty-article-magazine/.premium/whats-wrong-how-israel-trained-and-armed-an-isis-linked-gazan-crime-militia/00000197-5aa3-deed-a9bf-5fef7d990000>

<sup>32</sup> Avi Ashkenazi, “Now Revealed: The Israeli Entity That Recruited the Crime Gang in Gaza —Against Hamas,” site of *Maariv* newspaper, 9/6/2025, <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/politics/article-1204025> (in Hebrew)



In preparation for implementing this approach, Israel sought to establish conditions conducive to fostering the emergence of militia formations. To this end, it launched aggressive incitement campaigns against the resistance, exacerbated already severe internal crises, and encouraged protests against it, escalating these actions to both field and political levels and giving them organizational expression, until they ultimately assumed the form of armed militias.

In this context, notable developments included the organization of demonstrations in Deir al-Balah and Khan Yunis during the third month of the war, during which slogans were raised calling for an end to the war, the termination of Hamas's rule, and the release of Israeli captives.<sup>33</sup> Subsequently, suspicious mobilizations by circles opposed to the resistance's approach emerged and evolved into protests framed around socio-economic and logistical demands, under the slogan "We want to live." These demonstrations reached their peak in March 2025 in northern GS and later spread to refugee camps in central GS and the Khan Yunis area.<sup>34</sup>

As the protests expanded, accompanied by direct calls for the ousting of Hamas, it was observed that the resistance maintained a deliberately measured silence, albeit temporarily. Subsequently, it responded in a manner that was both intelligent and responsible, eschewing violence or coercion, fully aware that the world was observing. The objective was to channel the protests in a way that would strengthen the internal front. On that occasion, Senior Hamas official Bassem Naim commented on the protests, stating that "external actors were exploiting the spontaneous protests to serve Israeli interests," and that Hamas' "response strategy is to try to frame the protests as anti-war and anti-Israel rather than anti-Hamas."<sup>35</sup>

In this context, Israel sought to use the issue of humanitarian aid, coupled with the brutal starvation policy it imposed with excessive severity, as a tool of pressure against the resistance. Indeed, the media increasingly disseminated reports of so-called "rebellion," whose backbone consisted of armed militias that operated under flimsy pretexts.

## ►2. Key Militia Formations and Their Distribution

Since the first year of the war on GS, several armed groups have emerged across various locations, differing in size and impact. While some have disappeared, others continue to operate. Based on available publications, the most prominent of these groups are as follows:

<sup>33</sup> Nurit Yohanan, 'No to terror, yes to peace': New anti-Hamas protest breaks out in northern Gaza, site of The Times of Israel, 16/4/2025, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/no-to-terror-yes-to-peace-new-anti-hamas-protest-breaks-out-in-northern-gaza/>

<sup>34</sup> Rebecca Meller, Orit Perlov and Mora Deitsch, Protest in the Gaza Strip during the Swords of Iron War, Spotlight, 15/6/2025, <https://www.inss.org.il/publication/demonstrations-gaza/>

<sup>35</sup> Nurit Yohanan, Gaza war's first major anti-Hamas protests may not oust it, but are weakening its hold, The Times of Israel, 28/3/2025, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/gaza-wars-first-major-anti-hamas-protests-may-not-oust-it-but-are-weakening-its-hold/>



a. “The Popular Forces,” led by Abu Shabab and, after his death, by Ghassan al-Dahini



**Al-Dahini**



**Abu Shabab**

The first public appearance of this militia occurred in June 2024, when Yasir Abu Shabab released a video claiming, “he had formed the militia to protect civilians from “the de facto Hamas government’s terror.”<sup>36</sup> According to available information, he was born in 1993, belongs to the Tarabin clan, and had been imprisoned by the resistance prior to the war in GS on charges of theft and drug-related offenses. He was released following an Israeli attack on security facilities at the outset of the conflict.<sup>37</sup> After his escape, Abu Shabab established an armed group called the “Popular Forces,” claiming that its purpose was “to protect the population and distribute humanitarian aid.” Palestinian and international reports, however, indicated that the group “operated in coordination with Israel in areas under its military control, particularly east of Rafah.”<sup>38</sup> Abu Shabab also began sharing anti-resistance content on newly established social media platforms,

<sup>36</sup> Ershad Alijani, Inside post-ceasefire Gaza: Israel-backed militias, clan wars and Hamas’s fight to survive, site of France 24, 24/10/2025, <https://www.france24.com/en/middle-east/20251024-gaza-militias-clan-wars-hamas-power-struggle-2025>

<sup>37</sup> Fleeing a Hamas Prison: Meet the Clan Leader Whom Israel Is Arming in Gaza, *Maariv*, 5/6/2025, <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/military/article-1202789> (in Hebrew)

<sup>38</sup> Itamar Eichner and Einav Halabi, Escaped from Prison under the Protection of the Air Force; Promised Protection from Hamas, *Ynet*, 5/6/2025. (in Hebrew)



amid ongoing questions about the true identity of the person managing his professional Facebook page, given that he is illiterate and left school at an early age.<sup>39</sup>

Under the subheading “Criminal past—military present” in an Israeli journalistic report, it was noted that when Abu Shabab moved into “guarding humanitarian aid trucks” entering Gaza, a role he reportedly exploited to steal goods and engage in systematic looting,” to the extent that a UN source confirmed “that his name appeared in an internal memo identifying him as responsible for large-scale looting of humanitarian aid entering the Gaza Strip.”<sup>40</sup> According to sources within humanitarian organizations, “his men were also involved in imposing protection fees, with the knowledge of the Israeli army.”<sup>41</sup>

A Sky News investigation has uncovered that the location of the militia’s base “is strategically important - it sits along the route by which aid trucks must travel when entering Gaza through the Kerem Shalom crossing, a route that aid officials have named ‘Looters’ Alley.” In November 2024, an internal UN report “identified Yasser Abu Shabab and his gang as ‘the most influential stakeholders behind the systematic and massive looting of convoys.’” One of the militia’s leaders “admits that the group was involved in looting trucks and smuggling cigarettes, though he says they only ever targeted commercial trucks they believed to be supplying Hamas. ‘Hamas accused us of stealing the shipments, while in reality, we were bringing them for our families and distributing them,’ he says.”<sup>42</sup>

In continuing and expanding its mission, this militia has focused on increasing its membership, particularly by recruiting individuals with military backgrounds through attractive salaries; approximately 3,500 Shekels (about \$1,030) for a soldier and around 5 thousand Shekels (about \$1,470) for an officer.<sup>43</sup> A relative of Abu Shabab claims that this recruitment drive “has swelled the group’s forces across Gaza to around 3,000.”<sup>44</sup>

Within the context of the populist whitewashing of this militia, Abu Shabab released a video claiming that the eastern area of Rafah had been “cleansed” and was now under the control of his group. He urged residents to return to their homes, stating: “We will ensure you shelter, food and security.”<sup>45</sup> The video depicted armed fighters erecting tents

<sup>39</sup> Eyli Cohen, The Former Thief Who Became a Household Name in the GS: Who Is Yasser Abu Shabaab?, i24NEWS, 8/6/2025, <https://www.i24news.tv/he/news/israel-at-war/artc-d9d13a75> (in Hebrew)

<sup>40</sup> Einav Halabi, Inside the Gaza militia armed by Israel: A history of terror, ISIS ties and attacks on IDF, Ynet, 8/6/2025, <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/s1skwx7xgx>

<sup>41</sup> Itamar Eichner and Einav Halabi, Escaped from Prison under the Protection of the Air Force; Promised Protection from Hamas, Ynet, 5/6/2025. (in Hebrew)

<sup>42</sup> Ben van der Merwe and Sam Doak, Guns, cash and American aid: Investigation reveals Israel’s support for Gaza militia, site of Sky News, 4/10/2025, <https://news.sky.com/story/guns-cash-and-american-aid-investigation-reveals-israels-support-for-gaza-militia-13442260>

<sup>43</sup> Shachar Kleiman: Thousands of shekels per soldier: Abu Shabab’s forces expand their ranks, site of *Israel Hayom* newspaper, <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/geopolitics/palestinians/article/18692948> (in Hebrew)

<sup>44</sup> Ben van der Merwe and Sam Doak, Guns, cash and American aid: Investigation reveals Israel’s support for Gaza militia, Sky News, 4/10/2025.

<sup>45</sup> Itamar Eichner and Einav Halabi, Escaped from Prison under the Protection of the Air Force; Promised Protection from Hamas, Ynet, 5/6/2025. (in Hebrew)



and distributing flour in areas under Israeli control, despite Israel having called for the evacuation of civilians from those locations.<sup>46</sup>

On 9/6/2025, the militia issued a statement announcing the launch of a campaign to recruit Gazans for administrative and governmental positions and calling for the establishment of administrative committees tasked with addressing community needs on a professional basis. The statement also highlighted the need for volunteers across all fields, ranging from healthcare, engineering and architecture to education, administration, economics, IT programming, media, documentation, and law and legal affairs, extending to languages and translation.<sup>47</sup>

Subsequently, on 10/8/2025, Abu Shabab issued a statement addressed to the Palestinians and the international community, in which he called for assistance and outlined a series of purported “achievements” in public services, including infrastructure projects, such as water and electricity systems, a communal kitchen, a school, a field hospital and a mosque, among others. The statement declared: “We have established a comprehensive system, achieved numerous successes in vital sectors, and formed security and police forces to maintain internal order and counter any external threats.”<sup>48</sup> In addition, the militia posted on its Facebook page an appeal to GS residents to relocate to areas it claimed under its control, promising them “tents, sanitation facilities and amenities to preserve your dignity, as well as regular food and medical supplies for your children and families.”<sup>49</sup>

The militia’s activities were accompanied by the promotion of overtly political and authority-oriented themes, through which Abu Shabab elevated the ceiling of his ambitions (or illusions). In this context, he gave an interview to the Israeli Public Broadcasting Corporation’s Arabic-language service, Makan, in which he stated that “the armed group I lead will continue fighting Hamas, even if a truce is reached.” He further asserted that his project aims at the “eradication of Hamas from the GS,” after which “Popular Forces” (under his leadership) would assume control during the subsequent phase. He also made clear that his group operates with ease in an area fully under the control of the Israeli army and coordinates its movements with it.<sup>50</sup>

According to an opinion article published in *The Wall Street Journal* under his name, Abu Shabab claimed that “The Popular Forces, an independent Palestinian group under

<sup>46</sup> Fleeing a Hamas Prison: Meet the Clan Leader Whom Israel Is Arming in Gaza, Maariv, 5/6/2025. (in Hebrew)

<sup>47</sup> Yasir Abu Shabab is seeking to establish an administrative and governmental alternative in GS—will he succeed?, i24NEWS, 9/6/2025, <https://www.i24news.tv/ar/إسرائيل/الحرب-في-إسرائيل/artc-6e0e5b12> (in Arabic)

<sup>48</sup> Shachar Kleiman, A School, a Clinic and a Public Kitchen: Abu Shabab Presents — This Is What Gaza Looks Like Without Hamas, *Israel Hayom*, 10/8/2025, [https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/world-news/middle-east/article/18604294?heyday\\_src=heyday\\_search](https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/world-news/middle-east/article/18604294?heyday_src=heyday_search) (in Hebrew)

<sup>49</sup> Ahikam Himelfarb, Other militias in GS undermine Hamas while collaborating with Israel, site of Channel 14, 25/9/2025, <https://www.c14.co.il/article/1324487> (in Hebrew)

<sup>50</sup> Palestinian factions issue a warning: “We will show no mercy to the treacherous Abu Shabab gang, i24NEWS, 6/7/2025, <https://www.i24news.tv/ar/إسرائيل/الحرب-في-إسرائيل/artc-665e6cc0> (in Arabic)



my leadership, have secured several square kilometers of land that.... has become the only area in Gaza governed by a Palestinian administration not affiliated with Hamas since 2007.” He added, “On behalf of the overwhelming majority of Palestinians in Gaza, the Popular Forces call on the U.S. and Arab countries formally to recognize and support an independent Palestinian administration under our leadership.” He further claimed that he represented “the overwhelming majority of Palestinians in Gaza,” presenting his vision as an alternative to what he characterized as “ideologies of violence and terror.”<sup>51</sup> The militia members presented to Ynet their vision for Gaza’s future: “To be a safe place with a future and hope for the new generation, without terrorist organizations, without unnecessary weapons and without wars.”<sup>52</sup>

There are, therefore, observable trends, supported by concrete actions. These indicate that the Abu Shabab militia, enabled by Israel to acquire substantial operational capacities, has positioned itself as a potential governing alternative within a post-war “new reality” in GS that excludes resistance factions. This trajectory aligns with the core Israeli strategy, which Israel failed to impose through its war of annihilation and now seeks to advance through reliance on internally generated rogue actors.

However, in a sudden and notable development, Abu Shabab was killed on 4/12/2025. Accounts of the incident diverged. An Israeli security source was cited as assessing that he was “killed during a violent internal altercation over leadership, financial resources, and positions within the militia,” while asserting that “there was no involvement whatsoever by Hamas.” The same source further stated, “We will continue working with the militia; this model has proven itself.”<sup>53</sup> Israeli media reports reiterated this account, adding that his deputy, Ghassan al-Dahini, was injured during the altercation but survived. Both men were reportedly evacuated by helicopter to Barzilai Hospital in Ashkelon.<sup>54</sup> A comparable Israeli narrative attributed the incident to “internal disputes over governance and the allocation of geographic zones within the areas in which the group operates in southern Gaza, emphasizing that Abu Shabab sustained severe beatings and was not killed by stabbing or gunfire.”<sup>55</sup>

Meanwhile, the Popular Forces militia reported that its leader was killed while attempting to mediate a family dispute among members of the Abu Sneima clan. In response, the clan issued a statement expressing “pride in its sons, who demonstrated

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<sup>51</sup> Yasser Abu Shabab, Gazans Are Finished With Hamas, *The Wall Street Journal*, 24/7/2025, <https://archive.ph/m2YtQ#selection-753.234-753.450>

<sup>52</sup> Einav Halabi, Abu Shabab militia: ‘We welcome the agreement, we have no intention of leaving Gaza,’ Ynet, 9/10/2025, <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/uxw0nfeqt>

<sup>53</sup> Itay Blumental, Israeli security officials assess that Abu Shabab was beaten to death by his associates and bodyguards, site of Kan News, 4/12/2025, <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/defense/977131/> (in Hebrew)

<sup>54</sup> Internal conflict in eastern Rafah: Abu Shabab beaten to death; his deputy wounded and hospitalized in Israel, site of Channel 7, 4/12/2025, <https://www.inn.co.il/news/684603> (in Hebrew)

<sup>55</sup> Avi Ashkenazi, Not a knife or a bullet: This is what caused the death of Yasir Abu Shabab,” Maariv, 4/12/2025, <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/military/article-1258945> (in Hebrew)



steadfast courage and resolute determination in confronting injustice and betrayal; among them was the individual who confronted the so-called Yasser Abu Shabab, killing him and thereby inscribing a new chapter of pride and honor for Palestine.”<sup>56</sup>

In parallel with these accounts, a source close to the Al-Qassam Brigades disclosed that “the assassination of Abu Shabab was executed through a targeted operation conducted by the Brigades within the city of Rafah.” Furthermore, the resistance’s *Radi’* security force announced his elimination via its Telegram channel, publishing a poster declaring: “As we told you: ‘Israel will not protect you.’”<sup>57</sup>

Following the killing of Abu Shabab, confirmations emerged indicating that the militia he had founded would continue its course under the leadership of Ghassan al-Dahini. In this context, *Yedioth Ahronoth* featured al-Dahini in a video filmed in the Rafah area in southern GS, where he was seen reviewing columns of armed militia members and inquiring about their morale, to which they responded, “High.” Al-Dahini addressed them by stating, “We continue on the same path and move with the same power we had before, and even more.” He further told the newspaper, “According to my brother Yasser’s plan, we will be exactly where we were, with even more determination and more strength. We will fight the remaining elements until the last terrorist, young or old.”<sup>58</sup> (a claim referring, he alleged, to members of the resistance—author’s note).



The day following this display, al-Dahini told Israel’s Channel 12 that the purpose of the video he had released was simple and clear: to demonstrate that the “Popular Forces” continue to operate. He reiterated his threat against Hamas. Regarding his group’s plans,

<sup>56</sup> Who killed Yasser Abu Shab? The Abu Sneima clan reveals the account in an official statement, site of *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, 5/12/2025, <https://www.alquds.co.uk/?p=3613448>

<sup>57</sup> A Precise Al-Qassam Ambush Eliminates Yasser Abu Shab’s Israel-Aligned Group in Rafah, site of The Palestinian Information Center (PIC), 4/12/2025, <https://palinfo.com/news/2025/12/04/984167>

<sup>58</sup> Einav Halabi, ‘No mercy for Hamas’: the Gaza clans fighting alongside Israel after Abu Shabab’s death, site of Ynet News, 7/12/2025, <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/hj1qjzmf11e>



he declared, “We will establish a safe zone for civilians and aim to render it a weapons-free area, with the exception of the arms of the Popular Forces.”<sup>59</sup>

An Israeli journalist summarized the public resonance of Abu Shabab’s killing, noting “a wave of celebrations in Gaza Strip and among Palestinians and others across the Middle East, as well as on social media, where supporters of Hamas and Palestinians more broadly flooded networks with messages praising Abu Shabab’s death.”<sup>60</sup>

The Israeli and Palestinian coverage of Abu Shabab’s killing did not stop there; further materials related to the event were published, organized around several themes, which will be discussed in this paper.

### **b. The Counterterrorism Strike Force (CSF), led by Husam al-Astal**



**Husam al-Astal wearing a vest marked IMI (Israel Military Industries), with members of his group)**

This militia was established in 2024 in the Khan Yunis area by Husam al-Astal (50), a former officer in the PA’s Preventive Security Service under Muhammad Dahlan. Al-Astal had previously been imprisoned by the PA on charges of collaboration with Israel and had fled the GS in 2007 following Hamas and the resistance’s assumption of governance. Subsequently, he served in PA Security Forces abroad and, with the assistance of Mossad, participated in the assassination of Hamas engineer Fadi al-Batsh in Malaysia in 2018. In 2022, Hamas orchestrated his return to the GS, where he was sentenced to death and imprisoned; however, an Israeli airstrike on the prison at the outset of the war facilitated his escape.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Sapir Lipkin, Following Abu Shabab’s Death, His Successor Tells N12: “I Am Not Afraid of Hamas—I Am Fighting Them,” site of Channel 12, 6/12/2025, <https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/be11d799e08b8910/Article-9bd09a67480fa91026.htm> (in Hebrew)

<sup>60</sup> Hamas supporters celebrate the death of Abu Shabab: “In the dustbin of history,” *Maariv*, 4/12/2025, <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/military/article-1258897> (in Hebrew)

<sup>61</sup> See Avi Yaakov, Not Just Abu Shabab: Additional Forces Operate Against Hamas, site of Emess, 19/9/2025, <https://www.emess.co.il/pages/1037501> (in Hebrew)



In an exclusive interview with the Israeli channel N12 on 21/9/2025, al-Astal stated, “I have 150 people, and their number will reach 500 this week.” He directed a message in Hebrew to Israel, saying, “We want to live together... Replacing Hamas is necessary... We are the alternative after the war.” Al-Astal reportedly benefits from Israeli-sponsored weapons and military equipment. He added, “Without communication with the Israelis, we cannot operate... We enjoy strength, security and support, and the US and Arab actors also assist us.”<sup>62</sup> Al-Astal’s group has established itself around the depopulated village of Kizan al-Najjar, approximately a kilometer from al-Mawasi area, where Israel has directed Palestinians displaced from Gaza City. He asserted that “his group will take in ‘whoever lives under Hamas’s oppression,’ and that there is enough food, water and shelter for all.” He emphasized that he coordinates his activities with Israel and that soon “we will rely on Israel to bring us electricity and water.”<sup>63</sup> Evidence of this coordination includes al-Astal’s statements in an interview with Sky News from his group’s base along a military road less than 700 meters from the nearest Israeli army outpost: “They don’t engage us, and we don’t engage them [...] We’ve agreed, through the coordinator, that this is a green zone, not to be targeted by shelling or gunfire.” He further noted that the name given to their project is “The New Gaza”... “No war... no Hamas, no terrorism.”<sup>64</sup>

Al-Astal repeated several earlier statements in an interview with Israel’s Channel 12 (7/12/2025), and confirmed that he coordinates with Ghassan al-Dahini in Rafah.<sup>65</sup>

### c. Popular Defense Forces, led by Rami Hillis



It was established in the summer of 2025 by Rami Hillis, who, according to a report by the Palestinian Press Network, had been affiliated with the Fatah movement and employed

<sup>62</sup> Sapir Lipkin, Al-Astal who established a new force in Khan Yunis, in an exclusive interview with N12: “We want to live together,” Channel 12, 21/9/2025, [https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/2025\\_q3/Article-327af52123b6991027.htm](https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/2025_q3/Article-327af52123b6991027.htm) (in Hebrew)

<sup>63</sup> Nurit Yohanan, Armed group claims to set up area in Khan Younis for Gazans seeking alternative to Hamas rule, The Times of Israel, 18/9/2025, [https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog\\_entry/armed-group-claims-to-set-up-area-in-khan-younis-for-gazans-seeking-alternative-to-hamas-rule/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/armed-group-claims-to-set-up-area-in-khan-younis-for-gazans-seeking-alternative-to-hamas-rule/)

<sup>64</sup> Ben van der Merwe and Sam Doak, Revealed: The plan for a ‘New Gaza’ - and the four militias Israel is backing to defeat Hamas, Sky News, 25/9/2025, <https://news.sky.com/story/revealed-the-plan-for-a-new-gaza-and-the-four-militias-israel-is-backing-to-defeat-hamas-13456416>

<sup>65</sup> Sapir Lipkin, The commander of the militia operating in Khan Yunis told N12: “Hamas should fear me,” Channel 12, 7/12/2025, <https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/be11d799e08b8910/Article-2bff28e20e7fa91027.htm> (in Hebrew)



by the Presidential Security Force (Unit 17) on the GS payrolls. His group comprises individuals known for their affiliation with Fatah, the majority of whom are employees of the PA in Ramallah, and who are suspected of direct involvement in coordination with officers from the Shabak. Their tasks include: surveillance; targeting resistance fighters and opening fire on them during their movements along front-line areas; abducting citizens who cooperate with the resistance and handing them over to Israel; monitoring Israel's military movements in the area; and sowing chaos and discord in order to create an atmosphere of tension and mistrust in neighborhoods of eastern Gaza.<sup>66</sup>

An Israeli report identified Hillis as the leader of an armed militia operating in coordination with Israel in the Shuja'iyyah neighborhood. He resides in the Tal al-Hawa area, southwest of Gaza City, and he and his men "are heavily armed and are now receiving Israeli protection and operational cover."<sup>67</sup> Hillis, told Sky News that coordination with the Israeli army is done indirectly through the District Coordination Office (DCO). It's part of the Israeli defense ministry, but also includes officials from the PA.<sup>68</sup> He further stated on 24/10/2025, to the site of *Jisr News* that his group comprises approximately 500 members, adding: "Our area has long been open and ready to accommodate residents and families, and we receive families on a daily basis."<sup>69</sup>

**d. "The Popular Army," led by Ashraf al-Mansi**



This group was established in the northern GS in September 2025 by Ashraf alMansi. It comprises several dozen armed members and claims control over Jabalia and Beit Hanoun, while calling on residents to live under its protection.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Rami Hillis, Head of a criminal gang in Gaza serving Israel, site of Palestinian Press Network, 24/6/2025, <https://palps.net/?p=8127>

<sup>67</sup> Einav Halabi, Israel arms Fatah-linked militias, combatting Hamas in Gaza, Ynet News, 3/7/2025, <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/hj00b11cxrex>

<sup>68</sup> Ben van der Merwe and Sam Doak, Revealed: The plan for a 'New Gaza' - and the four militias Israel is backing to defeat Hamas, Sky News, 25/9/2025.

<sup>69</sup> Shahr Klaiman, Hamas Settles Scores – "Israel's Proxies" in Gaza Are in Danger, *Israel Hayom*, 21/10/2025, <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/geopolitics/palestinians/article/19067413> (in Hebrew)

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.



According to security sources affiliated with the resistance, the group includes individuals with prior criminal records involving drug-related offenses, theft and corruption. The charges pursued against alMansi and his associates include the establishment of an espionage network and the facilitation of intelligence activities in favor of Israel, smuggling and distribution of narcotics, and the provision of material and informational protection services to hostile agendas.<sup>71</sup>

Since the beginning of the ceasefire on 10/10/2025, reports from Gaza have indicated multiple clashes between Hamas and alMansi's militia in areas located very close to Israeli forces.<sup>72</sup>

#### **e. Other Groups**

Several press reports describe small clan-based groups that emerged during the war, whose loyalty Israel reportedly sought to secure for local governance in exchange for supplies. Two such groups, Abu Khammash and Abu Moghaiseb, from clans east of Deir al-Balah (western GS), allegedly focused on looting humanitarian aid and transferring it to areas east of Deir al-Balah, near Israeli forces, later smuggling it into the black market at inflated prices.<sup>73</sup>

Information was also published about the Doghmush clan, which Hamas's spokesperson described as an "outlaw gang" and accused of "high treason" following clashes between the two sides.<sup>74</sup>

Israeli accounts deliberately mentioned Yasir Hanaidiq as one of the leaders of groups allegedly supported by Israel in Khan Yunis, claiming that he and his men received weapons and humanitarian supplies from Israel, in addition to salaries from the PA.<sup>75</sup> However, on 3/7/2025, he released a video denying Israeli media claims that he had formed a militia collaborating with Israel.<sup>76</sup>

On 23/12/2025, reports emerged that Shawqi Abu Nasira formed a new militia in eastern Khan Yunis, reportedly numbering in the hundreds. In a video, Abu Nasira stood

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<sup>71</sup> Ashraf alMansi: Flagrantly involved in espionage and participation in an armed gang in Gaza, Palestinian Press Network, 27/9/2025, <https://palps.net/?p=11029>

<sup>72</sup> Nurit Yohanan, The return of Hamas: With wave of executions, terror group reasserts control in Gaza, The Times of Israel, 21/10/2025, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/the-return-of-hamas-with-wave-of-executions-terror-group-reasserts-control-in-gaza/>

<sup>73</sup> Which armed groups are challenging Hamas in GS?, *Asharq al-Awsat* newspaper, 17/7/2025, <https://aawsat.news/n4ht7>

<sup>74</sup> Ershad Alijani, Inside post-ceasefire Gaza: Israel-backed militias, clan wars and Hamas's fight to survive, France 24, 24/10/2025.

<sup>75</sup> Einav Halabi, Israel arms Fatah-linked militias, combatting Hamas in Gaza, Ynet News, 3/7/2025.

<sup>76</sup> Israel faces deadly security strikes in GS — Yasir Abu Shabab alone, Palestinian Press Network, 3/7/2025, <https://palps.net/?p=8490>



before masked gunmen, denouncing Hamas and urging them to challenge the movement.<sup>77</sup> Reports indicate that he was formerly a senior officer in the security forces of the PA, who had evaded prosecution for past cases of murder and corruption. He is said to have joined the inner circle of the Abu Shabab's militia, and a recent photograph shows him at one of the group's sites in southern GS.<sup>78</sup>



**Shawqi Abu Nasira**



**inspects some of his group members**

The map below illustrates the division of influence designed by Israel for the major militia groups, under its protection.<sup>79</sup>



**Gaza Militias**

<sup>77</sup> Sapir Lipkin, The New Militia Operating in Khan Yunis Against Hamas, Channel 12, 23/11/2025, <https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/be11d799e08b8910/Article-e12c01d74dfaa91026.htm?partner=lobby> (in Hebrew)

<sup>78</sup> What You Don't Know About Shawqi Abu Nasira, Palestinian Press Network, 23/11/2025, <https://palps.net/?p=12640>

<sup>79</sup> Einav Halabi, 'No mercy for Hamas': the Gaza clans fighting alongside Israel after Abu Shabab's death, Ynet News, 7/12/2025.

### ►3. Identity and Characteristics of the Militias

Militias in GS present themselves as fulfilling national roles, providing humanitarian, logistical and security assistance to citizens, and seek to establish legitimacy through popular acceptance. However, to conceal their true identity as collaborator gangs serving Israel, they deliberately divert attention from their actual character, portraying themselves as opposition forces to Hamas and positioning themselves as a potential alternative authority in a post-war context.

In this regard, multiple Israeli and Palestinian sources have detailed the identities, characteristics and composition of these militias. An Israeli report acknowledges that “most of the individuals recruited by the Shabak as an armed gang contracted on behalf of Israel are criminals from Gaza, marked by drug offenses, smuggling and property crimes.”<sup>80</sup> Moreover, the Joint Operations Room of resistance factions described them as “rogue, treacherous elements serving as instruments of the occupier, exploiting the presence of occupation forces on the ground, arming themselves with its weapons and under its protection. They exist outside the national identity; their blood is forfeit to all resistance factions and they are shunned by the broader population of our people.”<sup>81</sup>

### ►4. Admissions of Support for Militias and Coordination with Them

There have been repeated admissions regarding Israel’s support for militias, particularly since mid-2025, emphasizing the considerations and objectives purportedly intended to justify this support. Israeli propaganda, however, has highlighted what it terms “cooperation among clans and families,” thereby obscuring the reality that those “collaborating” with Israel are, in fact, groups of criminal gangs.

Emerging indicators revealed that, on 5/6/2025, Israeli security officials confirmed that “Prime Minister Netanyahu instructed the Civil Administration in Gaza to distribute weapons to clan-based groups (...) in southern Gaza Strip.” According to a statement from Netanyahu’s office, “Israel is working to defeat Hamas through various means, based on the recommendations of all heads of the security establishment.”<sup>82</sup> When Avigdor Lieberman, leader of the Israel Beiteinu party, disclosed the operation, Netanyahu characterized the arming of the militia as a good step that has helped save the lives of Israeli soldiers” and expressed surprise at criticism of his support, asking: “We worked with clans in Gaza that oppose Hamas. What’s wrong with that? It’s a good thing.”<sup>83</sup> A security operative directly

<sup>80</sup> Avi Ashkenazi, “Now Revealed: The Israeli Entity That Recruited the Crime Gang in Gaza —Against Hamas,” *Maariv*, 9/6/2025. (in Hebrew)

<sup>81</sup> “Popular Forces” Threaten to Eradicate Hamas from Gaza; Factions Respond: “Your Blood Is Forfeit,” site of Sama News Agency, 7/6/2025, <https://samanews.ps/ar/post/606114/>

<sup>82</sup> Almog Boker, A Security Official: Arming The Militia in Gaza Has Already Saved the Lives Of Numerous Soldiers, Channel 12, 7/6/2025, <https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/f239747af17c5910/Article-b46f66125264791027.htm> . (in Hebrew)

<sup>83</sup> Jack Khoury, Seven Palestinians Shot Dead Near Humanitarian Aid Site West of Gaza’s Rafah, Medics Say, *Haaretz*, 9/6/2025, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-06-09/ty-article/.premium/seven-palestinians-shot-dead-near-humanitarian-aid-site-west-of-gazas-rafah-medics-say/00000197-5444-ddae-a1ff-5e56d8cd0000>



involved acknowledged that Israel had transferred weapons, equipment, and funds to these groups in accordance with directives from military intelligence and the Shabak. Security sources explained that the operation aimed to protect the lives of Israeli soldiers and described it as “a carefully planned and managed step.”<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, Israeli security deliberations considered the possibility of increasing support for the militia. One source emphasized that arming the groups represented “a success that saved the lives of many of our fighters, and if it continues to succeed, it will constitute a genuine alternative to Hamas.”<sup>85</sup>

Israeli officers and soldiers serving in GS, as reported by *Haaretz*, indicated that that Gaza civilians had been used by the Israeli army “since the start of the war for targeted tasks, primarily scanning tunnels and inspecting suspicious buildings.” Later, “recruitment has grown into organized groups that Israeli field forces must coordinate with.” They receive both logistical support and salaries, as part of broader efforts to undermine Hamas’s control over the territory. “The militias are allowed to carry weapons, which enables them to profit by controlling aid truck routes and charging for the right to set up tents in areas with high civilian presence.” The Israeli army “has begun marking armed Gazans in its command-and-control systems the same way it marks Israeli army forces.”<sup>86</sup>

Moreover, the resistance Security Forces revealed confirmed intelligence information indicating the involvement of an Arab intelligence service in training and financing mercenary groups operating on behalf of Israel in areas east of Rafah. It further reported that this service provided these groups with direct financial and logistical support, including four-wheel-drive vehicles, night-vision devices, advanced navigation equipment, and specialized applications in the fields of communication and media. This assistance was delivered within the framework of security coordination aimed at supporting Israeli operations inside the GS.<sup>87</sup>

With the unraveling of President Trump’s plan, the circle of support for the militias expanded. Israeli sources leaked that the US headquarters in Kiryat Gat, defined as a Civil-Military Coordination Center (CMCC), as part of the plan’s implementation, began to maintain continuous contact with several militia and clan leaders in GS, aiming to consolidate them as a security force, with the possibility of granting them greater authority over larger parts of the territory if they proved capable.<sup>88</sup> Jared Kushner, Trump’s senior

<sup>84</sup> A security official reveals: weapons, equipment, and funds—this is how Israel assisted the clans in Gaza, Channel 7, 5/6/2025, <https://www.inn.co.il/news/670739> (in Hebrew)

<sup>85</sup> Nitzan Shapira, Israel is considering increasing support for Abu Shabab’s militia, Channel 12, 1/9/2025, [https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/2025\\_q3/Article-222be3965c30991027.htm](https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/2025_q3/Article-222be3965c30991027.htm)

<sup>86</sup> Yaniv Kubovich, Israel Using Gazan Militias for Military Operations in Exchange for Pay and Territory, *Haaretz*, 17/9/2025, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-09-17/ty-article/.premium/idf-shin-bet-using-gazan-militias-for-military-operations-in-exchange-for-pay-and-land/00000199-5822-d0dc-afdb-dab715ac0000>

<sup>87</sup> Resistance Security: An Arab intelligence service funds and supports Israel’s mercenaries east of Rafah, Shehab News Agency, 9/6/2025, <https://shehabnews.com/p/142683>

<sup>88</sup> Danny Zaken, The New Gaza Partners of the US Headquarters in Kiryat Gat: Abu Shabab Militia, *Israel Hayom*, 10/11/2025, <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/geopolitics/article/19213724> (in Hebrew)



advisor and son-in-law, held discussions with Yasir Abu Shabab, during which they addressed the role of his forces and the potential for their participation in ensuring the withdrawal of Hamas operatives from the Rafah tunnels.<sup>89</sup> In this context, the US sought to delineate the militias' capacities, areas of influence, and control, as well as to assess the feasibility of cooperation with them, with the aim of transforming them into a "law and order" security force in the areas they operate, and possibly beyond.<sup>90</sup>

### ►5. Samples of Militia Tasks

Cross-referencing information on the activities carried out by armed gangs in the GS reveals that they perform multiple roles. These include field operations resembling undercover units (*Musta'ribin*), aimed at assassination and abduction; contributing to efforts to locate captured Israeli soldiers; undertaking intelligence functions at aid distribution sites under the cover of army control over those areas; fomenting chaos, carrying out killings, and spreading fear among displaced populations; and draining security agencies by preoccupying them with the pursuit of these gangs.<sup>91</sup> According to resistance security sources, the gangs were assigned a range of field tasks, including raiding civilians' homes, setting up ambushes, and arresting individuals affiliated with the resistance. Moreover, they were entrusted with imposing an "alternative security fait accompli," with the objective of undermining the influence of the resistance and fostering an atmosphere of fear and division.<sup>92</sup>

In this way, the illusion is fostered that Israel is absent from the scene, hidden behind local façades; in other words, it has shifted from direct military confrontation to a tactic of managing the conflict through hired Palestinian actors who carry out security tasks on its behalf. This approach allows Israel to reduce the costs of confrontation while promoting the narrative that the conflict in GS has become internal. Consequently, it undermines international support for the Palestine issue and distorts the image of the resistance.<sup>93</sup>

According to *Haaretz*, the *Shabak* "oversees the militias' operations and recruits fighters alongside their leaders. Unlike earlier civilian recruits, once known as *shawishim*, these militias now participate in substantial combat activities." Report cited Israeli officers as stating that these groups were trained to carry out specific operations, including planting explosive devices, providing logistical support, and gathering intelligence. It further noted that hundreds of activists were deployed at the entrances of various areas of Gaza City to

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<sup>89</sup> Danny Zaken and Ariel Kahane, Paving the Way: The Abu Shabab Militia Leader Holds Talks and Contacts with Jared Kushner, *Israel Hayom*, 11/11/2025, <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/defense/article/19220669> (in Hebrew)

<sup>90</sup> Danny Zaken, Testing the Militias: Will They Prove Their Worth? Powers to Be Granted, *Israel Hayom*, 12/11/2025, <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/geopolitics/article/19222096> (in Hebrew)

<sup>91</sup> How Do Security Forces Confront the Spread of Armed Gangs in Gaza?, site of Aljazeera.net, 29/6/2025, <https://aja.ws/n4omwm> (in Arabic)

<sup>92</sup> Hillis and Hnaidiq Gangs... Dogs of Israel's Influence in Shuja'iyah and Khan Yunis, Palestinian Press Network, 3/7/2025, <https://palps.net/?p=8459&>

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.



counter Hamas's "Arrow" unit, which arrests and eliminates collaborators with Israel.<sup>94</sup>

In addition to the tasks outlined above, militias have exploited the resistance's preoccupation with the war, its reduced presence in several areas, and the weakening of the GS police under intense pressure from Israel. This has taken the form of repeated engagement in condemnable practices, including the theft of humanitarian aid from relief convoys—subsequently distributed to their members and associates or, at times, sold—as well as the seizure of public and private property for their own purposes.

## ► 6. Confrontations Between Militias and the Resistance

As part of their assigned tasks, the militias were instructed to attack resistance factions. The Abu Shabab militia carried out its first operation against Hamas security personnel in Khan Yunis. Ghassan al-Dahini, Abu Shabab's deputy, who later became its leader, wrote in a Facebook post that a Popular Forces special operations unit had ambushed members of Hamas's military wing, and he listed the names of those allegedly killed. Simultaneously, Israel killed Hamas militants who attempted to attack the Abu Shabab militia in GS, with the Israeli army conducting an airstrike in support of the militia.<sup>95</sup>

Among other incidents, following the ceasefire, clashes broke out in Gaza City between resistance-affiliated security forces and a militia from the Dughmush family. Since the ceasefire came into effect in GS, Hamas has sought to reassert its security presence in areas vacated by the Israeli army. Local reports indicate that Hamas was "striking hard at nests of treason and crime from north to south."<sup>96</sup> Gunfire was also exchanged with armed individuals in the Shuja'iyyah neighborhood of Gaza City, who were identified as criminals or collaborators. Hamas sources stated that the operation aimed to "impose order" following a period of security instability. Conversely, opponents of the movement argued that it constituted "an attempt to impose facts on the ground prior to the deployment of an Arab or international force."<sup>97</sup>

It goes without saying that the use of armed militias against the resistance automatically positions them on the front line of hostility toward the Palestinian national program, which enjoys the broadest support and participation, both factionally and among the public. Meanwhile, the justifications and pretenses these militias invoke, claiming to protect and serve the people, collapse when exposed as client forces serving Israel.

<sup>94</sup> Yaniv Kubovich, Israel Using Gazan Militias for Military Operations in Exchange for Pay and Territory, *Haaretz*, 17/9/2025; and Hebrew Reports: The Army Employs Local Groups in GS for Intelligence and Military Tasks, site of Nabd, 19/9/2025, <https://nabd.com/t/161108837-965eca>

<sup>95</sup> Israel eliminates terrorists attempting to attack Yasser Abu Shabab militia, i24NEWS, 10/6/2025, <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel-at-war/artc-israel-eliminates-terrorists-attempting-to-attack-yasser-abu-shabab-militia>

<sup>96</sup> Jack Khoury and Rawan Sulaiman, Reports from Gaza: Hamas Members Killed in Clashes with Armed Militia in Gaza City, *Haaretz*, 12/10/2025, <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-10-12/ty-article/00000199-d9aa-d8a7-afdd-ffbfbbaa0000> (in Hebrew)

<sup>97</sup> Jack Khoury, Hamas tries to regain control, and clashes with militias in the Gaza Strip intensify, *Haaretz*, 14/10/2025, <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-10-14/ty-article/.premium/00000199-e1db-da09-a1bb-f3fb80820000> (in Hebrew)



## ►7. Militia Relations with the Ramallah Authority

Militias in GS have publicly claimed affiliation with the PA's Security Forces, possibly to obscure their status as rogue gangs directly serving Israel. Evidence of this connection appears in statements, hints and the identification of individuals involved in coordination between the sides.

For example, Abu Shabab asserted in a video that he acted under Palestinian legitimacy with the PA leadership's endorsement and in full coordination with it.<sup>98</sup> Baruch Yedid, i24NEWS Arab affairs commentator, reported that Mahmud al-Habbash, originally from GS and adviser to President 'Abbas, maintained continuous calls with Abu Shabab to coordinate funds, salaries and assistance in Rafah. Abu Shabab is also linked to Baha' Ba'lousha, a PA intelligence colonel under Majid Faraj, who moved to Ramallah and oversees all matters concerning Hamas.<sup>99</sup>

Furthermore, a senior PA security official told Ynet that "the militia is reportedly supported simultaneously by Israel, the PA and exiled Fatah figure Mohammed Dahlan. PA sources added that members of the militia are paid through the PA, under the personal protection" of Baha' Ba'lousha.<sup>100</sup> Ghassan al-Dahini, Abu Shabab's deputy at the time, claimed that his group operated in full coordination with and under the direction of the PA.<sup>101</sup>

The Palestinian Press Network stated that "Abu Shabab was merely a minor actor in a militia politically, security-wise, and financially supported by the pillars of the PA, aimed at undermining the resistance and achieving what Israel could not through military force." It detailed the militia's links to al-Habbash (and his office director, Khalid Barud), Ba'lousha, Majid Faraj and others, and claimed that with Abu Shabab's death, "a chapter of one of the most dangerous security projects associated with the PA in GS has been closed."<sup>102</sup>

However, the PA has not officially acknowledged any connection to these militias. Regardless of criticisms of its security coordination with Israel, this lack of recognition appears intended to preserve the PA's status as the sole reference authority in GS, avoiding responsibility for militias mobilized by Israel that lack both popular and official legitimacy.

<sup>98</sup> Itamar Eichner and Einav Halabi, Escaped from Prison under the Protection of the Air Force; Promised Protection from Hamas, Ynet, 5/6/2025. (in Hebrew)

<sup>99</sup> Baruch Yedid, Relations with Ramallah and Mahmud al-Habbash, i24NEWS, 6/6/2025, <https://www.i24news.tv/ar/أخبار/الحرب-في-إسرائيل/artc-99b93bc7> (in Arabic)

<sup>100</sup> Einav Halabi, The struggle for Gaza control: Israel's bet on Abu Shabab militia is failing, Ynet News, 26/6/2025, <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/byw4711iexl>

<sup>101</sup> Shahar Klaiman, Hamas Settles Scores – "Israel's Proxies" in Gaza Are in Danger, *Israel Hayom*, 21/10/2025. (in Hebrew)

<sup>102</sup> Who are the PA's Trio That Engineered A Militia Against the Resistance Under Abu Shabab's Cover?, Palestinian Press Network, 5/12/2025, <https://palps.net/?p=13109>



## ►8. The Resistance Force “Radi” and Militia Dismantling Campaigns

Given the lack of self-restraint among the collaborator militias, which prevented them from ceasing or withdrawing from service to Israel, the resistance had no alternative but to dismantle them. This was carried out either through the elimination of their members or by issuing warnings aimed at securing their surrender, arrest, or compliance with the law, as well as the restitution of private and public property and aid they had looted.



In this regard, the resistance’s security force *Radi* conducted targeted operations, successfully confiscating weapons from individuals engaged in criminal activities that threatened civilian lives, closing complex criminal cases, and recovering stolen property.<sup>103</sup> The Revolutionary Court formally charged Abu Shabab with “treason, collaborating with hostile entities, forming an armed gang and armed rebellion,” while the Ministry of Interior called on him to surrender and urged citizens to report any information regarding his whereabouts.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, *Radi* dismantled a collaborator network in eastern Gaza, culminating in the surrender of its leader, Ahmad Jundiye, along with several members, and the release of civilians previously held by the group.<sup>105</sup>

After the ceasefire announcement, the resistance turned to decisively confronting the militias, engaging them directly in combat. To avoid their inevitable defeat, these militias fled to areas under Israel’s control. However, with the resistance establishing designated centers for amnesty, some of those involved seized the opportunity and

<sup>103</sup> Resistance Security Delivers Decisive Strike: Elimination of 12 Collaborators and Thieves in GS, Palestinian Press Network, 4/7/2025, <https://palps.net/?p=8508>

<sup>104</sup> Hamas orders Gaza clan leader to surrender, accuses him of treason, site of Reuters News Agency, 2/7/2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/hamas-orders-gaza-clan-leader-surrender-accuses-him-treason-2025-07-02/>; and Hamas gives Israel-backed gang leader in Gaza 10 days to surrender, site of Middle East Eye, 3/7/2025, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/hamas-gives-israel-backed-gang-leader-gaza-10-days-surrender>

<sup>105</sup> “Radi” Announces the Surrender of Mercenary Elements in Gaza, Palestinian Press Network, 28/9/2025, <https://palps.net/?p=11049>



opted for reconciliation.<sup>106</sup> Meanwhile, the security force *Radi'* continued to counter attempts to sabotage the home front, successfully neutralizing a number of collaborators and arresting others. The door remained open for return and repentance for those who voluntarily surrendered.<sup>107</sup>

As a result, Israel acknowledged the resistance's capacity to eliminate collaborators. Israeli military assessments reported that "local gangs that Israel backed during the last phases of the war, in the hopes they could challenge Hamas rule, have disbanded and/or their members have been eliminated or removed from the scene." They added, "during the war, Hamas kept thousands of activists in reserve with the intention of re-establishing control when the war ended."<sup>108</sup>

To complete the picture, there is no doubt that the campaigns conducted by the resistance's security forces to contain the militias—ultimately aiming at their eradication, form an inseparable component of the struggle against Israel, insofar as they operate under its oversight. Nevertheless, the slow pace of these campaigns and the limited results achieved suggest that they face significant difficulties in attaining their objectives, given that the militias seek refuge in areas controlled by the Israeli army and possess comparatively substantial capabilities, whether human, military, financial or otherwise. Despite these challenges, the resistance, endowed with considerable capacity, expertise and determination, persists in pursuing the militias without pause.

## ►9. Clans Disavow Militias

The establishment of militias in GS has reinforced popular support for the resistance while prompting families of militia leaders and members to oppose them.

For instance, al-Tarabin clan, to which Abu Shabab belongs, issued a statement condemning certain objectionable actions by the militia he leads, rejecting its collaboration with Israel, disavowing Abu Shabab as contrary to the family's national and ethical principles, and pledging to hold him legally accountable.<sup>109</sup>

The clan subsequently issued a statement affirming that "the killing of Yasir Abu Shabab by the resistance marked the end of a dark chapter for al-Tarabin clan, one that does not reflect the tribe's history or its longstanding positions. The family declares its

<sup>106</sup> Hamas Moves to Decide the Battle with Local Militias, i24NEWS, 13/10/2025, [https://www.i24news.tv/ar/أخبار/middle-east/artc-c4f83cda#google\\_vignette](https://www.i24news.tv/ar/أخبار/middle-east/artc-c4f83cda#google_vignette) (in Arabic)

<sup>107</sup> *Radi'* Continues Its Security Operations Against Collaborators and Mercenaries in GS, Palestinian Press Network, 17/10/2025, <https://palps.net/?p=1154>

<sup>108</sup> Yaniv Kubovich, IDF Sees Hamas Restoring Control Over Gaza With No Opposition From Local Gangs, Haaretz, 21/10/2025, <https://www.haaretz.com/gaza/2025-10-21/ty-article/.premium/idf-sees-hamas-restoring-control-over-gaza-with-no-opposition-from-local-gangs/0000019a-037e-dfc6-a3bf-f37e28f50000>

<sup>109</sup> Statement Issued by the Abu Shabab Family in Gaza Strip Regarding Our Son Yasir Abu Shabab and His Security Group Operating in Rafah, site of Masar News, 30/5/2025, <https://masarnews.co/archives/254423>



full alignment with our people's resistance across all its factions and calls upon members of all families and clans to uphold unity.”<sup>110</sup>

Similarly, the Higher Commission for Tribal Affairs in Gaza reiterated in a statement that “the outcome reached by Abu Shabab was foreseeable for someone who chose to defy the values and customs of his people and align with the occupation.” The statement added that “the Palestinian people have demonstrated that the struggle will persist only under the banner of honor, freedom and dignity, and that their resistance will remain a symbol of steadfastness.”<sup>111</sup>

In response, a statement from the Ministry of Interior and National Security in GS expressed “deep appreciation for the positions of Palestinian families, clans and tribes, which, from the very first day, withdrew familial cover from all criminals involved with the gangs formed by Israel to execute its criminal schemes against our people.”<sup>112</sup>

In a manner similar to the tribal stance regarding Abu Shabab, the family of Rami Hillis publicly disavowed him and anyone collaborating with him, affirming their support for Palestinian legitimacy.<sup>113</sup> Likewise, the family of Shawqi Abu Nasira, both in GS and in the diaspora, issued a statement fully disavowing him, emphasizing their adherence to national fundamentals and their alignment with the Palestinian people and its valiant resistance.<sup>114</sup>

As a general assessment of militias, it has become evident that there is an almost unanimous consensus among the clans and extended families of GS rejecting cooperation with Israel, as well as resisting its maneuvers and inducements aimed at isolating the resistance from its popular base and fragmenting the national front. As summarized by sociologist Thurayya Zahri, “tribal structures regard cooperation with Israel as an indelible stigma, which renders it difficult for any alternative leaderships to establish legitimacy, particularly in the absence of a popular constituency.”<sup>115</sup>

On the Israeli side, it has become firmly established that efforts to co-opt clans and thrust them into confrontation with the resistance have reached a dead end, and that “Israeli security establishment's gamble on creating a local alternative to Hamas appears to be a resounding failure.”<sup>116</sup> In explaining this outcome, it becomes clear that the resistance's steadfastness in confronting Israel's genocidal war depended on its organic linkage with its mass base, which both legitimizes and sustains its struggle.

<sup>110</sup> Statement Issued by al-Tarabin Clan in Gaza Strip on the Killing of Abu Shabab, PIC, 4/12/2025, <https://palinfo.com/news/2025/12/04/984188/>

<sup>111</sup> The Higher Commission for Tribal Affairs: The outcome of Yasir Abu Shabab was a natural consequence of his alignment with Israel, PIC, 4/12/2025, <https://palinfo.com/news/2025/12/04/984196/>

<sup>112</sup> The Killing of the Agent Abu Shabab: An Inevitable Fate for Every Traitor Subordinated to Israel, PIC, 5/12/2025, <https://palinfo.com/news/2025/12/05/984281/>

<sup>113</sup> Israel's Plan to Replace Hamas with Prominent Families Has Failed,” a Gaza-based journalist explains, i24NEWS, 4/7/2025, <https://www.i24news.tv/ar/إسرائيل-في-الحرب-في-أخبار/artc-568f5537> (in Arabic)

<sup>114</sup> What You Don't Know About Shawqi Abu Nasira, Palestinian Press Network, 23/11/2025.

<sup>115</sup> Ezzedine Abu Aisha, “What Is the Fate of Armed Militias Opposed to Hamas in GS?” site of Independent Arabia, 11/10/2025, <https://www.independentarabia.com/node/633853>

<sup>116</sup> Einav Halabi, The struggle for Gaza control: Israel's bet on Abu Shabab militia is failing, Ynet News, 26/6/2025.



## ►10. Readings and Future Assessments

In examining the adversarial relationship between the resistance and militias in GS, it becomes clear that its future trajectory does not arise from conjecture or speculation detached from unfolding realities. Rather, it is shaped by the current balance of power, through which the resistance has demonstrated both its deep-rooted presence and its capacity to continue managing the conflict against the occupation and its agents. Moreover, engagement with Israeli analyses allows for the delineation of certain future expectations. These assessments examine the war's outcomes, articulate its broader conclusions, and implicitly address the role and position of militias within this evolving context.

Among the numerous Israeli perspectives published, an Israeli report cited Michael Milshtein (A researcher at the Tel Aviv University's Moshe Dayan Center; former head of the department of Palestinian affairs in the Military Intelligence's research division; and advisor to the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, 2015–2018), who stated, "I find it hard to understand the rationale behind this doomed experiment," adding, "We must not forget the nature of this gang.... and should remember bitter historical precedents," and "In general, it is best to refrain from attempts to influence the thinking of our enemies and from kingmaking."<sup>117</sup> Also, an Israeli military official concluded that "these gangs cannot serve as a substitute for a long-term strategic plan to replace Hamas; rather, it is essential to develop a coordinated process with regional states to establish a governing structure for this purpose."<sup>118</sup> Furthermore, Eitan Dangot (retired brigadier general; former Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories) highlighted the error of Israel's reliance on militias, noting their inability to achieve superiority on the ground.<sup>119</sup>

In a similar vein, Jack Khoury, political and security commentator for *Haaretz*) expressed skepticism regarding any popular support for Abu Shabab's militia, presenting it as a contemporary illustration of Israel's persistent attempts to replicate previously failed models, such as the South Lebanon Army. Khoury underscored the fundamental principle that "legitimacy and leadership cannot be engineered or imposed. Especially not on the Palestinian people. Legitimate leaders emerge from within, through free will, or end up in the trash bin of history."<sup>120</sup> In a subsequent article, Khoury asserted that "the death of Yasser Abu Shabab wasn't just a local security incident in the Gaza Strip. It also revealed, once again, the enormous gap between the story Israel tells itself and Gaza's complex reality." He added, "The defense establishment and the media portrayed

<sup>117</sup> Yossi Melman, "What's Wrong With That?": How Israel Trained and Armed an ISIS-linked Gazan Militia, *Haaretz*, 11/6/2025.

<sup>118</sup> Avi Ashkenazi, "Now Revealed: The Israeli Entity That Recruited the Crime Gang in Gaza —Against Hamas," *Maariv*, 9/6/2025. (in Hebrew)

<sup>119</sup> Israeli Military Official: Relying on Militias Does Not Provide Israel with Superiority on the Ground, *i24NEWS*, 11/6/2025, <https://www.i24news.tv/ar/إسرائيل/الحرب-في-إسرائيل/artc-89ab8331> (in Arabic)

<sup>120</sup> Jack Khoury, Israel's Current Collaborators in Gaza and West Bank Can't Lead the Palestinians Either, *Haaretz*, 8/7/2025, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-07-08/ty-article/.premium/israels-current-collaborators-in-gaza-and-west-bank-cant-lead-the-palestinians-either/00000197-e9f8-d508-a997-ebfd0e210000>



Abu Shabab as an ‘alternative to Hamas,’ someone who could help rule Gaza after the war. But he turned out to be a controversial figure even in the limited area where he operated.” Khoury concluded, “Abu Shabab’s death offers an important lesson – leadership can’t grow from Israeli dictates,” and “Gaza isn’t a place where you can impose a leader from above and expect the grass roots to accept him. The territory’s history is stronger than any effort to engineer it.”<sup>121</sup>

Omri Haim, a prominent commentator on Channel 14, criticized Israel’s reliance on mercenaries and its trust in them to carry out tasks on its behalf, asserting that, given the strength of Hamas, all attempts to employ local militias are destined to fail. He added that the killing of Abu Shabab does not merely represent the elimination of an operational threat; rather, it constitutes a symbolic step aimed at reinforcing the movement’s rule and deterring its local adversaries.<sup>122</sup>

Two prominent commentators in Ynet cited a security official as stating, “The incident has dealt a significant blow to Israel’s plan to establish local, anti-Hamas forces as part of a potential postwar governing structure in Gaza.” And “Every internal killing tears at the foundation we were trying to build.” The commentators noted that noted that Abu Shabab’s death has deepened “Gaza power vacuum,” as there is “no stable, unified force currently exists that could replace Hamas’ governing and security structures.”<sup>123</sup> Furthermore, Israeli officials said, “Abu Shabab’s death is likely to strengthen Hamas’ hold on Gaza and complicate Israel’s efforts to cultivate alternative local forces for postwar governance.”<sup>124</sup>

While Israeli publications are replete with analyses from experts underscoring the futility of Israel’s reliance on militias as leadership actors in the post-war period, there remains a persistent Israeli determination to continue their recruitment. Indeed, the official broadcaster Kan cited an Israeli source noting that “Israel is preparing to provide protection for the militias and to grant them the opportunity to cross the yellow withdrawal line under Israeli army control.”<sup>125</sup>

The adoption of the US-sponsored Security Council resolution, Resolution 2803, on 18/11/2025 introduces a new dynamic in which the issue of militias is certain to be central during its implementation. It remains to be seen whether the mandate of the Board of Peace, as defined by the Security Council, to uphold order and security through military

<sup>121</sup> Jack Khoury, Death of anti-Hamas Militia Head Underscores That Gaza’s Next Leadership Won’t Be Israel’s to Dictate, *Haaretz*, 4/12/2025, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-12-04/ty-article/.premium/death-of-anti-hamas-militia-head-shows-that-israel-cant-dictate-gazas-next-leadership/0000019a-eb3d-d578-a3bb-ff3f0e710001>

<sup>122</sup> Omri Haim, Abu Shabab’s Death Demonstrates That Israel Cannot Rely on Mercenaries, Channel 14, 4/12/2025, <https://www.c14.co.il/article/1390825> (in Hebrew)

<sup>123</sup> Einav Halabi and Yoav Zitun, Militia leader Abu Shabab’s death deepens Gaza power vacuum as his deputy vows to fight on, Ynet News, 4/12/2025, <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/hk2qcljzbg>

<sup>124</sup> Yoav Zitun and Einav Halabi, Gaza militia leader Abu Shabab confirmed dead; Israel says he was beaten in internal dispute, Ynet News, 4/12/2025, <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/hys2ghjfwl>

<sup>125</sup> Following the agreement, how will Israel engage with the Palestinian militias in GS that oppose Hamas?, i24NEWS, 11/10/2025, <https://www.i24news.tv/ar/إسرائيل-الحرب-في-أخبار/artc-a43d6476> (in Arabic)



measures and to dismantle armed groups, will extend to the militias, or whether it is intended solely to address Hamas and the resistance forces.

This issue is particularly pressing given indications that the leadership of the CMCC in Kiryat Gat, along with Trump's representative Kushner, are engaging with the militias and contemplating their deployment in the forthcoming phase, in parallel with Israel's continued reliance on them. Indeed, some Israeli assessments suggest that the militias will be responsible for securing reconstruction efforts in the areas under their control, alongside Israel.<sup>126</sup> Against this backdrop, the fate of both the resistance and the militias remains uncertain, contingent on the outcomes of the ongoing conflict with Israel in GS.

Within this conflict, Israeli admissions, both longstanding and recent, particularly after the killing of Abu Shabab, highlight the dilemma of failing to employ militias as a credible authority and national alternative to the resistance. The resistance, in turn, asserts that this dilemma reflects its proven operational capacity to dismantle Israel's instruments of control.

## Conclusion

Israel's policies toward the Palestinians consistently highlight and promote "cooperative" groups to neutralize political, security or social threats. This approach has persisted from before the state's declaration in 1948, through the 1967 occupation, and continues today.

Although historical experiences belong to the past, they offer lessons that remain relevant, particularly as Israel continues a strategy of internal infiltration, which it regards as complementing the direct deployment of military force in its ongoing war against the Palestinians.

Notably, unlike the secrecy that once characterized Arab "collaborators" before and after the state's establishment, frameworks cooperating with Israel in the WB and GS now operate openly under ostensibly national slogans. Within these, GS militias emerged as a primary internal challenge to the resistance during the war and continue to exert influence in the current phase, marked by arrangements involving multiple actors.

It is recognized that these militias perpetuate the Arabic verse "and beyond the Romans, there are Romans behind your back," indicating that enemies are not limited to the visible adversary but surround you on all sides. However, it is crucial to emphasize that, despite these challenges, the Palestinian resistance strategy retains the capacity for meaningful impact within the confrontation with Israel, an equation that cannot be resolved without the full restoration of Palestinian rights.

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<sup>126</sup> Suleiman Maswadeh, with Israel's approval: Abu Shabab militia to secure reconstruction efforts in Rafah, Kan News, 12/11/2025, <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/politic/969873/> (in Hebrew)

