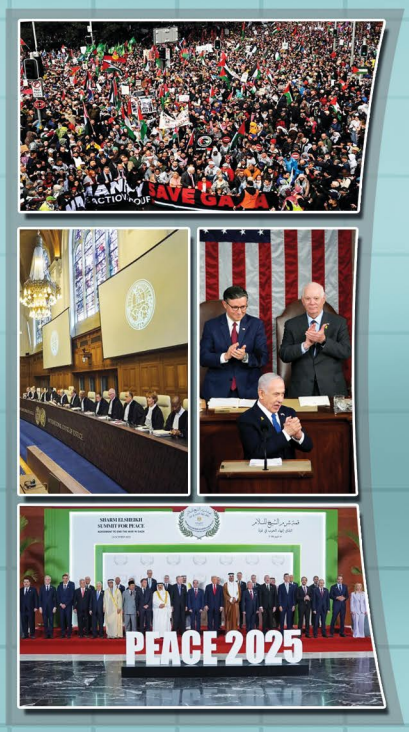
The Palestine Strategic Report 2024 – 2025



Edited By

Prof. Dr. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh

Al-Zaytouna Centre For Studies & Consultations

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2024 – 2025

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Prof. Dr. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh

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P.O. Box: 14-5034, Beirut, Lebanon

Tel: +961 21 803644

Tel-fax: +961 21 803643

E-mail: info@alzaytouna.net Website: www.alzaytouna.net

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Designed by:

Mr. Rabie Maarouf Murad

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Consultants

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Prof. Dr. Sami al-Arian

Contributors

Mr. ‘Atef Ishaq al-Joulani
Dr. Basem Jalal Elkassem
Mr. Hani Mohammad ‘Adnan al-Masri
Ms. Iqbal Walid ‘Omeish
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Chapter One

The Internal Palestinian Scene

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Introduction

Operation al-Aqsa Flood and its repercussions constituted the most consequential development shaping the internal Palestinian landscape across multiple levels during 2024 and 2025. In this regard, both the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) struggled to manage their response, demonstrating limited capacity to adapt to the evolving dynamics of the confrontation. At the same time, these developments had clear repercussions for intra-Palestinian relations, both among the factions and in their interactions with the PA. Divergent approaches to the confrontation, coupled with conflicting visions for the "day after" in Gaza Strip (GS), further deepened the Palestinian schism and undermined prospects for national consensus in the face of mounting challenges.

Moreover, rather than prompting a reassessment of its policy of security coordination with Israel in light of Israel's genocidal actions, the PA continued its pursuit of resistance groups in the West Bank (WB). Concurrently, it wagered on a return to governance in GS after the war; however, this prospect encountered rejection from both Israel and the United States (US), alongside intensified demands to reform and restructure the PA in line with Israeli and US requirements.

In the diaspora, Palestinian popular conferences sought to establish new mechanisms for coordinating efforts and enhancing the role of Palestinians abroad in the national struggle. In Syria and Lebanon, factions confronted acute challenges amid sudden and pressing political shifts. Simultaneously, Palestinians in the 1948-occupied territories faced intense pressures aimed at isolating them from engagement with the WB and GS, yet they persisted in challenging these constraints and breaking the silence.

This chapter examines the internal Palestinian landscape during the two years of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, analyzing how different actors responded across multiple arenas of the confrontation.

First: The PA: Performance and Its Impact on the Internal Arena

Throughout 2024 and 2025, the governments of Mohammad Shtayyeh and Mohammad Mustafa faced three central challenges: responding to international pressurres for institutional reform as a path to PA rehabilitation, managing the financial crisis, and overseeing affairs in GS.

During this period, the PA confronted unprecedented international and legal pressures that targeted its political legitimacy and constrained its external maneuverability. At the outset of 2024, US and international calls intensified for comprehensive reforms under the rubric of a "revitalized Palestinian Authority." In March 2024, the PA presidency appointed Mohammad Mustafa to form the nineteenth government, which assumed office on 31/3/2024 as a technocratic "government of competence" designed to present an internationally acceptable administrative model.[1] This formation reflected sustained international and Arab pressure to implement "PA reforms" as a prerequisite for any post-war role in GS, with primary objectives focused on humanitarian relief, reconstruction and institutional unification.[2]

However, the government emerged amid "significant political opposition." The resistance factions, Hamas, the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine (PIJ), and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), regarded it as a unilateral step that reinforced centralized decision-making and deepened division, rather than addressing it within a unified national framework. In their view, priority should have been given to forming a "national unity government" through comprehensive dialogue, rather than an administratively appointed cabinet aligned with international criteria.[3]

On the ground, the government faced acute structural constraints from the outset. On the one hand, Israel's continued withholding of clearance revenues left it unable to meet its financial obligations to public employees and the broader public sector. On the other hand, its ambition to assume governance in GS was blocked by categorical Israeli opposition, compounded by the absence of internal consensus necessary to confer operational legitimacy. By mid-2025, the government remained largely stagnant: while it managed to project an "administratively"

acceptable model to international actors, it failed to convert this into a political "breakthrough" capable of ending the Palestinian schism or mitigating the impact of the ongoing aggression.

Meanwhile, former Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh accused the US administration of shifting responsibility onto the PA, noting that its reform demands did not include the appointment of a vice president. He further recalled that in 2003 the US had pressed for the establishment of a prime ministerial post, cautioning that "we will not allow history to repeat itself." Moreover, he emphasized the PA's rejection of demands to halt payments to the families of those killed and detainees, maintaining that salaries were directed to public employees in GS rather than to Hamas. He also noted that a comprehensive reform program had already been introduced in 2022 and was welcomed at the time.[4] Nevertheless, despite its criticism of US pressure, the Shtayyeh government proceeded, on 28/1/2024, to launch a new phase of reforms across the judicial, administrative, security and financial sectors.[5]

The newly appointed prime minister, Mohammad Mustafa, stated on 31/3/2024 that institutional reform within the PA constituted both a necessity and a national priority, emphasizing that it is a cumulative and ongoing process rather than a cosmetic adjustment.[6] As a practical step, his government established, in its first session, the Standing Ministerial Committee on Reform and an office for Development and Institutional Reform within the Prime Minister's Office to oversee the implementation of the development and reform program.[7] During 2024 and 2025, the PA presidency managed international pressures for reform and articulated its position on GS, while assigning the financial crisis portfolio to the government.

In response to international pressure and demands for PA reform, Mahmud 'Abbas, in his mandate to Mohammad Mustafa's government, articulated its primary objectives for advancing reform. These included establishing a governance framework grounded in transparency and accountability, combating corruption, and preparing for legislative and presidential elections across all Palestinian governorates, including East Jerusalem. The mandate further emphasized the coordinated reconstruction of GS and the restoration of unified Palestinian institutions.[8]

Nonetheless, in a move that ran counter to the reform agenda, the PA president issued a controversial decree on 9/9/2024, amending the law regulating the salaries and benefits of members of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), government officials and governors. The Office of Grievances at the Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR) promptly called for the decree's immediate annulment, noting that it disproportionately extends retirement privileges to senior officials at the ministerial level, thereby undermining the retirement rights of other employees.[9]

Simultaneously, in response to international calls for the reform of educational curricula, 'Abbas directed the government to send a high-level Palestinian delegation to consult with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), with the aim of aligning Palestinian curricula with UNESCO's international standards and with broader international obligations.[10]

On 27/11/2024, Mahmud 'Abbas issued a constitutional declaration designating the President of the Palestine National Council (PNC) to temporarily assume the responsibilities of the PA President in the event of a vacancy, pending the conduct of presidential elections.[11] In response, four Palestinian conferences[12] issued a statement underscoring that political legitimacy rests with the people and rejecting Mahmud 'Abbas's decree, which they viewed as an attempt to transfer authority from one individual to another. Reflecting internal divisions within Fatah over the measure, Fatah's Central Committee member Jibril Rajoub observed, "We have million questions regarding the recent constitutional decree concerning Rawhi Fattouh's assumption of the presidency in the event of a vacancy," adding that what occurred with the late President Yasir 'Arafat cannot be replicated by one individual assuming three or more positions. His remarks underscored that Palestinians are currently navigating a period of political transition and a broader reconfiguration of the national political landscape.[13]

In a further controversial measure, widely interpreted as aligning with international and Israeli conditions, Mahmud 'Abbas issued, on 10/2/2025, a decree-law revoking the provisions contained in existing laws and regulations governing the system of financial allowances allocated to the families of prisoners, those killed, and the wounded. In response, Qadura Fares, head of the Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs, voiced strong opposition, urging Mahmud 'Abbas to reverse the decree and withdraw it without delay. He subsequently

convened a press conference, during which he announced the rejection of the decision by prisoners' institutions, noting that they had been taken aback by a decree drafted by what he described as "misleading and misinformed advisers."[14] Against this backdrop of criticism, 'Abbas issued a presidential decree on 18/2/2025 referring Qadura Fares to retirement and appointing Raed Arafat Abu al-Humus as his successor with ministerial rank.[15]

The years 2024 and 2025 were marked by a significant series of appointments and dismissals across administrative and security institutions. In this context, on 15/2/2024, Major General 'Abd Sulaiman Ahmad Abu Muhaimid ('Abdul Qadir al-T'amri) was sworn in as Director General of the Preventive Security Service (PSS), while Brigadier General Iyyad Taher Muhammad Aqra' simultaneously assumed office as Deputy Director of the same agency.[16] Moreover, on 1/3/2025, a presidential decree appointed Major General al-'Abd Ibrahim 'Abdul Salam Khalil as Commander of the National Security Forces, succeeding Major General Nidal 'Ali Mahmud Abu Dukhan, who had been retired. Concurrently, another decree promoted Brigadier General Akram Mahmud 'Ali Thawabteh to the rank of Major General and appointed him as Director of the Civil Defense.[17]

Hussein al-Sheikh remains one of the most prominent candidates to succeed Mahmud 'Abbas, with several arrangements made during this period in preparation for the transition. On 26/2/2022, he was appointed as secretary-general of the PLO Executive Committee and head of its Negotiations Department. Subsequently, on 25/2/2025, Mahmud 'Abbas retired al-Sheikh from his post as head of the General Authority for Civil Affairs (GACA), citing "the public interest,"[18] and, on 26/4/2025, appointed him Deputy Chair of the PLO Executive Committee and Deputy Chair of the PA. Thereafter, on 26/10/2025, 'Abbas issued a presidential decree stipulating that al-Sheikh would assume presidential responsibilities on an interim basis in the event of the president's inability to perform his duties, for a period of ninety days, during which elections would be held or his mandate could be extended once by a decision of the Palestinian Central Council (PCC). Nonetheless, al-Sheikh continues to face extensive criticism within the Palestinian arena, particularly concerning his professionalism and networks of relations. At the level of public opinion, polling data indicate consistently weak support. A survey published by *The Guardian* in May 2025 recorded support at 2%, while a poll by the Palestinian Center for Public Opinion (PCPO) in the same

month showed 19% support in his capacity as deputy to ‘Abbas. Earlier, in December 2023, the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR) reported support at only 1%.[19]

At the same time as the formation of Mohammad Mustafa’s government, Mahmud ‘Abbas issued a decree appointing Judge Mohammad ‘Abdul Ghani al-‘Awiwi as President of the Supreme Court/ Court of Cassation and head of the High Judicial Council.[20] He also promulgated decrees appointing a number of new governors in Hebron, Nablus, Jenin, Bethlehem, Tubas, Jericho and the Northern Rift Valleys. Moreover, on 15/4/2024, Mahmud ‘Abbas issued a decision to establish a new board of directors for the Palestine Investment Fund (PIF), chaired by Iyad Joudeh.[21] Subsequently, on 21/4/2024, he appointed Riyad al-Maliki as Presidential Adviser for International Affairs and Special Envoy to the President, with ministerial rank. Later, on 27/5/2024, he issued a decree appointing Amal Faraj as head of the State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau (SAACB).[22] In addition, he issued a decision promoting Colonel Nizar Sa‘id Sadiq al-Hajj to the rank of Brigadier General and appointing him Deputy Director General of the PSS, effective 5/5/2025.[23]

The Financial Crisis

Throughout 2024 and 2025, the PA and the Palestinian population in the WB experienced one of the most severe financial and socio-economic crises since the PA’s establishment. This crisis was the result of the convergence of Israel’s punitive measures and a marked decline in international support, which collectively drove the Palestinian economy to the brink of collapse. From the outset of 2024, Israel maintained its policy of the “systematic seizure” of clearance revenues, justifying this by its refusal to release funds allocated for GS and for the families of those killed or imprisoned. As a result, the PA has struggled to pay public sector salaries regularly, with disbursement rates in many months limited to between 50% and 60%.[24]

Domestically, Mohammad Mustafa’s government attempted to manage scarce resources through an “austerity and reform program.” However, the scale of its financial obligations to the private sector, banks and public employees significantly exceeded expectations, thereby contributing to a marked deterioration in public service delivery, particularly in the health and education sectors.[25] By mid-2025,

international actors had begun to issue warnings that the ongoing financial strangulation could precipitate a destabilizing "social explosion," especially in light of the PA's diminishing capacity to provide an effective social safety net for vulnerable groups.[26] Consequently, by the end of 2025, the Palestinian economy in the WB remained burdened by what may be characterized as "political coercion," whereby access to basic livelihoods became increasingly contingent upon political considerations tied to sovereignty. This dynamic, in turn, further eroded public trust in the PA and its institutions.

Sustained Pressures

Despite the PA's reform efforts, it remained subject to sustained legal and political pressures from the US. On 20/6/2025, the US Supreme Court issued a ruling permitting US citizens to sue the PA and the PLO for compensation related to attacks that occurred during the first decade of the twenty-first century (2001–2010), posing a significant legal and financial threat to the Palestinian institutional framework.[27]

Moreover, pressures were not confined to the judicial sphere; rather, they extended to encompass direct political sanctions in response to Palestinian diplomatic initiatives in international forums. On 31/7/2025, the US Department of State announced the imposition of sanctions on officials from the PA and the PLO, citing "undermining the peace process" and pursuing the internationalization of the conflict through the International Criminal Court (ICC).[28] Washington thus interpreted these Palestinian legal initiatives, aimed at holding Israel accountable for its actions in GS, as an attempt to "militarize the political track," thereby placing the PA in direct confrontation with the US administration, notwithstanding the ongoing security coordination between the two sides.[29]

In the same vein, on 9/9/2024, Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz threatened to "break and dissolve" the PA "if they move forward with aggressive measures against Israel in the United Nations." Katz cautioned that "If the Palestinian Authority acts against Israel in complete contradiction to the commitments it undertook in the interim arrangements that were signed, Israel will act in the same way and stop all cooperation with the PA and bring about its dissolution."[30]

Over the course of 2025, Israel's policy of economic coercion persisted, further deepening the PA's financial crisis. On 9/2/2025, the Jerusalem District

Court issued a temporary freeze order on approximately 2.8 billion shekels ($760 million) of PA funds, following a lawsuit filed by hundreds of individuals affected by the 7/10/2023 attack and the subsequent war.[31]

The Deepening PA–Public Divide

During 2024 and 2025, the divide between the PA and the Palestinian public in the WB and GS deepened considerably. Opinion polls consistently reflected a pronounced decline in the popularity of the official leadership, alongside growing demands for substantive political change. In particular, a public opinion poll in 2024 indicated that an overwhelming majority of Palestinians, 84%, called for the resignation of Mahmud ‘Abbas,[32] contending that the PA’s performance amid the genocidal war on GS failed to meet the scale of the existential challenges confronting the Palestinian people. Furthermore, this period witnessed a marked rise in public dissatisfaction, driven in part by perceptions that the PA had become “excessively responsive to international pressures” at the expense of fostering internal national consensus.[33]

With respect to public freedoms, 2025 witnessed a discernible intensification of restrictions on popular and trade union mobilization in the WB. Human rights organizations documented attempts to constrain activities expressing support for resistance, as well as those advocating comprehensive economic reforms. Consequently, these dynamics generated latent tensions with unions and professional associations, which had been pressing for the full disbursement of salaries and the establishment of an adequate social safety net.[34] Notwithstanding these tensions, the PA sought to restore a measure of public confidence through the issuance of a “temporary constitutional decree,” alongside expanded international engagement. However, the prevailing perception remained that such initiatives amounted to a form of “political deflection,” effectively circumventing the long-delayed obligation to hold comprehensive elections.[35]

Thus, by the close of 2025, the PA appeared to be operating within a framework of “defensive survival,” attempting to navigate the dual pressures of Israel’s financial restrictions and existential threats, on the one hand, and mounting domestic demands for genuine sovereignty and inclusive national representation, on the other.

Second: The PLO: Institutions and Representation

Throughout the period covered by this report, the PLO's institutions, most notably the Executive Committee and the PCC, faced significant criticism, primarily regarding the perceived "gap" between formal institutional actions and developments on the ground in GS and the WB. They were further accused of "bureaucratic inertia" at a time when rapid political responsiveness was required. Although the Executive Committee continued to convene regular meetings and issue statements condemning Israeli aggression, broad segments of the Palestinian public regarded these measures as confined to "traditional diplomacy," insufficiently responsive to realities on the ground and incapable of mobilizing international action commensurate with the scale of the crisis. While the Executive Committee emphasized "international legitimacy" and diplomatic appeals, the Palestinian street, particularly in GS and the WB refugee camps (RCs), pursued its own resistance strategies, largely independent of the PLO's institutional framework.

The PLO also undertook appointments and structural adjustments within several departments, including the Department of Expatriate Affairs and the Department of Human Rights. Yet persistent "bureaucratic rigidity," "centralized administration" and inadequate budget allocations continued to hinder their transformation into effective "sovereign service" institutions. As a result, their role remained primarily symbolic and media-oriented, rather than translating into substantive impact on the ground.[36]

The crisis of effectiveness was further exacerbated by the persistent centralization of decision-making within the organization. Its institutions continued to suffer from limited Palestinian-wide representation, particularly due to the absence of Hamas and PIJ, causing its decisions to be widely perceived as reflecting the policies of the PA leadership or Fatah, rather than representing the "broader Palestinian constituency."

Reconciliation Efforts and the Revitalization of the PLO

In 2024 and 2025, the PLO faced escalating pressures to reform its institutional structure in response to profound transformations within the Palestinian public following Operation al-Aqsa Flood. Both popular movements and Palestinian factions increasingly demanded the activation of a "unified leadership framework"

as a transitional step toward incorporating Hamas and the PIJ into the PLO, arguing that the continued exclusion of these forces from the official umbrella undermined the PLO's capacity to represent the "entirety of the Palestinian people" in international arenas. Concurrently, calls from within the PLO intensified for convening a "unified PNC" to reconstruct the PLO's institutions on democratic foundations that would ensure the inclusion of influential actors on the ground. These calls were accompained by warnings that continued marginalization of legislative and oversight bodies threatened to erode the PLO's internationally recognized "representative legitimacy."[37]

The events of 7/10/2023 and the subsequent full-scale Israeli aggression imposed a new and contentious dynamic on the relationship between Fatah and Hamas, oscillating between necessary field coordination and fierce political competition over the "representation of the national project." Whereas Hamas perceived Operation al-Aqsa Flood as an opportunity to redefine the fundamentals and establish a new political equation beyond the Oslo Accords, Fatah's leadership, representing the PA, approached the situation with considerable caution, striving to balance the popular sentiment supportive of resistance against its international obligations and the risk of losing "official legitimacy."

Within Fatah's Central Committee, pronounced divisions emerged over how to navigate the "post-war period." One faction emphasized the necessity of "renewing the PA" to meet international expectations, whereas another warned that any leadership failing to align with the momentum of resistance risked losing its remaining popular legitimacy.[38]

Throughout 2024, international diplomatic initiatives sought to revive the Palestinian reconciliation process, aiming to establish a unified leadership capable of addressing the challenges of the "post-war period." The Moscow dialogues in February 2024 marked the initial phase of this effort, convening Palestinian factions, including Fatah, Hamas and the PIJ, to reaffirm a united front against aggression. Nonetheless, these discussions largely produced "verbal consensus," with minimal substantive implementation on the ground.[39]

The most consequential development was the Beijing Declaration in July 2024, whereby China brokered a comprehensive agreement endorsed by 14 Palestinian factions. The accord stipulated the formation of an "interim national reconciliation

government" responsible for managing Palestinian affairs in the WB and GS and for unifying institutions in preparation for elections. This declaration constituted a significant political breakthrough, representing the first occasion in which a clear timeline and concrete mechanisms were agreed upon under the sponsorship of an emerging international power.[40]

Nonetheless, these commitments collided with the deeply rooted schism, which had been firmly entrenched over the years. The Beijing Declaration encountered outright Israeli rejection alongside US reservations, thereby impeding the initiation of any concrete implementation. Moreover, persistent divergences over the PLO's "political program" and the conditions for international recognition further obstructed the translation of the "Beijing framework" into a lived reality for the Palestinian populace, who continue to endure severe systemic pressures. By the end of 2024, it had become evident through external dialogues that the fundamental challenge was not the "drafting of agreements," but rather the absence of political will, compounded by external pressures that undermine national consensus and perpetuate the schism.

Over the course of 2024 dialogues, the official leadership of the PLO emphasized that any factions seeking integration must formally recognize the Oslo Accords and existing international obligations. In contrast, Hamas and the PIJ argued that the PLO should return to its original charter as a national liberation movement, unbound by the constraints of the Oslo Accords, which they consider both politically and practically obsolete. This divergence rendered the question of "organizational reform" a postponed matter, despite the preliminary consensus reached in Beijing regarding the imperative of institutional unity.[41]

By 2025, with unity talks at an impasse, the crisis intensified as the question of "Gaza administration" emerged as a central obstacle. Hamas insisted on a "national partnership" guaranteeing the retention of the resistance's arms, while Fatah demanded "one state, one government, one law and one weapon" as a precondition for returning to GS. This fundamental divergence reduced relations between the two factions to a "tense truce" imposed by their common enemy, rather than evolving into a "strategic alliance" capable of ending the historical schism, leaving the Palestinian political house exposed to external interventions exploiting this fragmentation.[42]

During 2024–2025, national and Islamic forces outside the Fatah–Hamas axis played a role far beyond that of observers or intermediaries, acting instead as a stabilizing force to prevent the internal front from collapsing under external pressure and aggression. The PIJ was instrumental in strengthening field coordination in the WB, transcending traditional political divides and asserting that "unity of arenas" represented the only effective response to plans for displacement and the liquidation of the Palestine issue.[43] Simultaneously, the PFLP and Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), spearheaded political initiatives within and beyond the PLO framework, advocating collective leadership and opposing unilateral decision-making. Their influence peaked in 2025 through the Palestinian Democratic Rally, which called for translating verbal understandings reached in Beijing and Moscow into institutionalized mechanisms that ensured inclusive participation in conflict management and in guiding the transitional phase.[44]

PLO and the International Community

The PLO entered a critical juncture in its relations with the international community, as tensions emerged between the "legal legitimacy" conferred by the United Nations (UN), which recognizes it as the sole representative of the Palestinian people and the "political realism" imposed by international powers in addressing the aftermath of the war in GS. During the second half of 2024 and into mid-2025, the Palestinian leadership pursued coordinated legal and diplomatic efforts to strengthen its domestic legitimacy and counter criticism of its response to Israel's aggression in GS. In September 2024, the Palestinian mission to the UN spearheaded an intensive diplomatic campaign, resulting in a revised draft resolution calling on Israel to end its illegal presence in the occupied territories within 12 months.[45]

This initiative drew directly on the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) advisory opinion affirming the occupation's illegality. Ambassador Riyad Mansour submitted the draft with the backing of over forty states, aiming to hold the international community accountable for its legal obligations regarding the Palestine issue.[46] Concurrently, the PA advanced legal measures against Israeli leaders, welcoming the ICC Prosecutor's request to issue arrest warrants against the Israeli Prime Minister and Defense Minister, framing it as both a vindication of Palestinian rights and a historic step toward accountability for war crimes.[47]

The recognition of the Palestinian state remained a central concern for the PA government. On 10/11/2024, the PA president reported that 149 countries had recognized Palestine and disclosed ongoing discussions with nations including Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Australia, France, Luxembourg, Belgium, Germany, and the United Kingdom (UK). He emphasized that, while many of these states are prepared to extend recognition, they prefer to do so collectively, at a moment that would maximize its impact.[48]

In 2025, reports highlighted the PLO's success in consolidating the State of Palestine's "legal standing" within international organizations, thereby intensifying legal pressure on Israel at the ICC. Yet, this diplomatic achievement faced regional and international attempts to "engineer" a new Palestinian leadership aligned with a post-war agenda. The PLO regarded these efforts as an infringement on its sovereignty and independent decision-making. Successive "international recognitions," particularly by European states, reinforced the PLO's position, emphasizing that engagement with the Palestine issue should proceed through its "official channels," contingent on reforms ensuring inclusivity and transparency.[49] On 22/9/2025, one day after Britain, alongside Australia, Canada and Portugal, recognized Palestine, the British Foreign Office said that the Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper stressed that "Hamas have no role to play in the future of a Palestinian state" and affirmed to her Israeli counterpart, Gideon Sa'ar, that recognition of Palestine "is about the best way to respect the security for Israel as well as the security for Palestinians."[50] These developments reveal that some countries offered conditional support, effectively promoting a specific leadership path and constraining the Palestinian people's freedom to make their own decisions and choose their leadership, thereby further entrenching the existing schism.

Nonetheless, developments in 2025 underscored that the PLO's legitimacy as the representative of the Palestinian people hinges on its capacity to evolve from a "bureaucratic structure" into an effective national body that encompasses all forms of resistance and popular activism. Observers of the Palestine issue are closely monitoring its ability to reflect public sentiment, placing the organization under a stark choice: undertake comprehensive reform and unity or risk "marginalization" amid the rise of grassroots forces.[51]

Third: Internal Conditions of the Factions and Their Interrelations

The Hamas Movement

In 2024–2025, Hamas confronted severe existential challenges due to a systematic Israeli campaign targeting its leadership both domestically and abroad. Despite the deaths of senior figures, including Political Bureau Chief Isma‘il Haniyyah in Tehran, his deputy Saleh al-‘Aruri in Beirut, and later Yahya Sinwar and Chief of General Staff Muhammad Daif in GS, the movement displayed considerable resilience, swiftly rebuilding its leadership. This, in turn, reflected the strength of its institutional structure, which has preserved unity in both military and political decision-making amid the intensity of the war.

Hamas also preserved its standing as the leading Palestinian movement. Surveys by the Ramallah-based PSR indicate that, throughout 2024–2025, it retained broad support across WB and GS, despite the heavy toll inflicted on the Palestinian population during Israeli brutality and the genocidal campaign that followed Operation al-Aqsa Flood.

In the context of external pressures, the Hamas movement, in April 2024, countered a wave of what it termed “fabricated media reports” intended to pressure Qatar over hosting its leadership and to extract concessions in prisoner-exchange negotiations. Musa Abu Marzuq, a member of the movement’s political bureau, dismissed reports of a possible relocation of the leadership to Iraq, Syria or Türkiye as mere “media atmospherics,” emphasizing that the movement’s leaders are embedded within their society and would not yield to policies of displacement or intimidation.[52]

With regard to Hamas’s administration of the GS during the war, and following the implementation of a temporary ceasefire in January 2025, Palestinian security forces redeployed across several areas of the GS. Israeli Army Radio reported that “Hamas police are redeploying throughout the Strip,” further noting that Hamas, having not relinquished control over any part of the GS at any stage of the war, was utilizing the pause to consolidate and reinforce its governance.[53] Subsequently, in May 2025, the Ministry of Interior in the GS reconstituted an executive force of approximately five thousand personnel from various security and police agencies, integrating them into a unified framework to restore internal security and stability.[54]

Regarding armed groups collaborating with Israel, Hamas and the resistance factions acted swiftly to confront them. On 6/7/2025, the Joint Operations Room of the Palestinian factions explicitly denounced Yasir Abu Shabab and his group as tools of Israel, accusing them of treason and operating under the protection of the Israeli army with the approval of its political leadership. The Joint Operations Room emphasized that the group had been "formed and armed by the enemy to carry out illicit security operations" and pledged to hold its members accountable in accordance with their betrayal.[55]

Following the ceasefire in the GS in October 2025, the Ministry of Interior and National Security announced that its agencies would intensify efforts to restore order and address the chaos Israel had sought to spread over the preceding two years. Palestinian media reported the launch of a comprehensive security campaign to investigate and prosecute those involved in unlawfully seizing citizens' property, while individuals who had collaborated with Israel or acted unlawfully during the conflict were ordered to surrender within 48 hours.[56]

Two days after the Ministry of Interior and National Security issued its statement, sources reported that GS security forces had fully taken control of the armed militia in Gaza City and launched a comprehensive sweep of the area. Several individuals accused of executing displaced persons and collaborating with Israel were killed in clashes, while around sixty militia members were arrested and transferred to secure locations for further investigation.[57] On 13/10/2025, a Hamas security official in the GS confirmed that 32 members of a "gang" had been killed as part of an operation initiated after the ceasefire on 10/10/2025.[58] On the same day, resistance-affiliated security forces executed seven collaborators with Israel and other lawbreakers by shooting, in a public event attended by crowds voicing support for the resistance.[59]

The PA presidency condemned what it described as "extrajudicial executions," while Palestinian tribes, clans and resistance factions expressed support for measures aimed at restoring security. Resistance groups commended the campaign for enforcing law and order and targeting collaborators, mercenaries, thieves and armed road robbers and those cooperating with Israel, stressing that it enjoys broad national consensus across factions.[60]

According to the Director of the GS Government Media Office on 14/10/2025, over seventy gang members surrendered themselves and their weapons under

the government's general amnesty initiative. He further noted that more than fifty criminal strongholds posing direct threats to civilians were dismantled, with security forces affirming their commitment to safeguarding the Palestinian population.[61]

Fatah: Factional Struggles and the Stakes of the "Day After"

Between 2024 and 2025, Fatah underwent a period of intense internal turbulence, with debates over "leadership succession" and reform agendas intensifying amid the genocidal war on GS. Despite official stagnation, 2025 saw significant moves to reorganize the Fatah political house, most notably Nasser al-Qudwa's return to the movement's "legitimate framework" in October, when he called on Fatah and PA President Mahmud 'Abbas to instate him to a position enabling him to advance the movement's agenda.[62] This return, influenced in part by regional pressures to reintegrate dismissed members, was widely interpreted as an effort to heal internal divisions and prepare the movement for the challenges of the "day after" the war, especially given that Marwan Barghouthi remained the leading figure in public opinion polls as the most broadly accepted potential successor to 'Abbas.[63]

In a significant development reflecting the pressures of the "transitional phase," credible reports indicate that unprecedented meetings took place in Cairo between a Fatah delegation led by Hussein al-Sheikh and Samir Mashharawi, deputy head of the Democratic Reform Bloc. Facilitated by Egyptian mediation, these talks sought to bridge divisions within the movement.[64] The initiative comes at a critical juncture, as Fatah attempts to reclaim its leadership in the Palestinian street, which has increasingly gravitated toward resistance, compelling the "official current" to pursue significant reforms to avoid marginalization.

Concurrently, Fatah sought to mobilize its diaspora branches. In October 2025, the Seventh Organizational Conference of Fatah Movement in Lebanon convened with broad leadership participation, aiming to reinforce its presence in RCs.[65]

Palestinian Factions in Syria and the Search for a Headquarters

Following Syria's political transition at the end of 2024, Palestinian factions faced a complex environment, notably the PFLP–General Command (PFLP–GC) and the Vanguard for the Popular Liberation War—Al-Sa'iqah faction. Khalid Mish'al, head of Hamas abroad, intervened with the Syrian Military Operations Administration and the Palestinian factions to prevent retaliatory measures. An

agreement was reached to detain those accused of fighting alongside the former regime, resulting in the arrest of approximately 20 members of the PFLP–GC, while Secretary-General Talal Naji and Al-Sa‘iqah leader Muhammad Qays remained unaffected.[66]

Illustrating the difficulties some factions encountered in adapting to the evolving situation in Syria and Lebanon, Bater Nimr, the PFLP–GC's security official in Lebanon, announced the complete evacuation of its five external sites outside the RCs across the country. All weapons and equipment at these sites were transferred to the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), described by Nimr as "the safeguard of Lebanon," with the operation fully coordinated and agreed upon with military authorities.[67]

In May 2025, Palestinian sources reported that leaders of factions formerly aligned with President Bashar al-Assad had left Syria. According to Agence France-Presse (AFP), a leader from one such faction reported that most of the leaders of groups supported by Tehran had left Damascus for several countries, including Lebanon. He further noted that the new Syrian authorities had confiscated the factions' assets, encompassing private residences, headquarters, vehicles and training camps in rural Damascus and other governorates.[68]

Factional Relations

Throughout 2024 and 2025, Palestinian resistance factions demonstrated a high degree of political and operational coordination in response to the Israeli war on GS, while a significant divide persisted with Fatah, which continued to represent the official leadership of the PLO and the PA.

In July 2024, a pivotal meeting in Doha brought together Isma‘il Haniyyah, head of Hamas's political bureau, and Ziad al-Nakhaleh, Secretary-General of PIJ, with his deputy Muhammad al-Hindi. The meeting reaffirmed a unified approach in negotiations to halt the aggression and concluded with a direct call for the PLO to revoke its recognition of Israel in response to Knesset decisions rejecting the Palestinian state.[69]

Regarding inter-factional coordination, Hamas and the DFLP held a bilateral meeting in GS in September 2024. Both parties affirmed that resistance is a legitimate right recognized by international norms and conventions, and maintained that it will persist as long as Palestine remains under Israeli occupation.

Moreover, they reiterated their commitment to sustained bilateral coordination across political, military, field and national spheres, with the aim of serving the Palestinian people and the Palestine issue, safeguarding the internal front, and addressing, with firmness, acts of sabotage, collaboration and lawlessness.[70] This collaboration was evident in joint operations by their armed wings across multiple fronts, reflecting a convergence of militant identity that transcended narrow factional allegiances.

By contrast, the political track between Fatah and Hamas remained stagnant and fraught with difficulties. Reports indicate that a "tense" meeting took place in Cairo on 27/10/2025 between Fatah, led by Hussein al-Sheikh, and Hamas, led by Khalil al-Hayya, under direct pressure from the Egyptian General Intelligence Service (EGIS). Despite this pressure, the meeting concluded without tangible outcomes, as the Fatah delegation initially refused direct dialogue with Hamas and insisted on pursuing political appointments rather than formulating a shared national program.[71]

Rather than fostering Palestinian cohesion, Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the associated Israeli crimes intensified internal divisions and mutual recriminations. Fatah and the PA blamed Hamas and the resistance factions for the killings and destruction in GS.[72] Senior Fatah figures accused Hamas of "aligning with Iran and other regional axes, providing Israel with pretexts to carry out its largest campaign of extermination against our people." They also cautioned Hamas against "repeating its ventures in WB."[73] These assertions, frequently reiterated, relied more on rhetorical clichés than on objective evidence.

In response to media reports suggesting US and regional proposals for a reduced Palestinian state and extensive land swaps with Israel, the PA leadership warned the so-called "parties involved," specifically cautioning Hamas against engaging with such schemes.[74] Hamas firmly rejected the claims, asserting that they exist only "in the imagination of certain influential figures within the PA seeking to tarnish the movement's image."[75]

Disputes between the resistance factions and the PA leadership, including Fatah, extended to Lebanon, particularly over the disarmament of the RCs following Mahmud 'Abbas's agreement with Lebanese President Joseph Aoun on 21/5/2025, which placed all weapons under state control. Hamas condemned the joint Lebanese-Palestinian statement issued after Mahmud 'Abbas's visit to Lebanon,

arguing that it failed to reflect national consensus. The movement emphasized that it had neither participated in the meeting's outcomes nor been invited to the security discussions, asserting that "such positions should have been issued by the Palestinian Joint Action Committee, as the sole legitimate national reference."[76]

The dispute over weapons in the RCs has spread into Fatah's internal ranks, prompting its leadership in Lebanon to reaffirm full adherence to the presidential communiqué of 21/5/2025. The statement stressed that "any position or declaration outside this framework does not represent Fatah in Lebanon and is condemned," underscoring that official statements from the movement's media, as well as its regional and local leadership, serve as the sole authority on its positions.[77]

Highlighting the depth of the internal rift, Fatah's Central Committee member 'Azzam al-Ahmad, who oversees the Palestinian arena in Lebanon, dismissed his deputy, Palestinian Ambassador Ashraf Dabbour. A source in the Palestinian Joint Action Committee indicated that a dispute had arisen between 'Abbas and Dabbour over the management of the weapons withdrawal, with Dabbour acting independently without consulting other Palestinian parties or factions.

In response to the weapons handover in Burj al-Barajneh RC, several Palestinian factions emphasized that "what is taking place within the camp is an internal organizational matter specific to Fatah and has no direct or indirect bearing on Palestinian arms in the camps." They reiterated that these weapons "have always been and will remain solely linked to the right of return and the just Palestine issue. They will remain as long as the occupation persists on Palestinian land, and will be used exclusively against the Israeli enemy."[78]

Fourth: The "Day After" the War in GS

Throughout 2024 and 2025, restoring PA authority in GS became a central focus for the PLO and PA leadership. In response to criticism over its perceived weakness in confronting Israeli aggression, Mahmud 'Abbas announced before the Turkish Parliament, on 15/8/2024 that he and the Palestinian leadership would travel to GS, calling on Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (GNAT), "the leaders of Arab, Islamic, and friendly countries as well as the UN secretary-general to join his planned visit," and "urged the UN Security Council [UNSC] to ensure

their access to the besieged enclave."[79] However, this announcement was widely perceived as largely symbolic and lacking in credibility, a perception subsequently reinforced by the PA's failure to take concrete steps toward its implementation. Subsequently, following the ceasefire in GS in January 2025, the PA presidency reiterated its intention to assume full administrative responsibility in the Strip. It further emphasized that the State of Palestine retains legal and political jurisdiction over GS, as over the rest of the Palestinian territories in the WB and Jerusalem.[80]

Israeli and US Perspectives

Throughout 2024, the Israeli security-driven approach remained predominant, rejecting any political horizon that would grant Palestinians sovereignty in GS. In this vein, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu maintained that "his government seeks open-ended control over security and civilian affairs in the Gaza Strip."[81] Netanyahu's plan envisioned Gaza's "complete demilitarization" and stated that civil affairs in Gaza will be run by "local officials" who have "administrative experience" and who are not tied to "countries or entities that support terrorism," thereby effectively excluding the PA and resistance factions.[82]

Following the inauguration of Donald Trump in early 2025, a notable shift occurred in the management of the issue, as the "soft pressure" approach of the Joe Biden administration, advocating a "revitalized PA," gave way to a more pragmatic and assertive posture. Trump advanced a comprehensive ceasefire framework that granted Israel concrete security gains on the ground in exchange for promises of "economic prosperity."[83] Nevertheless, while this vision aligned with Netanyahu's aim of curbing Palestinian political agency, the new US administration demonstrated a greater capacity to press the Israeli government toward broader regional arrangements.[84]

On the ground, Israel sought to entrench new geopolitical realities throughout 2024 by consolidating control over the Philadelphi and Netzarim Corridors, framing its continued military presence as a non-negotiable "strategic necessity."[85] With the onset of 2025, these dynamics were further reinforced by US proposals advocating a temporary "international administrative authority" in the GS to oversee aid and reconstruction. This initiative, however, met with broad Palestinian rejection, as it was widely viewed as an attempt to impose an "international trusteeship" that would undermine national legitimacy.[86]

Simultaneously, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) emerged as a central target within post-war arrangements. Israel, backed by actors in Washington, has sought to eliminate UNRWA's role and replace it with alternative relief mechanisms, a move widely interpreted as aimed at dismantling the refugee issue at its core. Consequently, 2025 has evolved into a contest between the imposition of Israeli "security sovereignty" and a US-driven "regional deal," amid the deliberate marginalization of any sovereign Palestinian political project.

The Palestinian Position

As early as February 2024, PA President Mahmud 'Abbas declared that the GS is an integral part of the State of Palestine, and we are prepared to undertake all necessary steps to assume governing responsibilities in GS, WB, and East Jerusalem.[87] Subsequently, on 8/4/2024, the Palestinian Council of Ministers decided to establish the Higher National Committee for the Relief of the Southern Governorates, referring to the GS, tasking the Minister of State for Relief Affairs with coordinating with relevant stakeholders to develop a framework for the committee's membership, mandate and operational mechanisms.[88]

Furthermore, Cairo hosted a series of meetings between Hamas and Fatah. The first, in September 2024, addressed the war on the GS and broader political and field developments, with the aim of unifying national efforts.[89] This was followed in October 2024 by discussions on forming a committee to administer post-war governance in the GS, based on an Egyptian proposal, although deliberations were postponed. Subsequently, in early November 2024, a leadership meeting revisited the proposal within the broader effort to advance de-escalation and facilitate humanitarian aid.[90] By late November 2024, a round of talks further explored the establishment of a support committee to oversee the future administration of the GS.[91]

The discussions progressed in early December 2024, when the delegations met in Cairo on 1/12/2024 to address post-war governance in the GS. They focused on establishing an independent administrative committee to oversee the Strip, including aid, crossings and reconstruction, in coordination with all Palestinian factions.[92] On 4/12/2024, the two movements approved a draft agreement to form a "Community Support Committee" to manage the GS alongside the

PA government, based on an Egyptian proposal as a preliminary step toward a ceasefire.[93] Nonetheless, tensions resurfaced on 8/12/2024, when Fatah rejected the proposal, arguing that it could deepen the schism between GS and WB, while Hamas remained committed to its adoption.[94]

In January 2025, a PLO and Fatah delegation, acting on behalf of President Mahmud ‘Abbas (Abu Mazen), formally informed Egypt of the Palestinian leadership’s rejection of the “Community Support Committee” and any initiative that would restore Hamas to power. This position generated tension in Cairo, given Egypt’s sustained efforts to reconcile the divergent Palestinian perspectives.[95]

Over the course of 2025, the PLO and PA leadership intensified their discourse concerning the post-war governance of GS, consistently attributing responsibility for the Strip’s dire conditions to Hamas and rejecting any role for it in administration. On 22/3/2025, Fatah explicitly called on Hamas to relinquish authority and withdraw from the governmental sphere to safeguard the “Palestinian presence” in GS.[96] PLO factions supportive of the PA endorsed this stance, emphasizing that Hamas should carefully evaluate both the internal and regional political landscape, attend to the voices and suffering of the people in GS, and cede governance to the legitimate leadership holding authority over the Strip.[97]

At the opening of the 32nd session of the PCC (23–24/4/2025), President ‘Abbas delivered his most forceful critique of Hamas to date, employing a strong insult and calling for the movement to surrender its weapons as well as Israeli prisoners and detainees. He questioned the necessity of its arsenal, asking, “What need do you have for it?” and underscored that “Hamas is now obligated—before us and our people—to end its takeover of governance and authority in Gaza entirely.”[98] During a subsequent meeting with former British Prime Minister and former Quartet envoy Tony Blair, ‘Abbas reaffirmed the imperative of enabling the PA to assume full responsibility in GS. He emphasized that Hamas will not govern GS the following day. He further insisted that the movement must transfer its weapons to the PA and participate in political life in accordance with the PLO’s political program, its international agenda and international legitimacy.[99]

As for the resistance factions, primarily Hamas and PIJ, they have consistently rejected any arrangements that do not arise from an unequivocal Palestinian national consensus. At the outset of 2025, amid growing discussions of “international

forces" or a "temporary civilian administration" under US sponsorship, Hamas asserted that "the day following the war will be an exclusively Palestinian decision, and no external guardianship over our people will be tolerated."[100] The "Moscow Meetings" and the "Beijing Declaration," in 2024, both emphasized the necessity of establishing a national unity government to manage Palestinian affairs in the WB and GS under the auspices of the PLO.[101]

Hamas and the resistance factions signaled strong willingness regarding GS's post-war future, expressing readiness to transfer governance to a Palestinian technocratic administration. In pursuit of halting the ongoing aggression against the Palestinian people and alleviating humanitarian suffering, they engaged constructively with President Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, agreeing to a ceasefire, the entry of aid, reconstruction and prisoner exchanges, while firmly preserving core national fundamentals and referring broader issues to Palestinian national consensus.

Following the implementation of the ceasefire, Cairo resumed hosting meetings between Hamas and Fatah delegations on 23/10/2025 to address the Palestinian situation and post-war arrangements in GS.[102] The expanded sessions on 24/10/2025 yielded a consensus to transfer GS's administration to a temporary committee of independent technocrats, the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG), while also calling for a strategy to reinvigorate the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Cairo further outlined its post-war vision, proposing that GS be managed by a committee of qualified Gaza residents who remained during the war, with the factions granting preliminary approval to the proposed members.[103]

At the same time, 2025 witnessed a broad popular and factional consensus rejecting the so-called "new Village Leagues" and any Israeli attempts to install alternative leadership to administer civil affairs in GS. Palestinian data further indicate the failure of all Israeli efforts to engage with local clans for this purpose, as these clans collectively affirmed, in a joint statement, their allegiance to unified national representation.[104]

Regional and International Roles

During 2024, the centrality of the Arab role, particularly that of Qatar and Egypt, became increasingly evident, serving as a critical safeguard against the collapse of negotiation tracks. In this context, efforts concentrated on formulating the "Paris framework proposal" and advancing de-escalation proposals aimed at securing a gradual Israeli withdrawal.[105] By contrast, 2025 marked a notable shift in the "relative weight of external actors." Most prominently, Türkiye assumed a more consequential role in shaping ceasefire arrangements, underpinned by growing factional confidence in its guarantees and its capacity to maneuver effectively among international stakeholders.[106]

At the international level, the US in 2024 attempted to advance a "day-after" framework centered on the deployment of "international or Arab forces" to oversee security in GS; however, this proposal encountered a lukewarm Arab response and pronounced Palestinian reservations.[107] By early 2025, and under the impetus of the Trump administration, the emphasis shifted toward "conditional funding," whereby large-scale reconstruction initiatives were made contingent upon the establishment of a "technocratic apolitical Palestinian committee" enjoying regional acceptance and adhering to stringent security standards vis-à-vis Israel.[108]

In parallel, regional actors assumed an active role in "shaping" the prospective Palestinian leadership. Reports indicated pressure from certain Arab capitals to integrate the "reformist current" into the PA as part of arrangements for returning to GS, thereby generating subdued tensions with Ramallah.[109] Meanwhile, Russia and China expanded their political engagement by sponsoring reconciliation dialogues, while underscoring that any international arrangements not grounded in Palestinian national consensus would lack both legitimacy and sustainability.[110]

In conclusion, the first half of 2025 was marked by a contest between two competing frameworks: an "international and regional trusteeship" model, supported by the US to safeguard Israel's security, and a "national empowerment" approach, advanced by actors such as Qatar, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye to prevent the marginalization of the Palestine issue under the guise of relief and reconstruction. Consequently, the "day-after" scenario evolved into an arena of contestation not only between Palestinians and Israel, but also among regional and international actors seeking to secure a role in shaping the region's future.[111]

Humanitarian Dimensions and Reconstruction as a Political Instrument

Over the course of 2024 and 2025, "reconstruction" emerged as one of the most intricate instruments of political pressure directed at the popular base of the resistance in GS. International and regional actors conditioned the effective launch of reconstruction on progress in the "demilitarization of Gaza" and the establishment of a new civilian administration.[112] Moreover, reports in 2024 documented Israeli efforts to establish a "maritime pier" and tightly controlled humanitarian corridors, with the apparent aim of bypassing existing Palestinian institutions and exercising direct control over the civilian lifeline.[113]

By 2025, particularly with the emergence of the "Trump Plan," the reconstruction file shifted from a predominantly "relief-oriented" phase to one centered on "conditional investment." In this context, proposals were advanced to establish an "international fund for the reconstruction of Gaza," to be administered by an international advisory board, thereby effectively marginalizing the role of the PA and the PLO in the Strip's development trajectory.[114] Against this backdrop, Palestinian legal experts cautioned that such initiatives could serve to legitimize a form of "economic trusteeship" in exchange for the provision of basic needs to the population.[115]

Domestically, GS in early 2025 experienced a state of "fragile stability" on the humanitarian front. In this context, Israel sought to exploit the issue of "commercial permits" and the entry of goods to strengthen the influence of local and clan-based actors outside established factional structures, an approach widely described as an attempt to revive the "Village Leagues" through economic channels.[116] Simultaneously, UNRWA continued to face significant pressure as part of broader efforts to shape the "day-after" scenario, with international support sharply reduced in favor of private international organizations aligned with the emerging US security and political framework.[117]

Overall, it is evident that the reconstruction agenda in 2025 extended beyond technical or humanitarian concerns; it functioned as a form of "soft power" designed to achieve what military means had failed to secure, namely, political concessions that undermine the core of Palestinian national rights. As a result, the population of GS remained trapped between the ruins of war and the conditionalities imposed by "donors," which directly threatened their political agency and collective identity.[118]

Fifth: Palestinians of 1948 Occupied Territories and the Diaspora

Palestinians of 1948 Occupied Territories

Throughout 2024 and 2025, Palestinians in the 1948 occupied territories were subjected to an unprecedented Israeli campaign of repression, meticulously designed to intimidate the community and discourage any engagement with the ongoing atrocities in GS. Since 7/10/2023, Israeli authorities have carried out arrests and investigations targeting approximately three thousand Palestinians, including formal indictments, administrative detentions and the criminalization of political and civil activities, with the objective of isolating the internal community from its broader national context.[119] Despite this stringent security clampdown, Palestinians within these territories exhibited remarkable "national steadfastness," endeavoring to safeguard their presence while affirming their identity and national belonging.

These bleak conditions were clearly reflected in political participation. In the local council elections of February 2024, voter turnout declined to 49%, down from 56% in the previous cycle, with particularly sharp drops in major cities such as Nazareth and Umm al-Fahm, where turnout fell from 79% to 49%.[120] Analysts attribute this decline both to the impact of the war on GS, which dominated the public sphere, as well as the spread of organized violence and crime, tolerated by Israeli authorities, which served to weaken social cohesion and Palestinian political engagement.

Nonetheless, despite these repressive measures, large numbers of Palestinians of the 1948 occupied territories joined the nationwide march organized by the High Follow-Up Committee for Arab Citizens in Israel to protest Israel's ongoing war on GS. This was the first major demonstration following a series of police restrictions limiting participation to 500 people. Yet thousands attended, demonstrating the community's collective mobilization.[121]

Under the slogan "Stop the War on Gaza," Palestinians of the 1948 occupied territories marked the 76th anniversary of the *Nakbah* by participating in the 27th annual "March of Return," which became a focal point for protest. Palestinian flags and banners bearing the names of depopulated villages were displayed, accompanied by slogans asserting the refugees' right of return and condemning the

acts of genocide in GS as war crimes. On 1/10/2024, the 1948 occupied territories observed a strike commemorating the 24th anniversary of the Jerusalem and *al-Aqsa Intifadah*, while the nationwide march in ‘Arrabah was canceled due to security concerns.

In 2025, popular mobilization among Palestinians of the 1948 occupied territories in solidarity with GS intensified, despite continued Israeli repression. On 24/5/2025, Israeli police dispersed a large demonstration in Umm al-Fahm, which condemned Israel’s aggression in GS and demanded an end to administrative detention.[122] On 27/7/2025, several Palestinian leaders within the Green Line undertook a three-day hunger strike.

Afterwards, 2/8/2025 was a significant day for internal Palestinian activism, as numerous Arab towns within the Green Line held demonstrations under the banner of “Breaking the Silence,” following calls from the High Follow-Up Committee for Arab Citizens in Israel, local committees, political factions and student groups. Town entrances and main streets became sites of protest, denouncing Israel’s aggression in GS and its policies of genocide and systematic starvation, with participants prominently displaying black flags.[123]

Palestinians Abroad

Operation al-Aqsa Flood represented a turning point for Palestinians abroad, elevating the diaspora’s role from providing “relief and support” to exerting “strategic influence” on the global narrative and political process. During 2024 and 2025, Palestinians abroad emerged as a significant pressure force, effectively challenging the Israeli narrative in Western capitals despite campaigns of vilification and legal restrictions targeting popular activism, carried out by some European governments and the US. These initiatives demonstrated that the diaspora is not merely an echo of the internal struggle but a genuine partner in advancing the national project, particularly as global recognition of the justice of the Palestine issue grew.[124]

At the same time, Palestinians abroad confronted existential challenges, notably attempts to dismantle UNRWA. National actors abroad viewed these efforts in 2024 and 2025 as a direct attack on the right of return and a move to undermine the definition of the “Palestinian refugee.” In response, Palestinian communities and civil organizations mobilized to reinforce the Palestinian narrative and assert

that the refugee issue remains central to the conflict and cannot be compromised, despite international pressure to link humanitarian aid to political concessions.

Regionally, Palestinians abroad faced an urgent need to assume a strategic role in response to shifting Arab and international policies, particularly amid concerns that potential "regional deals" might bypass core Palestinian fundamentals. Experts at an Al-Zaytouna Centre panel discussion on 22/10/2025 argued that the so-called "marginalization syndrome" previously imposed on the diaspora was decisively broken in 2025, due to the alignment of popular movements in Europe and Latin America with the pulse of the streets in GS and WB. This convergence established the Palestinians abroad as a significant actor in any forthcoming political equation.[125] By the end of 2025, Palestinians abroad became increasingly determined to reclaim a leading role within the unified national institution.

The latter half of 2025 witnessed notable progress toward institutionalizing national work abroad. In November 2025, following the Third Palestinian National Dialogue Forum in Istanbul, which brought together national communities, forces and figures from 28 countries, the National Commission for Palestinian Popular Action (NCPPA) was launched. This authority was launched with the participation of four major national conferences, Popular Conference for Palestinians Abroad (PCPA), the Palestinian Popular Conference – 14 Million, National Conference for Palestine (NCP) and Union of Palestinian Communities of Latin America (UPAL), providing the broadest organizational framework for representing Palestinians both in the diaspora and within Palestine.[126]

According to its founding statement, the body seeks to foster strategic action that effectively supports the steadfastness of the Palestinian people in GS and WB while confronting the Israeli plans of annexation and displacement that intensified in 2025. Despite official attempts to marginalize these popular initiatives, NCPPA has established itself as a central actor in shaping grassroots national decision-making, affirming the Palestinian people's right to manage their affairs and determine their future free from foreign tutelage or political monopolization.

This institutional role has been manifested through coordinated media campaigns exposing the crimes of genocide and advancing the prisoners' cause in international forums, capitalizing on the growing "international isolation" of Israel. The formation of NCPPA was not merely administrative but a necessary response to the post-Operation al-Aqsa Flood period, which required Palestinians abroad to

assume leadership in safeguarding the national narrative and supporting resistance politically and on the ground. By the end of 2025, Palestinian popular action had consolidated a model of "effective coordination" that transcends geography and unites around the fundamentals of liberation and return.

The reform and reconstruction of the PLO "on democratic foundations" constituted a central pillar of political mobilization among Palestinians within Palestine and abroad in 2025. In this regard, opposition intensified against the monopolization of national decision-making and the deliberate paralysis of representative institutions. On 30/10/2025, four Palestinian conferences, namely PCPA, the Palestinian Popular Conference–14 Million, NCP and UPAL, issued a strongly worded statement entitled "Together to Annul the Illegitimate Decree and Affirm the People's Right to Choose Their Leadership." The statement unequivocally rejected presidential decrees aimed at transferring authority "from one individual to another" outside the framework of popular will.[127]

Nevertheless, despite the official PA leadership's continued insistence on top-down appointments, national forces both within Palestine and abroad advanced an alternative vision centered on the establishment of a "unified national leadership" or a "transitional constituent council." This framework would encompass all political forces and social constituencies, including resistance factions, through comprehensive elections representing Palestinians worldwide. Moreover, strategic discussions underscored that the continued exclusion of Palestinians abroad from decision-making within the PLO is increasingly undermining the effectiveness of the national project, particularly in light of regional and international transformations that require leadership endowed with full political and legal legitimacy.

By the end of 2025, field evidence indicates that the Palestinian landscape is moving toward a more "comprehensive mode of confrontation," in which the boundaries between Palestinians within Palestine and abroad are increasingly blurred. In the case of the Palestinians of the 1948 occupied territories, Israel has continued to intensify policies of repression and security surveillance, with the aim of marginalizing their engagement with issues concerning Jerusalem, GS and the WB. Nevertheless, Israel's failure to weaken or marginalize "national identity" suggests the possibility of renewed popular mobilization, potentially in the form of civil disobedience or politically driven protest movements, particularly in light of the deepening crisis of confidence in Israeli institutions.

With respect to the Palestinians abroad, the NCPPA faces the critical task of translating global solidarity into tangible political pressure. Despite logistical and political constraints, the expanding role of Palestinian communities in the West, together with their growing ability to influence decision-making processes and international judicial outcomes, positions the diaspora as a significant "strategic asset" in safeguarding the national project. Accordingly, the increasing integration between Palestinians within Palestine and abroad contributes to redefining Palestinian political identity in the face of ongoing efforts at liquidation.

Sixth: Public Opinion Polls and Trends Among Palestinians in WB and GS

Public opinion polls conducted in 2024–2025 by PSR[128] indicate widespread dissatisfaction among Palestinians in the WB and GS with President Mahmud 'Abbas and the PA, which an overwhelming majority perceives as corrupt. Moreover, throughout the war period, Hamas consistently outperformed Fatah across all indicators, including presidential and legislative preferences, as well as levels of trust and satisfaction with performance. At the same time, respondents expressed strong opposition to the disarmament of Hamas, even when framed as a condition for preventing renewed war, while a majority continued to support its decision to launch the 7/10/2023 attack. Taken together, these findings call into question claims that Hamas bears primary responsibility for the hardships endured by Palestinians. Notwithstanding the unprecedented scale of suffering and destruction, public opinion has remained largely focused on attributing responsibility to Israel and its US ally, with combined percentages ranging between 78% and 87% across five surveys conducted in 2024–2025. By contrast, attribution of blame to Hamas remained comparatively limited, ranging between 7% and 14%. Furthermore, according to Public Opinion Poll 96 (22–25/10/2025), 36% of Palestinians reported that, two years after the Gaza war, their support for Hamas had increased, whether moderately or significantly, in addition to its already substantial pre-war support base.

With regard to public satisfaction with the performance of Palestinian actors during the war (Operation al-Aqsa Flood), the same five surveys consistently show that Hamas commanded the highest approval ratings by a substantial margin,

ranging from 57% to 75%, with an overall average of 64.6%. In contrast, Fatah's approval ranged between 24% and 30% (averaging 26.2%), while satisfaction with President Mahmud 'Abbas remained markedly lower, fluctuating between 10% and 21%, with an average of 15.6%.

Moreover, the surveys reveal a clear electoral advantage for Hamas-affiliated candidates, whether Isma'il Haniyyah, Yahya Sinwar, or Khalid Mish'al, over Mahmud 'Abbas in presidential contests. Support for a Hamas candidate ranged between 63% and 76%, compared to 20% to 27% for 'Abbas. Notably, however, when Marwan Barghouthi is included, he emerges as the leading candidate, at times with margins comparable to those of Hamas nominees. This pattern reflects a longstanding trend in Palestinian public opinion, as Barghouthi embodies a unifying national symbolism that departs from 'Abbas's "Oslo-oriented" approach, aligns with the resistance line, and transcends factional divisions.

Regarding support for Palestinian factions, the surveys indicate that Hamas received between 32% and 40%, Fatah between 17% and 24%, and other groups between 7% and 12%, while those undecided or without a position ranged between 32% and 40%. Were new legislative elections held on the survey date with the participation of all political forces, Hamas would secure between 42.9% and 46.4% of the vote, Fatah between 21.5% and 30%, and all other factions combined between 5.8% and 10%. These results underscore Hamas's dominance in the Palestinian popular sphere and its clear readiness to assume leadership in any free election throughout 2024–2025. Given that most other factions (PIJ, PFLP, DFLP and the Palestinian National Initiative (PNI), etc.) also support the resistance and reject the Oslo Accords, it is evident that a majority of Palestinians back the resistance and its program. This explains the PLO and PA leadership's persistent reluctance to pursue genuine reconciliation, institutional reform and democratic restructuring, as well as their resistance to true partnership with Hamas and other resistance forces in elections. Fundamentally, any free and fair election would transfer PLO and national leadership to the resistance, thereby undermining the current leadership's position and perceived "legitimacy."

This analysis highlights profound dissatisfaction with President 'Abbas, who consolidates leadership of the PLO, PA, Fatah and the Palestinian state, while controlling both executive and legislative authority through decrees. Between 2024 and 2025, opinion polls indicated that 80–88% of respondents favored his

resignation from the PA presidency, a decisive majority that included segments of Fatah's grassroots.

Notably, an overwhelming majority believes that there is corruption in the PA institutions. An October 2025 poll indicated that 80% held this view; among respondents in the WB, who live directly under PA administration, the figure rises to 92%. Furthermore, a majority believes that the PA has become a burden on the Palestinian people (60% in May 2025 and 56% in October 2025).

These indicators point to a structural imbalance within the Palestinian leadership, political and representative framework. More specifically, they suggest that the current leadership does not constitute a genuinely representative body of the Palestinian people, as it fails to adequately reflect their concerns, aspirations and political orientations. Instead, a clear disconnect has emerged between this leadership and its broader constituency. Notably, the available data and evidence indicate that similar patterns largely extend to Palestinians abroad.

Taken together, these findings point to a pronounced "crisis of representation." While Arab and Muslim countries, alongside the international community and donor actors, continue to engage with the "official leadership," empirical evidence and field realities suggest that this leadership operates in "relative isolation" from popular sentiment. In contrast, "field legitimacy" has emerged as the foremost political reality. Accordingly, any future national project must carefully account for the implications of these findings, and Arab, Islamic and international actors must adopt a more realistic approach, grounded in the authentic sentiments of the Palestinian people.

Professional Union Elections in WB

In 2024, Palestinian professional unions in WB experienced a marked stagnation in their democratic processes. The ongoing genocide in GS and escalating aggression in WB produced a complex security and logistical environment that prevented elections from occurring as scheduled. This was particularly evident in the Palestinian Bar Association and the Engineers Association, where existing boards were automatically extended under the pretext of a "state of emergency," reinforcing the status quo and constraining democratic space.

By mid-2024, union members increasingly advocated for alternative mechanisms, such as electronic voting, to bypass the geographical fragmentation

imposed by Israel. Nevertheless, these proposals met official resistance, reflecting concerns over losing control amid growing public dissatisfaction with PA policies. As a result, professional unions shifted from forums of democratic engagement to "administrative bodies," awaiting political or operational developments that might restore their electoral vitality.

In the first half of 2025, independent union movements emerged beyond traditional structures, leading widespread protests against rising living costs and delayed wages. The Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions played a central role in documenting the plight of workers in the 1948 occupied territories who lost their work permits due to the war. Over 200 thousand workers reportedly joined the ranks of the unemployed, shifting the unions from advocacy bodies to institutions managing a "survival crisis."[129]

Student Council Elections

Throughout 2024, universities in WB served as a "key arena" for assessing political balances and shifts in public sentiment. Amid the ongoing war in GS, student council elections transcended their conventional representative function, effectively becoming a "national referendum" on the choice between resistance and the peace process. This dynamic was particularly evident at Birzeit University, where the elections revealed pronounced polarization. The Islamic Loyalty Bloc, affiliated with Hamas, retained a strong presence despite extensive arrest campaigns targeting its members by both Israel and PA security forces.[130]

However, the military realities on the ground in 2025 effectively forced the suspension of electoral processes in universities in the northern WB, including An-Najah National University and Palestine Technical University – Kadoorie. Repeated Israeli incursions, coupled with the siege of urban centers, curtailed public student activity. Nevertheless, this disruption did not prevent student blocs from fulfilling their national role. Rather, student movements assumed a leading position in mobilizing popular support for GS, with university campuses increasingly serving as sites of confrontation and national mobilization.[131]

Consequently, 2024 concluded with a marked reordering of priorities within university spaces, as traditional service-oriented agendas receded in favor of a more pronounced emphasis on the "field-based national stance," which has emerged as the principal source of political leverage and legitimacy, as well as the central axis of competition among student blocs.[132]

Seventh: Palestinian–Israeli Security Coordination and Its Domestic Implications

The events of 7/10/2023, followed by the war on GS and escalating tensions in the WB, represented the most stringent test of the PA's security coordination doctrine. Although coordination was "officially" suspended at certain moments of protest, evidence from 2024 suggests the persistence of "field-level" arrangements. These, in turn, were justified by the imperative of "preventing a comprehensive security breakdown" and containing the spread of armed resistance into major urban centers in WB.

This continuity was evident in the ability of the PA security forces to contain mass protest mobilizations and prevent their escalation toward areas of confrontation with Israel during peak phases of the offensive. Resistance factions, by contrast, characterized this role as "functional," arguing that it effectively shields Israel and undermines popular mobilization in support of GS. Conversely, official discourse justified these practices as necessary to safeguard PA institutions and to avoid providing Israel with a pretext to reoccupy "Area A" and further dismantle what remains of the national infrastructure.[133]

By 2025, however, the gap between the security apparatus and the broader public had further widened. Perceptions of security coordination increasingly shifted from a "political necessity" to a direct "national burden," particularly as Israel continued conducting targeted assassinations and incursions into RCs without any intervention by PA security forces to protect civilians.

The continuation of security coordination in 2024 and 2025 did not derive solely from an internal "official" Palestinian decision, but rather from an "intensified framework" of international and regional pressures that placed the PA in a highly constrained position. In this context, the US and the European Union (EU), as key donors, exerted direct leverage by conditioning the continuation of financial and political support on "reforming the PA security forces" and ensuring their effectiveness in preventing armed activity in WB. Consequently, security decision-making became closely tied to external funding streams that constitute a vital lifeline for PA institutions.

Within this framework, the 2024 "Lieutenant General Michael Fenzel" plan, the US security coordinator for Israel and the PA, emerged as a central component. The

plan aimed to train and equip specialized Palestinian security units for deployment in areas of tension such as Jenin and Nablus, not to protect them from Israeli incursions, but rather to enforce "security control" and prevent the formation of "resistance brigades." The plan was met with broad popular rejection and was widely perceived as an attempt to "localize" the conflict and draw Palestinians into an internal confrontation under the guise of "reform" and "international obligations."[134]

In addition, Israel has used "clearance revenues" as a persistent instrument of coercion. Thus, whenever public pressure mounted to end security coordination, it threatened to financially constrain the PA, thereby reinforcing the latter's reliance on coordination as a "necessity option" to preserve institutional continuity. In 2025, reports indicated that this dynamic had generated a form of "security dependency," significantly limiting the PA's political maneuverability and positioning its security forces in tension with its own social base, while accommodating external actors who conceive Palestinian security primarily as a "functional mechanism" for maintaining Israel's stability.[135]

Furthermore, the impact of security coordination intensified throughout 2024 and 2025, functioning both as a mechanism of "containment" and as a persistent source of societal friction. Over long years, it has ceased to be a merely high-level political issue and has instead become an everyday reality that increasingly clashes with the rising momentum of resistance in WB towns and RCs. Field reports from 2024 also documented a growing number of confrontations between security forces and armed groups, particularly in Jenin and Nablus, where PA security forces undertook sustained efforts to dismantle explosive devices planted to counter Israeli incursions. These incidents, in turn, led to regrettable internal clashes that further strained the social fabric.[136]

This security conduct has left deep scars on the condition of "civil peace," as early signs of declining trust in the official security apparatus have become increasingly evident. Accordingly, both factional and popular voices have emerged, calling either for alignment with popular demands or, at minimum, for "strict neutrality" on the part of the security forces. In 2025, human rights organizations documented a rise in complaints regarding the failure to protect citizens from escalating settler violence, in stark contrast to the intensified pursuit of political activists and individuals affiliated with resistance-linked blocs. This divergence

has, in turn, fostered a growing sense of "national alienation" among significant segments of youth.[137]

From a sociological standpoint, security coordination has thus evolved into a mechanism that deepens the "vertical cleavage" within Palestinian society. While the ruling elite continues to frame it as essential for preserving institutional continuity and averting internal chaos, public opinion, exceeding 70% in 2025 surveys, largely perceives it as a blow to popular steadfastness and a structural obstacle to the emergence of a unified national leadership capable of confronting the war on GS.[138]

The issue of "political detention" during 2024 and 2025 constituted a significant rupture in the fabric of national unity, as arrests targeting activists, released prisoners, and university students intensified on the basis of political affiliation or expressions of support for resistance. Although the PA denied the existence of "political detainees," insisting instead that those detained were "held on legal grounds," reports by Al-Haq organization indicate that most arrests were conducted without clear legal warrants and were often justified through broad charges such as "stirring unrest" or "illegal possession of weapons."

Legally, 2025 also witnessed a marked increase in court orders for the release of detainees, which were frequently not implemented by security agencies through what is commonly termed "detention at the discretion of the governor." Human rights organizations have described this practice as an overt encroachment by the executive on judicial authority and a direct erosion of the rule of law. As a result, hunger strikes within PA detention facilities increased, bringing the issue under intensified scrutiny from international and human rights bodies.[139]

Politically, the prisoners' issue has been instrumentalized as a bargaining tool in reconciliation negotiations. Hamas and PIJ have repeatedly demanded the release of prisoners as a prerequisite for the success of the "Beijing Declaration." Nevertheless, the persistence of arrests has underscored that the prevailing "security doctrine," grounded in coordination, continues to override considerations of national partnership. By the end of 2025, this issue remained a central impediment to meaningful rapprochement, while also constituting a key source of popular frustration, particularly amid perceptions that the pursuit of resistance members and activists amounts to a form of "free service" to Israel's objective of fragmenting the internal front.[140]

In conclusion, security coordination remains a "tense fault line" that threatens the cohesion of the national fabric. Its resolution appears contingent upon reorienting security decision-making toward a "comprehensive liberation project," and, more fundamentally, upon reshaping the prevailing security doctrine from one oriented toward "safeguarding Israeli or international commitments" into one centered on "protecting Palestinian existence" on its own land.[141]

Conclusion

The two years of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, 2024 and 2025, were markedly turbulent across all levels and are likely to generate significant and long-term repercussions shaping the Palestinian landscape in the years ahead. Accordingly, Palestinian actors face pressing imperatives to redefine their visions and strategic orientations for a new phase, in which external influence is increasingly pronounced and challenges have taken on an increasingly existential character, thereby placing the future of the Palestine issue and the broader Palestinian national project under mounting strain.

In light of the rapidly evolving regional and international political, security and economic dynamics, and based on an assessment of the behavior of Palestinian actors alongside the orientations of key regional and international stakeholders, as well as the interaction of political, economic and security variables, several projections regarding future internal Palestinian developments may be advanced. Chief among these is the following:

1. It is expected that the PA leadership will continue to seek to persuade international actors of the credibility of its reform agenda, with a view to sustaining its role in governing the WB and, eventually, reasserting authority over GS. At the same time, US and Israel pressure is likely to persist, with the aim of securing additional concessions from the PA on an ongoing basis.
2. In light of the Israeli governing coalition's hardline right-wing orientation toward the PA, uncertainty over the future of Palestinian governance has increased significantly. This is further compounded by Israel's efforts to develop alternative local arrangements for administering the WB, alongside its accelerating policies of land seizure and de facto annexation. In parallel, the Trump administration's

push to place GS under international tutelage and oversight adds another layer of external pressure. Taken together, these developments underscore the growing ambiguity surrounding the future political role of the PA in both the WB and GS in the coming period.

3. It is expected that the NCAG, established under President Trump's Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and the ceasefire agreement, will begin its work despite Israeli obstacles. Hamas and other resistance factions have expressed a degree of willingness to facilitate its functioning and ensure its success. Nevertheless, the committee's ability to fulfil its mandate in serving the population of GS remains constrained by ongoing Israeli pressure and obstruction, as well as by its subordination to the direct oversight of the executive administration of the "Board of Peace (BoP)," which functions as the de facto governing authority for GS, in addition to Israel's and the US's preoccupation with reshaping regional dynamics in Lebanon, Syria and Iran... .

4. Prospects for reaching an agreement on the future of resistance arms remain constrained by the wide divergence of positions among the relevant parties. Nonetheless, mediation efforts by key regional actors are likely to persist, with the aim of formulating more flexible approaches to overcome this impasse. Concurrently, available indicators suggest that Israel will continue its military operations in GS, refuse withdrawal, and seek to impose a new operational framework that preserves its freedom to act militarily and securitarily without meaningful constraint.

   In this light, the "day after" in GS appears not as a settled outcome but rather as an open-ended and evolving struggle, with trajectories that remain wide open. Whereas Israel appears to rely on a strategy of "socioeconomic exhaustion" and the domestication of civil administration, Palestinians, by contrast, are placing their bets on sustained "steadfastness on the ground" to counter projects of external tutelage and domination. Against this backdrop, 2026 is likely to constitute a decisive test of the Palestinian political system's capacity for renewal and its ability to assert agency amid an "intensifying wave" of international initiatives.[142]

5. Despite sustained Israeli and US efforts to isolate Hamas and exclude it from the political landscape in both WB and GS, the movement is likely to remain a central national actor. It is expected to continue adapting to mounting pressures

and overcoming the challenges it faces. Furthermore, Hamas will likely deepen its institutional, consultative governance model to mitigate leadership losses, while simultaneously consolidating field alliances with other resistance forces in order to form a "national bloc" capable of influencing the parameters of post-war arrangements. Notwithstanding regional pressures, its growing popular support will render its exclusion from national decision-making increasingly untenable.

As for Fatah and the PA, the coming period will constitute a critical test for them, particularly with regard to the capacity of internal currents to advance a reform trajectory that curtails "unilateral dominance." In the absence of substantive change, the crisis of legitimacy is likely to deepen further.

The popular sentiment in support of the resistance trajectory is likely to continue gaining momentum, thereby consolidating a clear and increasingly broad majority over the camp aligned with the peace process.

6. As 2025 draws to a close, the Palestinian political landscape appears increasingly defined by the entrenched reality of "intractable reconciliation" and the persistent absence of national consensus, notwithstanding the fact that existential pressures have reached unprecedented levels. Indeed, the experience of the past two years has demonstrated that prospects for reconciliation remain constrained by structural factors that extend well beyond the capacity of the Palestinian factions. International "vetoes" and Israeli conditions function as decisive impediments to any meaningful convergence beyond temporary humanitarian or ad operational coordination.

   While Gaza has reinforced a sense of "unity of destiny," PA institutions in the WB have remained committed to political frameworks that are increasingly misaligned with the emerging discourse of "revolutionary legitimacy." Consequently, this divergence has consolidated a shift from a traditional factional divide (Fatah–Hamas) toward a deeper structural cleavage between an "official diplomatic orientation" and a "popular, resistance-centered paradigm."[143] In this context, the most plausible scenario is the persistence of fragmentation and political divergence, as there are currently no substantive indicators of imminent rapprochement or a durable resolution of the Palestinian internal schism.

7. It is likely that the PLO and its institutions will remain structurally paralysed and ineffective, owing to the PA president's continued monopoly over political

decision-making, his refusal to reconstruct and revitalise the organisation, and the exclusion of key Palestinian factions from its framework. This dynamic is further entrenched by restrictive conditions linked to recognition of so-called "international legitimacy," particularly acceptance of the Oslo Accords and the PA's security commitments, despite their contradiction with the same framework's affirmation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Accordingly, most Palestinian factions reject any arrangements that run counter to the free will of the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination, including the election of their leadership and representative institutions.

8. While existing evidence points to the continued Israeli repression and policing strategies aimed at further marginalising the role of Palestinians of the 1948 occupied territories in engaging with developments in GS and WB, Palestinian communities are nevertheless expected to persist in asserting their national identity. In parallel, they are also expected to maintain active engagement with Palestinian political affairs in the period ahead.
9. The establishment of the NCPPA is anticipated to contribute to the consolidation of coordination mechanisms among Palestinian national conferences and independent figures, while also strengthening the role of the Palestinian diaspora within the broader framework of national mobilization.
10. It is likely that tensions and mutual accusations between Palestinian factions will persist, owing to enduring political divergence between those aligned with the PA leadership and those aligned with resistance factions that uphold national fundamentals, the option of resistance, and confrontation with Israel. In the absence of any meaningful signs of rapprochement, there is little prospect of substantive improvement in relations between the two sides in the foreseeable future.
11. It is increasingly likely that the continuation of security coordination in its traditional form will encounter mounting constraints amid the rise of the far-right in Israel, which no longer appears content with coordination alone. Rather, it has sought to undermine the PA itself and reconstitute its institutions as limited "village leagues" structures. In this context, the PA leadership is confronted with a stark dilemma: either acquiescence to functional erosion or a recalibration toward prevailing popular sentiment.

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[128] Public Opinion Poll No (91), PSR, 5–10/3/2024; Public Opinion Poll No (92), PSR, 26/5–1/6/2024; Press Release: Public Opinion Poll No (93), PSR, 3–7/9/2024; Press Release: Public Opinion Poll No (95), PSR, 1–4/5/2025, https://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/997; and Press Release: Public Opinion Poll No (96), PSR, 22–25/10/2025, https://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/1000; As for the results of Public Opinion Poll No. 94, they have not yet been published on the PSR website.

[129] Aljazeera.net, 15/4/2025. (in Arabic)

[130] PIC, 25/5/2024. (in Arabic)

[131] Site of Quds News Network, 12/2/2025, https://qudsn.co (in Arabic)

[132] Site of Vision For Political Development, 18/6/2024, https://vision-pd.org

[133] Aljazeera.net, 22/10/2024. (in Arabic)

[134] Aljazeera.net, 22/5/2024. (in Arabic)

[135] Safa, 10/11/2025.

[136] See for example: Aljazeera.net, 9/9/2024. (in Arabic)

[137] Aljazeera.net, 10/2/2025. (in Arabic)

[138] Safa, 22/6/2025.

[139] Aljazeera.net, 14/9/2024. (in Arabic)

[140] Safa, 5/11/2025.

[141] Safa, 31/12/2025.

[142] WAFA, 11/2/2026. (in Arabic)

[143] Aljazeera.net, 28/11/2025. (in Arabic)

The Palestine Strategic Report 2024 – 2025

This Report

Al-Zaytouna Centre is pleased to present The Palestine Strategic Report (PSR) 2024–2025, now in its 14th consecutive edition. This report provides an academic, objective and comprehensive analysis of developments related to the Palestine issue across various dimensions. It offers up-to-date and accurate information and statistics through the end of 2025, complemented by analytical insights and forecasts.

Prepared by 14 specialized professors and researchers, this PSR consists of eight chapters that explore various aspects of the Palestinian situation. It examines the internal Palestinian scene, demographic and economic indicators, and the status of Jerusalem and its holy sites. The report also analyzes the courses of aggression, resistance and the peace process, while providing insights into the Israeli political, demographic, economic and military landscape. Furthermore, it discusses Palestinian Arab, Islamic and international relations. Notably, Operation al-Aqsa Flood has significantly influenced the report's findings and perspectives.

The PSR has emerged as a key reference in Palestine studies, serving as an indispensable resource that provides invaluable insights for those interested in Palestinian affairs. Al-Zaytouna Centre aspires, through the PSR, to make a significant contribution to the field of Palestine studies.

Prof. Dr. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh

Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies & Consultations

مركز الزيتونة للدراسات والاستشارات

P.O. Box: 14-5034 Beirut - Lebanon

Tel: +961 21 803 644 | Tel-Fax: +961 21 803 643

info@alzaytouna.net | www.alzaytouna.net

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