

MAPPING PALESTINIAN POLITICS



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1. Introduction

Mapping Palestinian Politics provides an interactive overview of the main Palestinian political institutions and players in Palestine, Israel, and the diaspora. Its goal is to provide an easy-to-use, scene-setting resource for researchers, journalists, and policymakers ahead of significant transformations to the Palestinian political order centred around the anticipated departure of Mahmoud Abbas in the near term.

Since succeeding Yasser Arafat as Palestinian leader in 2004, Abbas has consolidated his grip on power within the Palestinian Authority (PA), the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), and Fatah. Over the years, Abbas has steadily purged or constrained his political rivals, monopolised the various Palestinian decision-making processes, and pursued increasingly authoritarian measures to stifle dissent and shrink the space for Palestinian democracy and popular participation. This political fragmentation and fragility has been compounded by continued infighting between Fatah and Hamas and the ensuing political and geographic separation between the West Bank and Gaza.

Unsurprisingly, Palestinian public confidence in traditional Palestinian governance structures continues to decline, confronting Palestinian institutions, Abbas’s presidency, and the PA with an unprecedented crisis of legitimacy. Moreover, both Fatah and Hamas – both considered the most dominant Palestinian political parties – have seen a similar decline in popular support. This shift is particularly noticeable among Palestinian youth, who have become increasingly alienated from Palestinian politics and elites.

The ever-present backdrop to Palestinian political fragmentation, of course, remains Israel’s prolonged occupation of Palestinian territory and enactment of policies designed to weaken and divide the Palestinian liberation movement. The result is that, while the Palestinian liberation movement remains united around a unifying vision of ending the occupation, it is currently in disarray over how to achieve this following the failure of the Oslo peace process

launched in 1993. This, even as different elements vie with each other to succeed Abbas as president of the PA, chairman of the PLO, and head of the ruling Fatah party.

Crucially, there are no institutional mechanisms currently able to manage the upcoming PA leadership transition given that Israeli policies and intra-Palestinian splits for now preclude legislative and presidential elections. Meanwhile, Abbas's marginalisation of the PLO's Executive Committee and Fatah's Central Committee, and concentration of power within his person, further challenges the ability of the PLO and Fatah to ensure a smooth leadership transition. This democratic atrophication of the nascent Palestinian state – combined with growing popular frustration, shrinking diplomatic horizons for achieving an end to Israel's occupation, and humanitarian pressures in Gaza – is feeding an increasingly volatile situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT).

This 'map' charts Palestinian political actors in order to help understand where people may turn for organisation and leadership in the post-Abbas period. It is based on research, including publicly available resources and literature, as well as discussions with experts and academics. It aims to give a big-picture view but should not be considered comprehensive or exhaustive. The resource will be periodically updated and expanded to reflect internal developments.

2. Geography

The creation of Israel in 1948 resulted in the geographic scattering of the Palestinian people. The displacement of around 700,000 Palestinians from the newly created state of Israel is commemorated by Palestinians as the Nakba (Catastrophe). Many of these refugees arrived in the West Bank, Gaza, and neighbouring countries (Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan).

Palestinian geography was further fragmented following the Arab defeat by Israel during the June 1967 (Six Day) war which saw Israeli forces occupy the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza. This sent a second wave of approximately 300,000 Palestinian refugees (half of whom were already refugees from 1948) towards neighbouring countries.

A third phase in Palestine's territorial fragmentation occurred during the Oslo peace process which carved up the West Bank according to various complex jurisdictional schemes under continued Israeli military control, and led to further Palestinian dispossession in East Jerusalem and Area C of the West Bank where Israeli settlements have steadily swallowed up Palestinian land.

These geographic divisions were accentuated by the intra-Palestinian fighting between Hamas and Fatah that erupted following the 2006 legislative election, and the subsequent imposition of a joint Egyptian-Israeli blockade on Hamas-controlled Gaza, limiting trade and movement with the West Bank.

Today, around 3 million Palestinian refugees and their descendants are scattered among refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. A further estimated 2.5 million live elsewhere as a diaspora, particularly Europe, the United States, and Latin America. This is in addition to 1.8 million Palestinians in Israel, and a further 4.5 million in the OPT (2 million of whom are refugees) – for a total of 12 million Palestinians worldwide.

The Palestinian liberation movement – and its embodiment in the PLO – has reflected these geographical shifts and divisions. Since the 1967 war, the PLO has been variously headquartered in Amman, then Beirut, then Tunis, before returning to the OPT as part of the Oslo peace process. Doing this time, the centre of gravity within the Palestinian liberation movement has shifted from neighbouring refugee camps to the West Bank and Gaza.

As a result, distinct sociopolitical dynamics have arisen throughout the Palestinian population, depending on location. While some groups are now headquartered in the West Bank or Gaza, others such as Hamas continue to base a large portion of their leadership in the diaspora. Others still, such as the Syrian-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (PFLP-GC), have been heavily co-opted by host governments. Meanwhile, in areas such as East Jerusalem and refugee camps, where the PA/PLO exercises either weak or non-existent control, autonomous leaderships have risen, creating their own distinct political dynamics. This political complexity combined with enduring physical separation and socio-economic backgrounds have weakened the Palestinian polity, making it harder for a unified and representative body to take root or articulate a coherent liberation strategy

Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT)

The OPT consists of the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza. Some 4.5 million Palestinians live in the OPT (2.7 million in the West Bank and 1.8 million in Gaza). The fulfilment of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would see the creation of a sovereign and unified Palestinian state on this area, with East Jerusalem as its capital, based on the pre-June 1967 lines (the borders that existed prior to Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in June 1967).

Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza during the 1967 war. Between 1967-1993, it administered the OPT through a system of Palestinian "Village Leagues". The launch of the 1993 Oslo peace process between Israel and the PLO, however, led to their replacement with a newly created Palestinian Authority (PA), the return of the previously exiled PLO, and a shift in the Palestinian liberation movement's centre of gravity, away from the refugee camps and diaspora, to the OPT.

The 1993 Oslo Accords have resulted in the gradual fragmentation of the OPT. As part of a four-year interim phase supposedly leading to a final status agreement, the West Bank was divided into three areas with differing jurisdictional arrangements: Area C (17.2 per cent) under full PA control; Area B (23.8 percent) under PA civil control and Israeli security control; and Area C (59 per cent) under full Israeli control. The Oslo peace process also saw a surge in Israeli settlement building. Today, the West Bank is [perforated](#) by over 100 Israeli civilian settlements, dozens of "outposts" and military bases, along with a network of restricted roads and checkpoints. In total, over 588,000 Israeli settlers reside in the OPT.

The West Bank and Gaza have been politically split since the intra-Palestinian fighting that erupted after Hamas's victory in the 2006 legislative election. Since then, Hamas has controlled Gaza, while the PA remains in the West Bank. This has resulted in the emergence of two parallel systems of Palestinian governance, despite numerous intra-Palestinian reconciliation attempts. Gaza has also been under an Israeli air, sea, and land blockade since then, limiting the ability of Palestinians to travel and trade with the West Bank, and creating severe social, economic, and humanitarian hardships for Gazans.

Palestinian citizens of Israel

Palestinian citizens of Israel have had the right to vote in Israeli elections since the first Israeli elections in 1949. During military rule until 1966, Palestinian representation was largely organised through the Communist party or satellite factions allied with Israeli Jewish parties. The first independent Arab party that ran for the Knesset, Al-Ard, was outlawed by the Israeli government in 1964. The Abnaa al-Balad movement (Sons of the Village), which promoted a secular nationalist ideology, encouraged a boycott of Israeli elections.

The Israeli Palestinian community's politics is multi-faceted with communist, socialist, nationalist, religious, secular, feminist, and other streams of thought. They generally share a common platform of promoting a "state for all its citizens". Although Arab parties are largely focused on political matters inside Israel, since the 1990s they have more strongly asserted their simultaneous connections to the wider Palestinian cause and the Palestinian leadership.

Palestinian political figures frequently face efforts by Israeli authorities and Jewish parliamentarians to limit their political rights. These include motions to disqualify Arab parties from running in the election; criminal indictments by police against Arab politicians for participating in demonstrations; and a new law allowing 80 Knesset members (out of 120) to expel their colleagues from the parliament, among others.

Joint List

The Joint List was formed in 2015 as a united slate of the four main Arab political parties in Israel: Hadash (Arab-Jewish, communist), Balad (Palestinian nationalist), Ra'am (Islamist), and Ta'al (Arab nationalist). The List is currently the third largest party in the Knesset with 13 seats, and is headed by Ayman Odeh (Hadash), a lawyer from Haifa.

Although there have been long-standing calls for the Arab factions to unify, the impetus for the List's creation was a new law enacted in March 2014 that raised the Israeli electoral threshold from 2 percent to 3.25 percent – a measure deliberately designed in part to make it more difficult for the smaller Arab parties to enter the Knesset.

The Joint List has increased the public profile and political engagement of Arab parliamentary members, and has boosted its international advocacy including in the United States and the European Union. However, the List also faces various internal disputes, including over seat rotations, political language, and partnerships with left-wing Jewish parties.

1. *Ayman Odeh (Leader of the Joint List)*

Islamic Movement (Northern Branch)

The Islamic Movement in Israel split into two branches in 1996 over its decision to stand candidates for the Knesset. The southern branch formed the Ra'am party (now part of the Joint List), while the northern branch continues to boycott elections. The northern branch – led by Raed Salah – is said to have links with Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood.

In November 2015, the Israeli government issued an executive order under the 1945 Emergency Regulations that outlawed the northern Islamic Movement and 17 associated NGOs. The Murabitat and Murabitoun, a collective established by the movement to 'defend' Al-Aqsa, were also outlawed.

1. *Raed Salah (Leader)*

High Follow-Up Committee

Established in 1982, the High Follow-Up Committee (HFC) is an extra-parliamentary organisation that acts as a national coordinating and representative body for Palestinian citizens of Israel. Its membership is drawn from the National Council of the Heads of Arab Localities, the Arab political parties in the Knesset, Arab civil society organisations, and others. It is currently headed by Mohammad Barakeh, a former Knesset member for Hadash.

Decisions in the HFC are reached by consensus and organised through various sub-committees. In 2006-2007, it facilitated the creation of the [Future Vision Document](#), which articulated the Palestinian citizens' demand for Israel to become a 'state for all its citizens'. However, the HFC has been criticised in recent years for being ineffective and offering few actions aside from general strikes.

Israel refuses to recognise the HFC as a representative body, viewing it as an attempt to establish political autonomy outside of the state's institutions; the subsequent pressure from Israeli authorities has prevented the HFC from renewing its leadership.

1. Mohammad Barakeh (Leader)

Jerusalem

Jerusalem is at the centre of the Palestinian liberation movement, and where it first developed in the late 1920s. But Palestinian factions, and the PLO, currently have a very minimal presence in the city.

Jerusalem was emptied of Palestinian political forces, first by Jordan after the 1948 war, and then by Israel after the 1967 war. It experienced some political revival in the 1990s after the launch of the Oslo peace process allowed the PLO to establish a presence in the city. During the Second Intifada, however, Israel expelled the PLO from Jerusalem and closed its headquarters in the city – the “Orient House”. In 2011 Israel expelled four Hamas PLC members from the city: Muhammad Totah, Ahmad Atoun, Muhammad Abu Tir, and Khaled Abu Arafah, a former Palestinian minister for Jerusalem affairs.

Residents have recently shown the ability to mobilise in resistance to what they see as the “Israelisation” of the city. Most notable is the movement led by youth and supported by religious institutions in the city (including the Waqf, the Mufti, Sharia Courts, and the Islamic Higher Council) to block Israel from installing security structures at the gates of Al-Aqsa mosque in March 2017.

Refugee camps

The majority of Palestinians – around 5 million – are refugees. About one-third of the Palestinian refugee population are spread out across 58 UNRWA-administered camps in the OPT, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.

While UNRWA administers health, education, and other services in the camps, refugees organise themselves politically through popular committees. Refugee staff of UNRWA are organised within the Local Staff Union and regularly mobilise against UNRWA reduction of their employment or services in the camps.

Palestinian political movements and factions emerged from the refugee camps, and continue to serve as recruiting grounds and as locations of political contestation. In the OPT, the camps played a major role in the resistance against the Israeli occupation in the First and Second

Intifadas. Recent years have seen PA security forces [clash](#) in refugee camps such Jenin and Balata, allegedly with Fatah activists loyal to Mohammed Dahlan.

Although Palestinian factions such as Fatah and Hamas maintain a strong presence in refugee camps in Lebanon (outside of Lebanese security control) these have however witnessed the rise of [Salafi-jihadist factions](#) such as Fatah al-Islam.

3. Institutions

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was established in 1964. Over the years, it grew to embody the Palestinian national liberation movement and become the sole and legitimate representative of Palestinians everywhere.

The PLO's power was eclipsed by the creation of the Palestinian National Authority – more commonly referred to as the PA (PA) – in 1993, following the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self Government (the Oslo Accords) signed between the PLO and the government of Israel. The PA was established as an interim administrative organisation that nominally governs parts of the West Bank and Gaza, and whose role is restricted according to the PLO's agreements with Israel. In theory, the PA is subordinate to and derives its legitimacy from the PLO.

Following the signing of the Oslo Accords, the PLO formed the now defunct 'Council of the Palestinian National Authority' and appointed Yasser Arafat as the chairman of the Council. This arrangement, which was the first step in the creation of the PA, has formed the institutional basis of Palestinian politics to this day, whereby the head of the largest Palestinian faction, Fatah, operates as chairman of the PLO and as president of the PA. Since Arafat's death in 2004, these three positions have remained in the hands of his successor, Mahmoud Abbas.

In 2006, the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, won the PA's PLC election. In response to his rivals' victory, Abbas reactivated the PLO's status and institutions to regain power and assert legitimacy, including by launching a diplomatic campaign to make Palestine a non-member state at the United Nations. More recently, the PLO has been the main institution responding to the US declaration of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and its cutting of aid to the Palestinians.

These latest activities within the PLO have so far precluded any serious attempt to fully revive and reform the crumbling institution, despite many Palestinian voices calling for such efforts. The PLO remains very weak and the PA, while enjoying the appearance of a developing state, lacks sovereignty and is increasingly seen by Palestinians as serving the interests of the Israeli occupation rather than the aspirations of the Palestinian people.

Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)

The [Palestine Liberation Organisation](#) (PLO) was founded in 1964 during the first Arab League summit in Cairo. In 1974, it was officially recognised by the Arab League and the United Nations General Assembly as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people", and was invited to participate in all UN activities under observer status. In 1988, it endorsed a two-state solution to the conflict with Israel. Since 2012, the PLO sits at the UN as a non-member state, Palestine, and is a signatory to UN treaties as well as agreements with Israel.

The PLO had been successively headquartered in Jordan (from its establishment until the Black September confrontation with Jordan in 1970-71); in Lebanon (until its expulsion by Israel in 1982); and in Tunis (until its return to the OPT following the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993).

The PLO comprises various political factions (excluding Hamas and Islamic Jihad) and is organised into three bodies: (i) the [Palestinian National Council \(PNC\)](#), a parliamentary body that is elected by Palestinians everywhere except for Palestinian citizens of Israel; (ii) the Central Council, a 124-member decision-making body elected by members of the PNC; and (iii) the 18-member Executive Committee, which is elected by the Central Council and which in turn elects the chairman of the PLO.

The PLO is governed internally by its [Basic Law](#), which outlines the powers and relations between the [organs](#) of the PLO.

Palestinian National Council (PNC)

The Palestinian National Council (PNC) is the legislative authority within the PLO, and is responsible for formulating the organisation's policies. It acts as a parliament that represents all Palestinians, except for Palestinian citizens of Israel. The PNC currently comprises 740 members representing Palestinians in Palestine and the diaspora. Despite not being members of the PLO, Hamas and Islamic Jihad representatives are invited to attend PNC meetings as observers (although they usually refuse).

According to its bylaws, the PNC must meet annually and can hold special meetings (without a full quorum) as needed. In practice, though, it last convened a full meeting in 1996, in Gaza.

A full quorum of the PNC is expected to meet on 30 April 2018 in Ramallah to elect a new PLO Central Council (which will in turn elect a new PLO Executive Committee). This is seen as a step towards designating a successor to Abbas as chairman of the PLO.

The scattering of the Palestinian people and Israel's occupation has made it difficult to organise direct elections for the PNC. Instead, a quota system was put in place whereby factions appoint members to the body in proportion to the size of their support base. This makes Fatah the most dominant faction, followed by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Unions and groups also appoint their own representatives to the PNC.

The PNC adopted the Palestinian National Charter in [1964](#) and another new charter in [1968](#). It was amended again in [1996](#) to comply with the PLO's acceptance of the Oslo peace process formally launched in 1993. This initiated internal strife within the PLO due to many members' opposition to the agreements (Edward Said, the famous scholar and activist, left the PNC because he believed the Oslo Accords undermined Palestinian refugees' right to return to their homes in pre-1967 Israel). In 1998, the PNC convened in Gaza to amend articles within the Charter in accordance with new requirements under the Oslo Accords, including recognition of Israel; the meeting, which was boycotted by many members, was addressed by then-US president Bill Clinton.

Many Palestinians see the PNC as the most important democratic institution through which the Palestinian national movement can be revived. Recent efforts to reactivate the PNC, such as the [PNC Register Campaign](#), are widely supported by Palestinians both inside and outside the OPT. The revival of the PNC is also a central subject in the current Palestinian national reconciliation efforts.

There are currently an estimated 740 members of the Palestinian National Council (PNC), including all members of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) and PLO Executive Committee (EC). Key figures are listed below. (full profiles can be found in the annex.)

1. *Salim Zanoun (Speaker/Shairman)*
2. *Tayseer Quba'a (Deputy Speaker) ***
3. *Constantine Kormosh (Deputy Chairman)*
4. *Mohammad Sbieh (Secretary General)*
5. *Marwan Ali Muna al-Sa'di (Deputy Secretary General)*

Palestinian Central Council (PCC)

Because of the difficulties in convening the full PNC, the Palestinian Central Council (CC) was established in 1973 to function as an intermediary body between the PNC and the PLO's Executive Committee.

The Palestinian Central Council convened in January 2018 following the US decision to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. As a response to the US decision, the PCC called on the Executive Committee to suspend the recognition of Israel until it recognises Palestine as a state, to suspend PA security coordination with Israel, and to work on a multilateral international approach to resolving the conflict.

Since April 1996, the Palestinian Central Council has consisted of 124 members drawn from the EC, the PNC, and the PLC. PCC meetings are chaired by the PNC chairman.

1. *Salim Zanoun (Chairman)*

Executive Committee (EC)

The [Executive Committee](#) (EC) is the primary executive organ of the PLO and represents the organisation at the international level. Its main function is to execute the policies and decisions set out by the PNC and the CC, and is responsible for adopting a budget. Each member of the EC is responsible for overseeing the functioning of the PLO's departments, similar to the role of ministers. Decisions of the EC are taken by a simple majority.

In September 2009 the EC [appointed](#) Mahmoud Abbas as chairman. During the same meeting, the prime minister of the PA was made permanent observer at EC meetings -- in effect establishing an institutional connection between the PLO and PA. Abbas has further sought to solidify his hold over the EC, including by [freezing funds](#) to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine in 2016 following their increased criticism of his policies, especially regarding security coordination with Israel.

The EC has 18 members, including its chairman, and is elected by and responsible to the PNC.

In August 2015, 11 members of the EC announced their resignations: Abbas; Amira; Ashrawi; Erekat; Ismail Ali; Kaddoumi; al-Khoudary; Majdalani; al-Nashashibi; Abd al-Rahman; and Shakaa (who has since died). These have yet to be accepted (or rejected), pending a meeting of the PNC, currently expected to take place on 30 April 2018 in Ramallah.

Palestinian analysts and political rivals have [dismissed](#) the significance of these resignations as a "play". According to [Masarat's](#) Hani Masri: "Those who reportedly submitted their resignations have no intention to leave. They just want to use the resignations to call for an

extraordinary meeting of the Palestinian National Council in accordance with Article 14 of the Palestinian Basic Law.”

Current members of the EC are:

1. *Mahmoud Abbas (Chairman)*
2. *Saeb Erekat (Secretary General)*
3. *Zakaria al-Agha*
4. *Mahmoud Ismail Ali*
5. *Hanna Afif Amira*
6. *Hanan Ashrawi*
7. *Ali Ishaq*
8. *Farouk Kaddoumi*
9. *Taysir Khaled*
10. *Riyad Hassan al-Khoudary*
11. *Ahmad Majdalani*
12. *Abdel Rahim Mallouh*
13. *Mohammad Zuhdi al-Nashashibi*
14. *Ahmed Qurei*
15. *Yasser Abed Rabbo*
16. *Saleh Ra'fat*
17. *Asaad Abd al-Rahman*
18. *Ghassan Walid Shak'a ***

Palestinian Authority (PA)

The PA (PA) – formerly referred to as the Palestinian National Authority – is headed by the president, who sits on top of the executive branch which includes the Council of Ministers. In addition to the executive branch, the PA includes the PLC and justice system. Since the launch of the PLO's statehood strategy in 2011 the institutions of the PA have been at times been equated to those of the State of Palestine, although a degree of confusion exists over the exact relationship between the two.

The PA was established in 1994 as part of the Oslo peace process and it effectively allowed for the return of the PLO to the OPT. The PA has nominal control over both security-related and civilian matters in urban areas of the OPT (Area A), and only civilian control over Palestinian rural areas (Area B). The remainder of the territory, (Area C) which includes illegal Israeli settlements, bypass roads, and the Jordan Valley region, remains under full Israeli control.

With the support of the United States and the European Union, Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah attempted to sideline the Hamas-led government that emerged following the group's victory in the 2006 legislative election. This led to bloody infighting and the fracturing of the PA, and the geographic division of Palestine between a Hamas authority in Gaza and a Fatah authority in the West Bank. This division has become entrenched within Palestinian politics despite a number of reconciliation efforts over the years

Since 2007, Hamas has worked to develop its own institutions in Gaza, which include ministries, judicial systems, municipalities, and security forces; the Hamas parliamentary “Change and Reform” bloc in the PLC in Gaza has also remained active. Meanwhile, in the West Bank, the PA has gained extensive international support to build state institutions and acquire international legitimacy.

In June 2014, a National Accord Government was formed following an agreement between Fatah and Hamas. Abbas's decision to reshuffle the government in July 2015 without consulting Hamas led the Islamist group to withdraw its endorsement.

Reconciliation efforts in 2017-18 have since centred around returning governance of Gaza to the PA. This would be among the first in a series of steps aimed at convening new PA presidential and legislative elections, and reforming the PLO.

Executive

Presidency

The president of the PA (PA) is directly elected by Palestinians in the OPT for a five-year renewable term. The president is the commander-in-chief of the armed forces. According to the Basic Law, the president appoints a prime minister following nomination by the PLC. The president is also chief of the national security services.

1. *Mahmoud Abbas (President)*
2. *Majdi al-Khalidi (Adviser for diplomatic affairs)*
3. *Mahmoud al-Habbash (Adviser on religious affairs)*
4. *Hassan al-Ouri (Adviser for legal affairs)*
5. *Tayeb Abdel Rahim (Secretary general)*
6. *Nabil Abu Rudeineh (Spokesperson)*
7. *Nabil Shaath (Adviser for international and foreign relations)*

Council of Ministers

The prime minister is appointed by the PA president. The position of PA prime minister was created in 2003, in part due to international criticism of the then president, Yasser Arafat. Initially, prime ministers were Fatah members, reflecting the party's electoral majority in the PLC. However, since the international boycott of the 2006 Hamas government led by Ismail Haniyeh, the prime minister has been an independent 'technocratic' figure.

The cabinet is appointed by the prime minister and is responsible to the legislature (the PLC).

The PA government is currently headed by Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah and includes 20 ministers.

1. *Rami Hamdallah (Prime Minister)*
2. *Ziad Abu Amr (Deputy Prime Minister)*
3. *Haifaa al-Agha (Minister for Women's Affairs)*
4. *Hussein Al-Araj (Minister for Local Government)*
5. *Jawad Awwad (Minister of Health)*
6. *Shukri Bishara (Minister of Finance and Planning)*
7. *Ehab Bseiso (Minister of Culture)*
8. *Ali Abu Diak (Minister of Justice)*
9. *Youssef Ed'iss (Minister for Religious Endowments (Awqaf) and Religious Affairs)*
10. *Mofeed al-Hasayneh (Minister for Public Works and Housing)*
11. *Adnan al-Husayni (Minister for Jerusalem Affairs)*
12. *Rula Maayah (Minister of Tourism and Antiquities)*
13. *Riyad al-Maliki (Foreign Minister)*

14. *Alam Moussa (Minister for Communications and Information Technology)*
15. *Abeer Odeh (Minister of National Economy)*
16. *Sabri Saidam (Minister for Education)*
17. *Ibrahim al-Shaer (Minister for Social Development)*
18. *Ma'moun Abu Shahla (Minister of Labour)*
19. *Sufian Sultan (Minister of Agriculture)*
20. *Samih Tbeileh (Minister for Transport)*
21. *Salah Alayan (Secretary General)*

Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC)

The Palestine Legislative Council was created as part of the Oslo Accords as the legislative branch of the PA and is meant to represent Palestinians residing in OPT (i.e. Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem). The PLC approves the PA's budget, and can pass motions of no confidence against the PA (PA) government.

The PLC comprises [132 seats](#), based on a mixed electoral system by which 50 percent of seats are elected through the majority system (districts) and the other 50 percent of seats are elected through the proportional representation system (lists). Legislative elections have been held twice: in 1996 (won by Fatah) and 2006 (won by Hamas).

The current distribution of PLC seats is: Hamas "Change and Reform Bloc" (74); Fatah (45); PFLP (3); PNI (2); Third Way (2); DFLP (1); PPP (1); Independents (4). In theory, the current PLC's mandate expired in 2010.

As of December 2017 there were [10 PLC members](#) imprisoned by Israel, the majority of them held without charge or trial – these include Khalida Jarrar (PFLP), Ahmad Sadaat (PFLP), and Marwan Bargouthi (Fatah). In December 2016 Abbas lifted parliamentary immunity from his Fatah rival and PLC member Mohammed Dahlan, along with four other PLC members seen to support him.

The PLC has not met in a regular session since the 2007 West Bank-Gaza split. With the PA legislative and oversight process effectively frozen, Mahmoud Abbas has increasingly ruled through presidential decrees.

The Hamas 'Change and Reform' bloc has continued to convene as the PLC in Gaza. A Change and Reform bloc meeting at the PLC in Gaza in August 2017 was attended by Fatah members opposed to Abbas splinter-group and led by Mohammed Dahlan (who appeared via video conference).

The protocols for holding of PLC elections – including in Jerusalem – are set out in [Annex 2 of the 1995 Israeli-Palestinian interim agreement](#) (Oslo II). According to the PA's [Basic Law](#), the PLC's term limit is four years.

There are 132 members of the PLC, all of whom are automatically members of the PNC. A full list of PLC members can be found [here](#). Key figures are listed below.

1. *Aziz Duwaik (Speaker/Hamas)*
2. *Hasan Khreisheh (Deputy Speaker/Independent)*
3. *Ismail Haniyeh (Hamas)*
4. *Mahmoud al-Zahar (Hamas)*

1. *Mahmoud Al-Aloul (Fatah)*
2. *Azzam al-Ahmad (Fatah)*
3. *Marwan Barghouti (Fatah)*
4. *Saeb Erekat (Fatah)*
5. *Nabil Shaath (Fatah)*
6. *Mohammed Dahlan (Fatah - Democratic Reform Bloc)*
7. *Khalida Jarrar (PFLP)*
8. *Ahmad Sa'adat (PFLP)*
9. *Mustafa Barghouti (PNI)*
10. *Hanan Ashrawi (Third Way)*
11. *Salam Fayyad (Third Way)*

Justice system

The Palestinian justice system includes the [Attorney-General's Office](#), [the Bar Association](#), and a court system supervised and regulated by the [High Judicial Council](#) which nominates judges for approval by the president of the PA. The PA [court system](#) is composed of sharia courts, [military courts](#), the Court of First Instance, Court of Conciliation, the Courts of Appeal, the High Court of Justice (which has primary jurisdiction over electoral matters), and the newly created High Constitutional Court (which interprets the Basic Law and legislative texts).

The Palestinian judiciary faces a number of challenges, including the intra-Palestinian split that has led to the development of a [parallel justice system](#) in Gaza under Hamas, as well as continued obstacles resulting from Israel's occupation and limited Palestinian sovereignty.

Constitutional Court

In what was seen as a largely political move to consolidate power, Mahmoud Abbas issued a decree in April 2016 [creating](#) a Constitutional Court composed of nine judges drawn predominantly from his Fatah supporters. Although the Constitutional Court was foreseen in the 2002 Basic Law, the timing and context of its activation is seen as a means of further constraining Abbas's rivals and potentially creating a mechanism to anoint a future successor to the PA presidency.

In October 2016, the Constitutional Court backed Abbas's decision to postpone municipal elections, ruling that these could no longer be held in Gaza given a lack of judicial "guarantees" from the Hamas-backed court system. In November 2016, the court once again ruled in Abbas's favour, upholding his authority to revoke the parliamentary immunity of his Fatah rival Mohammad Dahlan and of four of his supporters in the PLC.

Given its expansive powers, Abbas may attempt to use the Constitutional Court to rubber-stamp the creation of a PA vice-president that would take precedence over the PLC speaker (Hamas's Aziz Duwaik) in any post-Abbas succession process.

Elections

The PA has held presidential and legislative elections twice. The first were in 1996, when Yasser Arafat won the presidency and his party, Fatah, dominated the PLC. A presidential election was held once again in 2005 following Arafat's death, and was won by Mahmoud Abbas. Legislative elections for the PLC were held once again in 2006, at the urging of President Bush, and won by the Islamist group Hamas.

In addition, there have been three municipal elections since the PA's creation: in 2004-05 in both the West Bank and Gaza; and in 2012 and 2017 in the West Bank only, without the participation of several Palestinian factions, including Hamas.

PA elections (presidential, legislative, and municipal) are regulated by the 2007 Elections Law – a decree issued by Mahmoud Abbas. Since 2005 Palestinian elections have been administered by the independent [Central Elections Commission](#) (CEC). The CEC is led by nine [Commissioners](#) appointed through presidential decree.

Municipalities

Municipalities were once controlled and used by Israel as a means of administering its occupation until the formation of the [Palestinian Authority](#) (PA) in 1994. Prior to the establishment of the PA, Israel created what was known as the “Village Leagues” to administer the OPT through proxies. Leaders and members of these groups were largely seen as traitors by the Palestinian population and became a target for assassinations during the First Intifada.

After the PA's establishment, municipal elections became a significant arena for Palestinian political development. Municipal elections were held in 2004-05 in both the West Bank and Gaza – the first since 1976, and the first under the PA. Voting mostly followed party lines, but in some cases family and tribal relations also played a role. The second municipal elections were held only in the West Bank in 2012 without Hamas participation. The third municipal elections in 2017 – again held exclusively in the West Bank – saw lower participation and a shift away from factional politics. They highlighted internal divisions within Palestinian politics given the non-participation of Palestinian factions such as [Hamas](#), the [Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine](#) (PFLP), and [Fatah-aligned supporters](#) of [Mohammed Dahlan](#).

Hamas boycotted PA elections until 2005, when it participated and had great success in that year's municipal elections. But Hamas boycotted the 2017 municipal elections after the Supreme Court ruled that the Hamas-backed court system in Gaza did not have jurisdiction to rule on electoral matters – a crucial element in ensuring Hamas buy-in and prompting accusations that Abbas had ignored agreements reached by Palestinian factions in Beirut in January 2017.

Unions

Union mobilisation played a major role in the development of the Palestinian liberation movement since 1925, and has historically been a vehicle for Palestinian women and students to play a role in politics. They were weakened by the emergence of the PA and the decline of the PLO, in which they are represented. The split between West Bank and Gaza led to the creation of two separate bodies of unions. University student unions are dominated by factional politics, and elections for the unions often serve as indicators of the strength of the political parties as a whole.

4. Political actors

Fatah continues to be the dominant force within the PLO and PA, although the emergence of Hamas and its victory in the PLC elections in 2006 posed a serious challenge to Fatah and the PLO as a whole. The infighting between Fatah and Hamas in 2007 caused deep divisions within Palestinian politics. Although some Palestinians have been organising and operating outside or across these factional lines, politics is still largely determined by them. These

factional lines are reflected to varying degrees within the PLO and the PA, in refugee camps, in Jerusalem, and in municipal and union elections.

PLO groups

There are [11 factions](#) represented in the PLO. Fatah remains the largest and most dominant, followed by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Many of the other parties have lost their popular support base and contribute very little to politics today; in most cases, they have been reduced to a few aging figures who still hold positions within the PLO.

Fatah

Fatah is the Arabic acronym for the National Liberation Movement, a secular nationalist organisation established by Yasser Arafat and fellow activists, including Mahmoud Abbas, in the late 1950s. Arafat led the party until his death in 2004. Since Arafat's death, Fatah has been led by Mahmoud Abbas.

Fatah has experienced internal strife throughout its history in exile and at home. It effectively took control of the PA in 1996 and is widely viewed by Palestinians as [corrupt](#). The party lost much of its position of dominance after Arafat's death and the loss of the 2006 parliamentary election to Hamas. Following the 2007 infighting, Fatah was left weakened in Gaza, and broken as a national movement.

The two main organs within Fatah are the Central Committee (the executive branch) and the Revolutionary Council (the legislative branch), both of which are elected by a General Conference. Fatah has held seven conferences throughout its history.

Dahlan and his supporters now operate through a new organisation called the Fatah Democratic Reform Movement.

Throughout its history Fatah has organised and perpetrated numerous attacks against Israeli military and civilian targets. In 1988, it was removed from the United States's list of terrorist organisations after it renounced terrorism.

General Congress

The Fatah General Congress is composed of approximately 1400 party members and elects both the Revolutionary Council (RC) and Central Committee (CC). The last Congress – Fatah's Seventh – was held in Ramallah in December 2016, electing a new RC and CC. This was largely seen as a move by Mahmoud Abbas to strengthen his grip on the party by ousting his rival Mohammed Dahlan and marginalising the popular Fatah figure Marwan Barghouti.

Revolutionary Council (RC)

The Revolutionary Council (RC) is Fatah's parliamentary body. It consists of 80 members elected by the Fatah General Congress, and sets policies through various committees. The RC is elected by the Fatah Congress made up of approximately 1400 party members.

Fatah held its seventh Congress in Ramallah in December 2016 which elected the current RC.

A full RC membership list can be found [here](#). High-profile members are also posted below.

1. *Majed al-Fetyani (Secretary General)*
2. *Jawad Awwad*
3. *Fadwa Barghouti*
4. *Akram Rujoub*

5. *Afif Safieh*
6. *Hussam Zomlot*

Central Committee (CC)

The Central Committee (CC) is Fatah's executive arm. It is made up of 21 members including the chairman, 18 members elected by the General Conference, and two members appointed by the chairman.

1. *Mahmoud Abbas (Chairman)*
2. *Mahmoud Aloul (Deputy Chairman)*
3. *Jibril Rajoub (Secretary General)*
4. *Sabri Saidam (Deputy Secretary General)*
5. *Azzam al-Ahmad*
6. *Marwan Bargouthi*
7. *Saeb Erekat*
8. *Rawhi Fattouh*
9. *Ahmad Hilles*
10. *Ismail Jabr*
11. *Nasser Kidwa*
12. *Muhammad Madani*
13. *Jamal Mohsin*
14. *Samir Rifai*
15. *Nabil Abu Rudeineh*
16. *Dalal Salameh*
17. *Hussain Sheikh*
18. *Mohammad Shtayyeh*
19. *Tawfiq Tirawi*
20. *Karim Younis*
21. *Abbas Zaki*

Fatah – Democratic Reform Bloc

The Democratic Reform Bloc is the name given to Mohammed Dahlan and his supporters from Fatah who were ostracised from Fatah following the seventh conference.

1. *Mohammed Dahlan*

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)

The [Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine](#) (PFLP) is a revolutionary socialist party that was co-founded in 1967 by George Habash, Nayef Hawatmeh, and Ahmad Jibril, as an umbrella organisation for Marxist and Arab nationalist groups. It became the second largest faction, and the main opposition force to Fatah, within the PLO. It has been in decline since the 1980s following the collapse of the Soviet Union which had been its chief benefactor, and the emergence of non-PLO groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

The PFLP holds its General Conference in secret. It elects an unknown number, thought to be 18, members of the Political Bureau, most of whose identities are unknown. The last General Conference, held in 2014, re-elected Ahmad Sa'adat as secretary general.

The PFLP opposes serving in the PA government and has been critical of its policies, particularly regarding security coordination with Israel. The PFLP does not support the two-state solution and instead calls for the liberation of all of historical Palestine.

The PFLP has previously carried out attacks against Israeli targets, and is listed as a foreign terrorist organisation by the European Union and the United States.

1. *Ahmad Sa'adat (Secretary General)*
2. *Khalida Jarrar*
3. *Abdel Rahim Mallouh*
4. *Asaad Abd al-Rahman*

Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP)

The [Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine](#) (DFLP) is an offshoot of the PFLP, which was founded and continues to be led by Nayyef Hawatmeh, who is based in Syria.

1. *Nayyef Hawatmeh (Secretary General)*
2. *Taysir Khalid*

Palestine Democratic Union (FIDA)

The [Palestine Democratic Union](#) (FIDA) is an offshoot of the DFLP; founded in 1990 by Yasser Abd Rabbo, and currently led by Saleh Ra'fat. FIDA is a social democratic reformist movement that advocates democracy, social justice and equality, and socialism, and supports Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation.

1. *Saleh Ra'fat (Secretary General)*
2. *Yasser Abed Rabbo (Founder)*

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC)

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command (PFLP-GC) is headed by Ahmad Jibril; both organisation and leader are based in Syria. It is an offshoot of the PFLP, with a limited following among Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and Syria.

The group was involved in insurgent attacks against Israeli forces in southern Lebanon during the 1970s and 1980s. It is also allegedly responsible for the bombing of [Swissair Flight SR330](#) in February 1970, as well as a number of attacks against Israeli civilians, including the Avivim school bus attack, in May 1970, which killed 9 children and 3 adults, and the attack on Kiryat Shmona in April 1974 which killed 18 (including 8 children). In November 1987, 2 PFLP-GC militants infiltrated Israel using hang-gliders from southern Lebanon and proceeded to kill 6 Israeli soldiers.

The party has strong links to the Syrian regime and reportedly took part in fighting against Syrian opposition forces. The PFLP-GC is opposed to peace with Israel and is designated a terrorist organisation by the United States and the European Union.

1. *Ahmad Jibril (Founder and leader)*

Palestinian People's Party (PPP)

The [Palestinian People's Party](#) (PPP) was founded in 1982 as the Palestinian Communist Party but changed its name in 1991. Members of the party have served in PA governments, including for example Ghassan Khatib.

1. *Bassam al-Salhi (Secretary General)*
2. *Hanna Afif Amira*
3. *Ghassan Khatib*

Palestine Liberation Front (PLF)

The [Palestine Liberation Front](#) (PLF) is led by Wasel Abu Yousef.

1. *Wasel Abu Yousef (Secretary General)*
2. *Ali Ishaq*

Palestine Popular Struggle Front (PPSF)

The [Palestine Popular Struggle Front](#) is led by Ahmad Majdalani who is seen as a close ally of Mahmoud Abbas.

1. *Ahmad Majdalani (Secretary General)*

Non-PLO groups

The PLO once dominated the Palestinian liberation movement, between its founding in 1964 and the eruption of the First Intifada in 1987. Since then, however, the PLO's leadership has been challenged by the emergence of non-PLO groups.

The 1980s saw the founding of groups, such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad (PIJ), which were heavily inspired by political Islam and the Muslim Brotherhood. These Islamist groups initially criticised the secular and leftist PLO over its compromises with Israel, in particular its renunciation of armed struggle and acceptance of a two-state solution based on only 22 per cent of "historic Palestine".

While they initially sought to replace the PLO as the dominant force within the Palestinian liberation movement, Hamas and PIJ have more recently indicated their desire to join the PLO in an effort to co-opt it from within. The past decade has also seen a more pragmatic line from Hamas, which is engaging in the Palestinian political process for the first time since the 2006 legislative election, and indicating its potential acceptance of a Palestinian state on the pre-June 1967 borders.

Recent years have also seen the emergence of a new crop of secular parties, such as the Palestinian National Initiative (al-Mubadara), seeking to present Palestinian voters with an alternative to either Fatah or Hamas. For now, however, these political initiatives have so far failed to attract broad-based popular support, or challenge the dominance of Fatah and Hamas in Palestinian politics. Although not formally part of the PLO, these parties and their representatives participate in PLO politics at all levels (the Palestinian National Council, Palestinian Central Council, and the Executive Committee).

Alongside this, the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) and Palestinian refugee camps have seen the emergence of Salafi groups. Some, such as Hizb ut-Tahrir (which is predominant in the West Bank), continue to reject violence (and to a certain extent political participation). Others, such as Fatah al-Islam in Lebanon's Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp, or Jaysh al-Islam in Gaza, have adopted a more violent ideology based on religious struggle (jihad).

Hamas

The Islamic Resistance Movement [Hamas](#) was established during the start of the First Intifada in December 1987. It was founded by Sheikh Ahmad Yassin and other members of the Muslim

Brotherhood in Palestine, who eventually turned Hamas into an autonomous organisation with its own charter and strategies. Hamas is described as a nationalist Islamist movement with political, military, and social branches. The party became Fatah's main rival and a strong opponent of the PA's policies.

The group carried out frequent suicide bombings against Israeli military and civilian targets between 1994-2004. Hamas is funded by Iran and is listed as a terrorist group by the United States and European Union. In addition, the European Union has put in place a "no contact" policy preventing its officials from engaging with members of Hamas.

Hamas ran a wide network of charitable, social, and welfare associations, but this infrastructure was significantly damaged by the PA in the West Bank following the 2007 infighting with Fatah. Its isolated rule of Gaza has also distanced the party from the Islamist grassroots in the West Bank, segments of which were filled by different and more radical groups.

The Hamas leadership is located both inside and outside of Palestine and is made up of a consultative Shura Council and a Politico Bureau (Politburo) responsible for decision-making. In addition, it has 'regional'-level Shuras and Politburos representing Hamas members in the West Bank, Gaza, the diaspora, and prisoners in Israeli jails. Despite its geographical spread, the Hamas leadership appears to be well organised and effective, capable of pursuing consistent policies and enforcing compliance with internal instructions.

Following the assassination of Sheikh Ahmad Yassin in Gaza in 2004, the movement's centre of power shifted to Hamas's Politburo, based first in Syria and then Qatar.

Following Politburo elections in 2017 and the election of a new Hamas leadership, the centre of power has returned to Gaza. In May 2017 Hamas published a revised political platform distancing itself from the Muslim Brotherhood, and potentially paving the way for its acceptance of a Palestinian state based on the pre-June 1967 borders.

Shura Council

The Shura Council is a consultative body that elects the Politburo. It is comprised of members from four 'regional' Shuras, elected by Hamas members in Gaza, the West Bank, the diaspora, and by prisoners in Israeli jails. These regional Shuras also appoint 'regional' Politburos for each area.

The Shuras were initially dominated by religious figures but now also include an unknown number of political and social figures. Membership of Hamas's Shuras is mostly kept secret.

Politburo

The Political Bureau (Politburo) is a decision-making body whose authority is derived from the support of the Shura Council. The Politburo determines social, political, and military policies, in consultation with the Shura Council.

The Politburo comprises 15 members elected by the Shura Council. It is currently headed by Ismail Haniyeh, who replaced Khaled Mashal in May 2017 following Politburo elections. In practice, though, Yahya Sinwar has assumed effective control over the movement.

In addition to the main Politburo, Hamas has 'regional' Politburos elected by four 'regional' Shuras, representing the West Bank, Gaza, the diaspora, and prisoners.

1. Ismail Haniyeh (Chairman)
2. Saleh al-Arouri (Deputy Chairman)
3. Nizar Awadallah
4. Husam Badran
5. Fathi Hamad
6. Khalil al-Hayya
7. Sami Khater
8. Moussa Abu Marzouk
9. Khaled Mashal
10. Rawhi Mushtaha
11. Mohammad Nazzal
12. Maher Obeid
13. Izzat al-Risheq
14. Yahya Sinwar
15. Mahmoud al-Zahar

Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)

Palestinian Islamic Jihad was founded in 1982 by students at the Islamic University in Gaza, although the name was formally adopted in 1987. It rose through the network of the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine, but developed into a distinct organisation influenced more by Iran's Islamic Revolution. Its founder, Fathi Abd al-Aziz al-Shikaki, a physician from Rafah in the Gaza Strip, was assassinated in Malta in 1995 in retaliation to a double suicide bombing by PIJ against Israeli soldiers at Beit Lid Junction in Israel. PIJ suicide bombings against Israeli civilian targets continued until 2007.

Islamic Jihad acts as an elite vanguard rather than a broad community-based movement and is opposed to political engagement with Israel. While Islamic Jihad is sharply critical of the PA and its policies, it does not participate in politics and limits its role to military confrontation with Israel; however, it once had representatives participating in PLO Central Council meetings. It is thought to have good working relations with Egyptian intelligence. PIJ has supported intra-Palestinian reconciliation efforts between Hamas and Fatah.

The organisation upholds a secretive and ostensibly disciplined cell-based structure.

1. *Ramadan Shalah (Secretary General)*
2. *Ziyad al-Nakhalah (Deputy Secretary General)*
3. *Khaled al-Batsh (Gaza leader)*

Popular Resistance Committees (PRC)

The [Popular Resistance Committees](#) (PRC) were formed during the Second Intifada in Gaza by members of Fatah who became opposed to the PA and its policies. It is currently led by Abu Yasser Shashnyeh. The PRC are strong allies of Hamas and Islamic Jihad and do not participate in the politics of the PA or the PLO. There seems to be little difference between its political branch and armed wing (al-Nasser Salah al-Din Brigades). Israel accuses Iran of supporting and funding the PRC.

Palestinian National Initiative (PNI)

The Palestinian National Initiative (PNI) – al-Mubadara in Arabic – describes itself as a democratic movement of non-violent resistance to the occupation. It supports peace with

Israel based on a two-state solution, and the right of return for refugees. It was co-founded by [Haidar Abdel-Shafi](#), [Edward Said](#), Ibrahim Dakkak, and Mustafa Barghouti (the PNI's current leader). The PNI has consultative party status in the [Socialist International](#), and is a founding member of the [Progressive Alliance](#).

- *Mustafa Barghouti*

Hizb ut-Tahrir (HuT)

Hizb ut-Tahrir, founded in 1953 in Jerusalem, is a global pan-Islamic Salafi movement. Its [Palestinian branch](#) includes hundreds of members who have been repressed by the PA in the West Bank. Their organisation has recently been limited to activities of supporters among students in universities. Hizbu Al Tahrir does not participate in PA or PLO politics but instead works on the re-establishment of the caliphate through non-military means.

Harakat al-Sabareen (HaS)

[Harakat Al-Sabireen](#) was founded in 2014 by Hisham Salim and other former members of Islamic Jihad. Although founded in Gaza, it also operates in the West Bank. The movement is reported to have strong and direct ties to Iran.

In January 2018, the United States imposed sanctions on the movement as [Specially Designated Global Terrorists \(SDGTs\)](#), accusing it of having “planned and executed terrorist attacks include firing rockets into Israel in September 2015 and detonating an explosive device targeting an Israeli army patrol in December 2015”.

5. Armed groups

Most Palestinian political parties have armed wings, though the structural and organisational relationship between the two institutions in each party is not always clear.

Following 2007 infighting, PA security forces targeted Hamas’s social and military infrastructure in the West Bank. The security campaign launched under the banner of “one arm, one authority” also targeted Fatah activists critical of the PA leadership. The PA security forces’ policies towards armed groups have been criticised by politicians and activists for [criminalising resistance](#).

In Gaza, Hamas’s al-Qassam Brigades have developed exponentially, while other groups have been allowed to maintain their armed wings and new groups such as Salafi-jihadists have grown.

Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (IQB) – Hamas

The [Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades](#) (IQB) was founded in 1991 as the military wing of Hamas. It is the largest and best-equipped group operating in Gaza today. In recent years, IQB developed its missile and rocket capacity in addition to its internal security force (al-Majd). IQB has claimed responsibility for many attacks against Israeli civilians, including suicide bombings. IQB is led by Mohammed Deif. Its deputy is Marwan Issa.

1. *Mohammed Deif (Commander)*
2. *Marwan Issa (Deputy Commander)*

Al-Quds Brigades (AQB) – Islamic Jihad

[Al-Quds Brigades](#) (QB) was founded in 1992 as the armed wing of Islamic Jihad. Following Israel's assassination of the organisation's secretary general Fathi al-Shikaki in 1995, QB carried out attacks against Israeli civilians jointly with Hamas and IQB. It is the second-largest armed group in Gaza after IQB.

Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades (AMB) – Fatah

Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades (AMB) emerged during the Second Intifada as a loose network of military groups associated with Fatah, largely initiated by activists from the Balata refugee camp near Nablus. Although it was never officially recognised or openly backed by Fatah, many Fatah leaders have maintained an ambiguous relationship with the AMB.

The AMB claims to be a continuity of "The Storm" (al-'Asifah) and "Fatah Hawks" (Suqoor Fatah), armed groups which were absorbed into the PA's security forces. However, many of its members were young activists who were part of the Tanzim, a grassroots organisation of Fatah activists that was led by Marwan Barghouti, who Israel claims also led the AMB. The group carried out suicide attacks against Israeli targets between 2001-2007.

Most of the AMB's leaders have been captured or killed by Israel. In 2010, the remaining activists reached a deal with Israel through the PA to be removed from the wanted list in return for renouncing violence and surrendering their weapons to the PA. Many of these activists were absorbed into the PA security forces; others kept their weapons and were targeted by the PA. Others went on to form splinter groups such as the [Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades-Nidal al-Amoudi Division](#) and the Popular Resistance Committees (PRC) in Gaza.

During the Second Intifada, the AMB carried out numerous operations against Israeli soldiers and settlers in the West Bank and Gaza, as well as suicide attacks on civilians inside Israel.

Al-Nasser Salah al-Deen Brigades – PRC

The armed wing of the [Popular Resistance Committees](#) is the al-Nasser Salah al-Din Brigades – although in practice there seems to be little difference between the two.

The Brigades were formed by members of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades (AMB) in Gaza. They are the third largest armed group in Gaza after Hamas's Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (IQB) and Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds Brigades (AQB).

The al-Nasser Salah al-Deen Brigades/PRC coordinate closely with Hamas and contribute personnel to the Gaza police force. They have participated in joint military operations with IQB, including the capture and holding of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in 2006. They are thought to be behind a minority of the rocket fire from Gaza witnessed in early 2017, as well as the 17 February 2017 IED attack on IDF soldiers on the Gaza border. Israel accuses Iran of supporting and funding the PRC.

Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades – PFLP

The [Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades](#) are the armed wing of the PFLP. They function in both the West Bank and Gaza. One of their notable operations was the assassination of Israeli minister of agriculture Rehavam Ze'evi in October 2001.

National Resistance Brigades – DFLP

The [National Resistance Brigades](#) are the military wing of the DFLP and operate in Gaza.

Salafi-Jihadis

A small number of different [Salafi-jihadi](#) groups formed following Hamas's seizure of the Gaza strip in 2007. Some of these groups were formed by disgruntled Hamas members who had grown increasingly critical of what they saw as softening of positions towards Israel. Other groups were formed by clans as way a of gaining political legitimacy.

Salafi-jihadi groups have only a marginal presence and are held in a choke-hold by Hamas. Nevertheless, Israeli-imposed closures on the Strip and consecutive military offensives have radicalised them and helped create a fertile recruiting ground in Gaza. Although responsible for occasional rocket fire against Israel in defiance of the ceasefire between Palestinian armed groups and Israel, these groups have more often [attacked](#) Hamas, including through the use of suicide bombings and assassinations.

The four main active groups in Gaza are: Jund Ansar Allah, Jaysh al-Islam, Jaysh al-Umma, and al-Tawhid wal-Jihad. These groups are known to cooperate with Egyptian Salafi-Jihadi groups active in the Sinai.

Lebanon's refugee camps have, meanwhile, seen the growth of [Salafi-jihadist factions](#) which regularly clash with other Palestinian groups such as Fatah.

Jund Ansar Allah

Jund Ansar Allah is a Salafi-jihadi group active in Gaza that pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda. It first came to prominence in June 2009 when its members [attacked](#) Israeli security forces on horseback at the Karni border crossing. Two months later, the group's then leader, Latif Moussa, [declared](#) an "Islamic Emirate" in the Gaza Strip from his mosque in Rafah. The ensuing two-day gun battle with Hamas security forces resulted in the death of 22 people, including six Hamas members and Latif Moussa. The group has criticised Hamas for not imposing Sharia law and it is thought that its members previously fought in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Al-Tawhid wal-Jihad

[Al-Tawhid wal-Jihad](#) is a Salafi-jihadi group active in Gaza since 2008, inspired by al-Qaeda. The group is believed to be behind the abduction and [killing](#) of Italian peace activist Vittorio Arrigoni in 2011 along with repeated rocket fire and IED attacks against Israeli forces. It is thought to have close ties with the Sinai-based Islamic State group-affiliate Ansar Bait al-Maqdis. Al-Tawhid wal-Jihad was founded by Hisham Ali Saidani who fought with al-Qaeda in Iraq following the US-led invasion. Saidani was killed in October 2013 by an Israeli missile strike in the Jabaliyya refugee camp.

Jaysh al-Umma

Jaysh al-Umma is an al-Qaeda-inspired Salafi-jihadi group which emerged in 2008 in Khan Younis (Gaza). The group is responsible for rocket fire against Israel and is thought to have been active fighting Israeli forces during the 2012 and 2014 Gaza wars. It has reportedly

[warned](#) about Iranian influence in the Gaza Strip and [criticised](#) Hamas for not applying Sharia law.

Jaysh al-Islam

Jaysh al-Islam is a Salafi-jihadi group founded between 2005-2006 in Gaza, and is thought to have splintered from Hamas. The group has carried out rocket attacks against Israel, and is accused of [kidnapping](#) two Fox News journalists, and carrying out attacks in Cairo. Analysts have also [linked](#) the group to the abduction of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in 2006 and BBC reporter Alan Johnston in 2007. As of 2015 the group was led by Mumtaz Durmush – both [figure](#) on the US terrorist list. In 2015, Jaysh al-Islam [shifted](#) its allegiance from al-Qaeda to the Islamic State group. It has [criticised](#) Hamas “for oppressing Muslims and working for the “interests of the Jews.”” At least one member of the group is [reported](#) to have died fighting in Syria.

1. *Mumtaz Durmush (leader)*

Fatah al-Islam (Lebanon)

Fatah al-Islam is a Salafi-Jihadist offshoot of Fatah which first appeared in the north Lebanese Palestinian refugee camp of Nahr al-Bared in 2006. The Lebanese government has linked the group to Syrian intelligence. According to [Reuters](#), the group was founded by Shaker al-Abssi with the aim of “reform[ing] the Palestinian refugee community in Lebanon according to Islamic sharia law before confronting Israel”. Since al-Abssi’s death, the group has [reportedly](#) been led by Bilal Badr who is now [reportedly](#) in Syria’s Idlib province with the former al-Qaeda affiliate Hayat Tahrir al-Sham.

Between May and September 2007 Fatah al-Islam engaged in sustained clashes with Lebanese Armed Forces in Nahr al-Bared, ultimately leading to the group’s defeat and relocation to the Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp near Sidon.

6. Security forces

Today, there are [over 83,000](#) security personnel in the West Bank and Gaza combined, forming one of the highest ratios of security personnel to civilians in the world. In both areas, the security forces have become authoritarian [tools](#) used by Palestinian leaderships to control and limit political participation and silence freedom of expression.

[Several laws](#), including the Basic Law, and executive decrees are in place to regulate the security forces, yet in practice these act largely without accountability. PA security forces continue to perpetrate human rights violations including arbitrary detention, torture, and use of excessive force. In the West Bank, many Palestinians therefore [perceive](#) the PA security forces as agents of the Israeli occupation

The 1994 Gaza-Jericho Agreement, signed in Cairo, specified the creation of a Palestinian police force which formed the basis of today’s Palestinian security forces. There were [three major phases](#) in the development of these forces.

The first phase saw a proliferation of forces beyond what was stipulated in the agreement, such as in the Preventive Security Force, and the morphing of PLO security bodies into PA institutions, such as the General Intelligence Service. During this period, members of these forces were largely drawn from members and supporters of Fatah.

The second phase began with the Second Intifada and the destruction of the Palestinian security infrastructure by Israel. After Hamas's election win in 2006 and the internal fighting that ensued the following year, the Fatah-dominated PA forces were driven out of Gaza and replaced with newly established Hamas forces. Two separate security regimes were thus created – an issue which remains one of the most challenging in Palestinian national reconciliation efforts.

The third phase came following the Second Intifada and the resumption of peace negotiations with Israel. In this ongoing phase the PA's Western-backed security forces in the West Bank coordinate closely with Israel.

In 2005, the European Union established the Coordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support (EUPOL COPPS) and the United States set up the office of the Security Coordinator (USSC). Both bodies became the two main mechanisms for international support towards the Palestinian security sector. But despite the extensive foreign-funded Palestinian securitisation programme, Palestinians remain widely exposed to violence by Israeli forces and settlers.

In Gaza, Hamas's rapidly upgraded security forces also faced massive destruction through three consecutive Israeli military operations, in which security personnel and infrastructure were targeted.

General Intelligence Service (GIS)

The [Palestinian General Intelligence Service](#) (GIS) falls under the direct command of the PA president. Its structure and organisation replicate those of the PLO's intelligence forces before the creation of the PA. It collects intelligence, counters espionage, cooperates with foreign intelligence services, and commands a paramilitary force. Its members wear plain clothes and carry out both covert and public operations. The head of the service holds the rank of PA minister.

The GIS is very powerful and has been used to target political opponents and dissenting activists. It is led by Major General Majed Faraj.

1. Majed Faraj (Head)

Preventive Security (PS)

The Preventive Security (PS) is an internal intelligence agency that was established to counter opposition to the PLO's peace agreements with Israel, especially Hamas. The PS operates under the Ministry of Interior, but also appears to report directly to the president. It has grown to become one of the most powerful security forces.

In Gaza, the agency was led by Mohammed Dahlan until he and his forces were driven out by Hamas in 2007. Jibril Rajoub, a powerful member of the Fatah Central Committee, headed the organisation in the West Bank until he was removed by Yasser Arafat in 2002. The PS is currently led by Major General Ziad Hab al-Reeh, appointed by Yasser Arafat in 2003.

The PS [works closely](#) with the American CIA; in 2007, the PS in Gaza was [supported](#) by the CIA to retake control from Hamas by force. It also coordinates closely with Israel's Internal Security Agency in arresting, interrogating, and sometimes [torturing](#) Palestinians who are then arrested by Israel.

In 2005, following Arafat's death, and as part of the security sector reform process, the PS's 'Security and Protection Department', or the so-called 'Death Squad', was dismantled.

1. *General Ziad Hab al-Reeh (Head)*

National Security Forces (NSF)

The National Security Forces (NSF) is the successor organisation to the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA), once the PLO's military in exile, and is often described as Palestine's army-in-waiting. It initially recruited most of its personnel from the PLA and gradually added local recruits. Its current role is to support other security forces. The NSF in the West Bank has been led by Major General Nidal Abu Dukhan since 2011. In Gaza, the NSF has been led by Brigadier General Naim Al-Ghoul since 2015.

The NSF is made up of two departments: Military Intelligence and Military Liaison.

1. *Nidal Abu Dukhan (Head of the PA's NSF)*
2. *Naim al-Ghoul (Head of Hamas's NSF)*

Military Intelligence

Military Intelligence is responsible for collecting intelligence on the external military environment, but in practice operates as an internal security organisation to repress opposition within Fatah, including those serving in other security forces.

1. *Zakaria Misleh (Head)*

Military Liaison

Military Liaison is the official body responsible for security coordination with Israel through its District Coordination Offices (DCO). It conducts joint Palestinian patrols with the Israeli army until the Second Intifada. As other Palestinian security organs coordinated more directly with Israel, such as the PS and GI, the Military Liaison's function was reduced to the coordination of day-to-day civil matters.

1. *Jihad Jayyousi (Head)*

Presidential Guard

The Presidential Guard operates outside the NSF and reports directly to the president. It is an elite force with a mandate that includes personal protection to the president, counter-insurgency, and rapid intervention tasks. The Presidential Guard has nominally assumed control of the Rafah crossing with Egypt as stipulated in the national reconciliation talks sponsored by Egypt. It is currently led by Major General Munir al-Zoabi.

1. *Munir al-Zoabi*

Security and Protection Unit (Hamas)

After its takeover of Gaza in 2007, Hamas established the Security and Protection Unit, which took over the security infrastructure of the PA's Presidential Guard.

Civil Police

The Civil Police is split between the PA-controlled West Bank and Hamas-controlled Gaza.

In Area A of the West Bank, the Civil Police is the PA's main law enforcement apparatus. It handles ordinary police functions such as combating crime and upholding public order, and is also in charge of the PA's prisons. The Civil Police has various sub-branches including criminal

investigation, drug enforcement, public order, traffic, emergency response, and women's police.

In Gaza, the Civil Police force is made up of members of the armed wings of Hamas and the Popular Resistance Committees (PRC), as well as members of smaller factions in Gaza.

The Gaza police force was initially known as the Executive Force, which was formed in 2007 by order of the Minister of Interior under the National Unity Government (the minister, Said Seyam, was assassinated by Israel during the 2008-09 military offensive). The Executive Force had allowed Hamas to administer executive power after Fatah security forces refused to work under the government's authority. The dispute was a precursor to the Fatah-Hamas fighting in 2007.

The [police in the West Bank](#) is headed by Major General Hazem Atallah. The [police in Gaza](#) is headed by Major General Tayseer al-Batch.

1. *Hazem Atallah (PA Head)*
2. *Tayseer al-Batch (Hamas Head)*

Internal Security Force (ISF)

The Internal Security Force (ISF) is the intelligence organisation of the Hamas government, operating under the Ministry of Interior. It is made up of members of the al-Majd internal security force within the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (IQB), and is responsible for espionage and informants. It has been a force against dissent and political opposition.

The force is made up of two bodies: the Internal Security Agency (ISA), led by Sami Oudeh; and the [newly established](#) General Intelligence, led by Sami Nofal. The overall leader of the ISF is Major General Tawfiq Naim.

1. *Tawfiq Naim (head)*

Internal Security Agency (ISA)

The Internal Security Agency (ISA) is a part of the Hamas' Internal Security Force (ISF). It is led by Sami Nofal.

1. *Sami Oudeh (Head)*

General Intelligence

General Intelligence is part of Hamas' Internal Security Force (ISF) and operates in Gaza. It is led by Sami Nofal.

1. *Sami Nofal (Head)*

7. Civil society

Since 1948 Palestinian political agency has been expressed through grassroots organising predominantly in the refugee camps. Grassroots activism played the most significant role in the First intifada, with Palestinians mobilising in acts of civil disobedience, boycotts, and demonstrations.

The establishment of the PA has seen a proliferation of non-governmental organisations that receive funding from international donors. Today many civil society organisations focus on

development-related issues, and some fill in gaps left by the PA in terms of services. Extensive foreign funding has led to [criticism](#) of both the “NGO-isation” of Palestinian civil society and of the international support to NGOs, which has been described as serving a political agenda. Development of Palestinian civil society in East Jerusalem has, meanwhile, been severely restricted by Israel.

Palestinian civil society has coalesced around a joint [call](#) made in 2005 to boycott, divest from, and sanction Israel. Today the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement ([BDS](#)) has wide local and international support and is seen, and fought, by Israel as a strategic threat.

Additionally, grassroots groups known as [Popular Resistance Committees](#) (not to be confused with the PRC group in Gaza) remain at the forefront of resisting Israel’s land grab policies through direct non-violent action and protests, including against the construction of Israel’s West Bank separation wall and the settlements. Grassroots mobilisation has also been led by youth on issues such as national reconciliation, electricity cuts in Gaza, and Israel’s regime of segregation and closure in Hebron.

Palestinian human rights organisations play a significant role in the documentation of Israeli violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, but they also play a crucial role in monitoring the practices of the Palestinian authorities in the West Bank and Gaza.

Palestinian human rights groups have come together under the [Palestinian Human Rights Organisations Council \(PHROC\)](#) to speak on important and strategic human rights issues. Meanwhile, Palestinian humanitarian/developmental organisations have coordinated through the [Palestinian Non-Governmental Organisations Network \(PNGO\)](#).

Yet, despite well-rooted civil society organisations with a strong human rights component, growing [authoritarian trends](#) by Palestinian authorities in the West Bank and Gaza – coupled with regular arrests and crackdowns by Israeli forces – increasingly limit the space for civil society participation.

8. Acknowledgements

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9. Profiles

Mahmoud Abbas

President of the PA; Chairman of the PLO’s Executive Committee; Chairman of Fatah’s Central Committee (Fatah)

Mahmoud Abbas, born in 1935 in Safed (present-day Israel), is one of the original co-founders of Fatah. He is the head of Fatah, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), and the

Palestinian Authority (PA). Abbas served as the first prime minister of the PA in 2003 but soon resigned due to political frustrations with Arafat, Israel, and the United States.

Following Yasser Arafat's death in November 2004, Abbas was elected as chairman of both Fatah's Central Committee (CC), and the PLO's Executive Committee (EC). In January 2005, he was also elected as president of the PA with 62 percent of the vote. In theory, Abbas's four-year presidential mandate expired in 2009.

Abbas announced his resignation as EC chairman and the head of the PLO in August 2015. This has yet to take effect, due in part to the inability of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) to convene in order to elect a new EC.

Over recent years there have been growing concerns over Abbas's deteriorating health, partly resulting from heavy smoking. In February 2018 he was briefly hospitalised in the US for medical checks.

Abbas is a long-time proponent of political dialogue with Israel as opposed to military confrontation, and is regarded as one of the main architects of the Oslo peace process. He previously served as the head of the PLO's department for national and international relations in 1980. He initiated contacts with Jewish and pacifist groups in Israel as far back as the 1970s, and headed the Palestinian negotiating team that created the Oslo Accords in 1993. In 2011, Abbas oversaw Palestine's successful application to be recognised as a state at the United Nations General Assembly.

As chairman of Fatah, Abbas has been criticised for filling the CC with close allies, and forcing out rivals like Mohammed Dahlan and Farouk Kaddoumi. As PA president, following the Fatah-Hamas split in 2007, he has been accused of eroding democratic institutions, weakening the judiciary, and entrenching the PA's authoritarian policies. As PLO chairman, he has kept a tight grip over the EC, marginalised non-Fatah parties, and neglected the PLO's ties to the Palestinian refugee camps.

Haifaa al-Agha

PA Minister for Women's Affairs

Haifaa al-Agha was appointed minister of women's affairs in 2014. She previously worked at al-Aqsa University in Gaza and has held several positions in previous governments, including in the ministry of health. She also served as director of the ministry of education in the 2007 Hamas government based in Gaza.

Zakaria al-Agha

PLO Executive Committee (Fatah)

[Zakaria al-Agha](#), born in 1942 in Khan Younis (Gaza), has been a member of the PLO's Executive Committee (EC) since 1996. He was previously a member of Fatah's Central Committee (CC) between 1992-2016. Al-Agha currently heads the PLO's Department for Refugee Affairs and was recently assigned by Mahmoud Abbas to help resolve internal disputes and tensions within Fatah in Gaza.

Al-Agha was a member of the Palestinian negotiating team between 1991-1993, as well as a minister of housing in the first Palestinian Authority government between 1994-1995. A medical practitioner by training, he has contributed to various health organisations, such as

the Arab Medical Organisation, the Palestine Red Crescent Society, and the Blood Bank Organisation.

Azzam al-Ahmad

Fatah Central Council; Member of PLC (Fatah)

Azzam al-Ahmad, born in 1948, is a member of Fatah Central Committee (CC) and a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC). He is the head of Fatah's National Relations Commission and led Fatah's delegation for Palestinian reconciliation. Al-Ahmad is considered a close ally of Abbas, but publicly criticised Abbas's order to arrest Bassam Zakarneh, the head of the Palestinian Civil Servants Union.

Al-Ahmad was the chairman of the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS) from 1971 to 1974. He was the PLO's representative to Iraq from 1979 to 1994, and became a member of the Fatah Revolutionary Council in 1989. Upon returning to the West Bank after the Oslo Accords, al-Ahmad was elected to the PLC and later became chairman of Fatah's parliamentary bloc. He held various senior government positions, including Minister of Public Works (1996-2002) and Minister of Telecommunication and Technology (2003-2005).

Salah Alayan

Secretary General of the PA's Council on Ministers

Salah Alayan is secretary general of the Palestinian Authority's Council of Ministers.

Mahmoud Ismail Ali

PLO Executive Committee (ALF)

[Mahmoud Ismail Ali](#) is a member of the PLO's Executive Committee (EC). He heads the Department for Labour and Popular Mobilisation, and the National Committee for Education, Culture, and Youth. He joined the Arab Socialist Ba'ath party as a student in Baghdad in 1956, and joined the Arab Liberation Front in 1968. He returned to the Palestinian territories in 1994 following the Oslo Accords.

In August 2015, 11 members of the EC – including Ali – announced their resignations. These have yet to take effect, due in part to the inability of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) to convene in order to elect a new EC.

Mahmoud Aloul

Deputy Chairman of Fatah's Central Committee; Member of the PLC (Fatah)

Mahmoud Aloul was born in 1951 in Nablus. In February 2017 he was made vice-chairman of Fatah's Central Committee (which he joined in 2009). He was elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) in 2006.

He is considered a leading candidate to succeed Mahmoud Abbas. He is a proponent of peaceful and popular resistance, including through demonstrations and boycotting Israeli products, though in the past he advocated and engaged in armed resistance.

After being imprisoned for three years and deported to Jordan by the Israeli army after the 1967 war, Aloul joined Fatah, where he became a top adviser to Yasser Arafat and Fatah deputy leader Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad), as well as a commander in Fatah's military wing in Jordan and then Lebanon. Despite initial opposition from Israel, Aloul was allowed to return to the Occupied Palestinian Territory in 1995. Aloul was then appointed by Yasser Arafat as governor of Nablus, a position he filled for ten years, before becoming PA minister of labour.

Hanna Afif Amira

PLO Executive Committee (PPP)

[Hanna Afif Amira](#) is a member of the PLO's Executive Committee (EC), and has been a member of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) since 1996, affiliated to the Palestine People's Party (PPP). He heads the EC's Department of Social Affairs as well as the PLO's Higher Committee of Churches Affairs since its establishment in 2012. A resident of Jerusalem, he spent five years in an Israeli prison from 1968 to 1973.

In August 2015, 11 members of the EC – including Amira – announced their resignations. These have yet to take effect, due in part to the inability of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) to convene in order to elect a new EC.

Ziad Abu Amr

Deputy Prime Minister of the PA (Independent)

[Ziad Abu Amr](#), born in Gaza in 1950, has been deputy prime minister of the Palestinian Authority (PA) since June 2013. He has managed to maintain good relations with both Fatah and Hamas: he was briefly minister of culture in 2003 under then prime minister Mahmoud Abbas. In 2007, he served as PA foreign minister in the Hamas-led government under prime minister Ismail Haniyeh. He has been an independent member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) since 1996.

Previously, Abu Amr held several positions within civil society, including deputy secretary general of [Miftah](#), a Palestinian civil rights organisation. He was a professor of political science at Birzeit University from 1985 to 1996.

Hussein al-Araj

PA Minister for Local Government

[Hussein al-Araj](#) was promoted to minister for local government in a July 2015 cabinet reshuffle. He previously held various government positions including: acting mayor of Nablus, and governor of Hebron in 2007. Prior to that, he was professor of public administration at al-Najah University.

Saleh al-Arouri

Deputy Chairman of Hamas's Politburo (Hamas)

[Saleh al-Arouri](#), born in 1966 in the West Bank town of Aroura, has been a member of Hamas's Politburo since 2010, and its deputy head since October 2017. He currently heads Hamas's

delegation in reconciliation talks with Fatah. Al-Aroui helped negotiate the release of captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, in 2011, in exchange for 1,027 Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails (including Yahya Sinwar and Rawhi Mushtaha).

A member of Hamas since 1987, he led the Islamic student movement and helped establish Hamas's military wing in the West Bank. He has been repeatedly detained by Israel, including for long periods between 1985-1992, and 1992-2007. In 2010 he was deported by Israel to Syria where he lived for three years before moving to Turkey, his current place of residence.

Hanan Ashrawi

PLO Executive Committee (Third Way)

[Hanan Ashrawi](#), born in 1946, is member of the PLO's Executive Committee (EC) where she heads the Department of Culture and Media. She is a member of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) and the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) to which she was elected in 2006 as a member of the Third Way party (with Salam Fayyad), representing Jerusalem.

In August 2015, 11 members of the EC – including Ashrawi – announced their resignations. These have yet to take effect, due in part to the inability of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) to convene in order to elect a new EC.

Ashrawi was a spokesperson for the Palestinian negotiating team from 1991 to 1993, and the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research from 1996 to 1998. She was also the Dean of the Faculty of Arts at Birzeit University. She has founded several Palestinian bodies and institutions, including the [Independent Commission for Human Rights \(ICHR\)](#), the [Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy \(MIPTAH\)](#), and the [Coalition for Accountability and Integrity \(AMAN\)](#).

Hazem Atallah

Head of the Civil Police in the West Bank (PA)

[Major General Hazem Atallah](#) is the head of the civil police in the West Bank.

Nizar Awadallah

Hamas Politburo Member (Hamas)

[Nizar Awadallah](#), born in 1957 in Gaza City, has been a member of Hamas's Politburo since 2009. He was previously Hamas's leader in the Gaza Strip and helped negotiate the release of captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in 2011 in exchange for 1,027 Palestinian prisoners.

Awadallah was a confidant to Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmad Yassin. In 1989 he was imprisoned for six years by Israel due to his membership of Hamas. His home in Gaza City's Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood has twice been struck by Israeli airstrikes. Awadallah was previously a member of the Engineering Trade Union.

Jawad Awwad

PA Minister of Health; Fatah Revolutionary Council (Fatah)

Dr Jawad Awwad was appointed minister of health in June 2013. He is also a member of Fatah's Revolutionary Council.

Husam Badran

Hamas Politburo Member (Hamas)

[Husam Badran](#), born in Nablus in 1966, is a member of Hamas's Politburo. He was considered to be one of the most prominent leaders of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (IQB) in the West Bank during the Second Intifada and was the target of a failed Israeli assassination attempt in 2002.

In total Badran has spent 14 years in Israeli jails during which time he was a member of Hamas's "prisoner" politburo. He was previously involved in student politics and became a leader of the Islamist bloc at al-Najah University in 1985. He currently lives in Doha after a brief stay in Damascus.

Mohammad Barakeh

Leader of the High Follow-Up Committee (HFC)

Mohammad Barakeh is the head of the High Follow-Up Committee (HFC) and a former Knesset member for the Arab-Jewish Hadash party.

Fadwa Barghouti

Fatah Revolutionary Council (Fatah)

[Fadwa Barghouti](#) is the wife of jailed Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti and a member of Fatah's [Revolutionary Council](#). According to [Al Jazeera](#): "[a]t the age of 18, she became the youngest founding member of the Women's Union for Social Work, which she now heads. The group works to increase the participation of women in the Palestinian resistance movement."

Marwan Barghouti

Fatah Central Committee; Member of the PLC (Fatah)

Marwan Barghouti, born in the West Bank village of Kobar in 1962, is a prominent and popular political figure associated with Fatah, currently serving five life sentences in an Israeli prison. He is a member of the Fatah Central Committee, and of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC).

Often likened to the 'Palestinian Mandela,' he is viewed as one of the strongest leadership candidates to succeed Abbas. During the First Intifada, Marwan Barghouti was a student leader at Birzeit University involved in popular protests. During the Second Intifada, he led Fatah's Tanzim faction and directed military attacks against Israeli targets. Barghouti was arrested and sentenced by an Israeli military court in 2002 to five consecutive life sentences for orchestrating attacks on Israelis.

Since his imprisonment, Barghouti has been active in the prisoners' movement and has published various articles from prison to communicate with the outside world. In 2006, he helped draft the [Prisoners' Document for National Accord](#), and most recently in 2017, led a large-scale hunger strike to demand improved rights and conditions for prisoners.

Mustafa Barghouti

Palestinian Central Council; Member of the PLC; Leader of the Palestinian National Initiative (PNI)

Dr Mustafa Barghouti is the secretary general and co-founder of the Palestinian National Initiative (PNI) – also known as al-Mubadara. A physician by practice, he has been a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) since 2006 and is also a member of the Palestinian Central Council (PCC).

In 2007 he served as minister of information in the Palestinian unity government. He ran for president in the 2005 presidential election, coming second after Mahmoud Abbas. Barghouti has worked extensively on defending human rights and internal democracy, and is the founder and chairman of the [Palestinian Medical Relief Society](#) (PMRS).

Tayseer al-Batch

Head of the Civil Police in Gaza (Hamas)

[Major General Tayseer al-Batch](#) is the head of the Hamas-run civil police in Gaza.

Khaled al-Batsh

Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)

Khaled al-Batsh is the leader of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) in Gaza.

Shukri Bishara

PA Minister of Finance and Planning

[Shukri Bishara](#) has served as minister of finance and planning since 2014. Spending most of his career in finance, he was a vice-chairman of the Palestine Electric Company, chairman of the Jordanian-based financial advising company AIMS, and the head of the Arab Bank.

Ehab Bseiso

PA Minister of Culture

[Ehab Bseiso](#), born in in Gaza in 1978, has been culture minister since 2014. Prior to this he was a government spokesperson. He previously worked for several Arab and international media outlets. In 2012, he moved to the West Bank where he worked in the media department at Birzeit University before joining the government's media centre.

Mohammad Dahlan

Member of the PLC (Fatah - Democratic Reform Bloc)

Mohammad Dahlan was elected to Fatah's Central Committee in 2009, but increased tensions with Abbas led to his expulsion from Fatah in 2011. He remains a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), for Khan Younis, serving since 2006, although Abbas stripped him of his parliamentary immunity in 2016. The same month, he was [convicted](#) by the PA's Anti-Corruption Crimes Court of embezzling \$16m and was sentenced in absentia to three years in prison.

Dahlan retains a small and localised support base in Gaza, particularly in his hometown of Khan Younis, and among groups that received financial or [other aid](#) from him or through the [Palestinian Centre for Human Perseverance](#) (FATA) which his wife, Jalila Dahlan, heads. He is also thought to have support from armed groups in the West Bank refugee camps in Balata and Jenin.

Since his ousting by Abbas, Dahlan has lived in exile. He is currently based in the United Arab Emirates where serves as an adviser with a security-focused portfolio for Abu Dhabi prince Mohammad Bin Zayed. He has [reportedly](#) also acquired Serbian nationality. During this time he has created a profile for himself as an influential yet polarising regional player. He is considered close to Egyptian president Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, and has led Egyptian diplomatic missions, including negotiations for a dam project on the Nile river with Ethiopia and Sudan. He has also been [accused](#) of acting as a middleman to funnel weapons to UAE-backed militias in Libya.

Throughout this time, Dahlan has allegedly maintained strong links to the Israeli security establishment and political leaders, including minister of defence and right-wing politician [Avigdor Lieberman](#). More recently, he has been using his strong relations with regional powers to insert himself back into Palestinian politics. This reportedly included a three-way deal with the Egyptian government and Hamas which would allow him to make a political return to the Gaza Strip.

Born in 1961, Dahlan grew up in Khan Younis refugee camp and was a founding member and leader of Fatah's al-Shabiba, the youth arm of the party, which played a significant role in the First Intifada. Following the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993, he was appointed to head the Preventive Security (PS) in Gaza with a mandate to suppress local opposition to the PLO. By the mid-1990s, Dahlan commanded a well-organised force of about 20,000 members, giving him great powers within Gaza and strong relations with Israeli, American, and regional intelligence agencies. His forces were [accused](#) of committing grave human rights violations at the time, mainly against members of Hamas, including arbitrary arrests and torture and the killing of protestors on [18 November 1994](#).

By the time of the Second Intifada, Dahlan had established himself as a trusted partner of the Israeli security establishment and began to pose a direct challenge to Yasser Arafat. In 2001, he made public calls to reform the PA and [resigned](#) from his post as security chief in protest against what he said was the corruption of Arafat's rule. For some, Dahlan was emerging as the figurehead of Fatah's [New Guard](#); others viewed him as a [traitor](#) conspiring against the Palestinian leader to end the Intifada.

In 2003 he served as short-lived minister of state and security affairs under then prime minister Mahmoud Abbas until the latter's resignation. Following Arafat's death in November

2004, Dahlan was reappointed by Abbas (now president), this time as minister of civil affairs, directly responsible for coordination with Israel – a position he held until the 2006 PLC legislative elections.

Between 2006-2007, as head of the National Security Council Dahlan, [reportedly](#) led preparations for a US-backed military effort by Fatah security forces – in particular PS – to overthrow the Hamas government in Gaza. This was pre-empted by a Hamas coup in June 2006 and resulted in the Islamist movement [seizing full control of the Strip](#) following [bloody clashes](#). At that time, Dahlan fled to the West Bank but fell out with Abbas and other Fatah leaders, who blamed him for the Gaza debacle.

Mohammed Deif

Commander of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (IQB)

Mohammed Deif, born in Gaza in 1965, is a founding member and commander of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (IQB). He has survived multiple Israeli assassination attempts, two of which left him seriously injured. The most recent attempt was during the 2014 military operation in Gaza, which killed his wife and one of his children and injured other family members. While recovering from his injuries, Deif was replaced as IQB head by Ahmad Jabari, who was assassinated by Israel in November 2012. He was [listed](#) as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) by the US Department of State.

Ali Abu Diak

PA Minister of Justice

[Ali Abu Diak](#) has been minister of justice since December 2015. He served as a legal adviser to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) from 1998 to 2004, and then as general director of legal affairs for the Ministry of Justice until 2007. Following that he served as deputy assistant of legal and professional affairs, before becoming president of the Legal Advisory and Legislation Bureau from 2010-2014. Between 2014-2015 Abu Diak was secretary general to the Palestinian cabinet.

Nidal Abu Dukhan

Head of the Palestinian Authority's National Security Forces (NSF)

Major General Nidal Abu Dukhan heads the Palestinian Authority's National Security Forces (NSF) in the West Bank.

Mumtaz Durmush

Leader of Jaysh al-Islam

Mumtaz Durmush is the leader of the Salafi-jihadi group Jaysh al-Islam, based in Gaza. According to [Haaretz journalist Zvi Bar'el](#): Durmush “began his military career as a counterintelligence agent in the Yasser Arafat era. Later he joined Hamas, only to leave it and join the popular committees that formed during the second intifada. He was responsible for the murder of Musa Arafat, Yasser Arafat's cousin, and later set up Jaysh al-Islam...[H]is main power lies in the large Durmush clan.”

Aziz Duwaik

Speaker of the PLC (Hamas)

Born in 1948, Aziz Duwaik is a member of Hamas's "Change and Reform" parliamentary bloc and speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC). He has repeatedly been placed in administrative detention by Israel, for three years following the 2006 legislative election, in 2012, and most recently between 2014-2015. According to the Palestinian Authority's [Basic Law](#), Duwaik would assume the presidency on a temporary basis if Mahmoud Abbas resigns or is otherwise incapacitated.

Youssef Ed'iss

PA Minister for Religious Endowments (Awqaf) and Religious Affairs

Youssef Ed'iss became minister of religious endowments (Awqaf) and religious affairs in 2014. He is also the head of the Supreme Sharia Court and the Supreme Council for Sharia Jurisdiction.

Saeb Erekat

Secretary General of the PLO's Executive Committee (Fatah)

Born in Jerusalem in 1956, Saeb Erekat has been secretary general of the [PLO Executive Committee](#) since July 2015, when he replaced [Yasser Abed Rabbo](#). He is also a member of [Fatah's Central Committee](#) (CC), of the [Palestinian Legislative Council](#) (PLC), and chief Palestinian negotiator with Israel. He is a former university lecturer and editor of the pan-Arab al-Quds newspaper.

In August 2015, 11 members of the EC – including Erekat – announced their resignations. These have yet to take effect, due in part to the inability of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) to convene in order to elect a new EC.

Erekat has been centrally involved in the peace process since 1995, but faced controversy over the release of the [2011 Palestine Papers](#), which revealed that the Palestinian negotiating team had offered extensive concessions to Israel as part of a two-state solution, including control of most of its West Bank settlements. Erekat required a lung transplant in 2017, raising questions about his health and his continuing role heading up peace negotiations with Israel.

Majed Faraj

Head of the General Intelligence Service (GIS)

Major General [Majed Faraj](#) is the head of the General Intelligence Service (GIS). He is the only security chief with a political role and has been involved in the PA's negotiations with Israel and the United States. He is one of Abbas's closest confidants and is seen a [possible successor](#) for the presidency. He is also part of Fatah's delegation in reconciliation talks with Hamas, responsible for the security file.

Majed Faraj was born 1963 in the Dheisheh refugee camp in Bethlehem. As a youth, he was one of Fatah's most prominent activists and was arrested by Israel many times. He became a

member of the preventative security following the PA's establishment. In 2002, his father was killed by Israeli forces during an incursion in Bethlehem. He was appointed head of the Military Intelligence in 2007 and head of the General Intelligence in 2009. Faraj has good relations with the US and Israel; in a rare media interview, he [boasted](#) about security coordination with Israel and how his forces have stopped attacks against Israeli targets.

Rawhi Fattouh

Fatah Central Committee (Fatah)

[Rawi Fattouh](#), born in 1950 in the Rafah refugee camp, was elected to the Fatah Central Committee in 2016 where he heads its International Foreign Affairs Commission. He has been a member of the PNC since 1983. After Yasser Arafat's death in 2004, he served as the interim PA president for two months until the election of Mahmoud Abbas in January 2005. From 2006-2016, he served as the personal representative of the PA president.

Fattouh was a member of the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS) in Syria. After the 1967 war, he moved to Jordan and joined Fatah's armed wing, "al-Asifah", and received military training in Iraq. He became a member of Fatah's Commission for Popular Organisation in the 1980s, and a member of its Revolutionary Council in 1989. Upon returning to the occupied territories after the Oslo Accords, Fattouh was elected to the PLC from 1996 to 2003, and served as the head of Fatah's parliamentary bodies. In 2003, he was appointed by prime minister Ahmad Qurei to be the minister of agriculture, before rejoining the PLC as speaker between 2004-2006.

Salam Fayyad

Member of the PLC (Third Way)

Salam Fayyad, born in 1951 in the West Bank, is a member of the [Third Way party](#), which he founded in the run-up to the 2006 [Palestinian Legislative Council](#) (PLC) election. Fayyad is known for his programme of Palestinian economic liberalisation and institution building.

Between 2007 and 2013 he was prime minister of the [Palestinian Authority](#). He twice served as PA finance minister (between 2002-2005, and 2007-2012). In February 2017, the United States [blocked](#) his appointment as United Nations envoy for Libya. He has since joined the Middle East Initiative (MEI) at Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.

Majed al-Fetyani

Secretary General of Fatah's Revolutionary Council (Fatah)

Majed al-Fetyani is the secretary general of Fatah's Revolutionary Council (RC). He was previously governor of Jericho, as well as Fatah's representative to India, and to the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS) in India.

Naim al-Ghoul

Head of Hamas's National Security Forces (NSF)

Brigadier General Naim al-Ghoul heads the Hamas-controlled National Security Forces (NSF) in Gaza.

Mahmoud al-Habbash

Presidential Adviser on Religious Affairs

Mahmoud al-Habbash is Mahmoud Abbas's adviser on religious and Islamic affairs. He is also the Palestinian Authority's top Sharia judge.

Fathi Hamad

Hamas Politburo Member (Hamas)

[Fathi Hamad](#), born in 1961 in Gaza, has been a member of Hamas's Politburo since 2017. He was elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) in 2006, and appointed as Hamas's minister of interior and national security in Gaza from 2009 to 2014.

Hamad joined the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1980 and was an active in student politics. He joined Hamas's internal security force ("al-Majed") in 1984, and formed the group's first military presence in the Jabaliyya refugee camp in 1988. He spent six years in Israeli prisons from 1988 to 1994, in addition to being arrested three times by the PA for a total of two years. He helped to establish several Islamic media institutions and charities focusing on prisoners and people with injuries and special needs.

Rami Hamdallah

Prime Minister of the PA; PA Interior Minister (Independent)

Rami Hamdallah, born in 1958 near Tulkarem, is prime minister of the Palestinian Authority and interior minister. He spent most of his career in academia, primarily at al-Najah National University in Nablus: initially appointed as chair of the English department in 1988, and then serving as university president from 1998 until Mahmoud Abbas appointed him prime minister in 2013.

In March 2018 Hamdallah was the target of an assassination attempt while visiting the Gaza Strip along with Majed Faraj, the head of the PA's General Intelligence Service (GIS).

Ismail Haniyeh

Chairman of Hamas's Politburo (Hamas)

[Ismail Haniyeh](#), born in 1963 in Gaza's Shati refugee camp, was elected head of Hamas's Politburo in 2017. He became prime minister of the Palestinian Authority government following Hamas's victory in the 2006 legislative election but was dismissed from his position by Mahmoud Abbas in 2007, deepening the political conflict between Fatah and Hamas.

Haniyeh headed Hamas's "Change and Reform" parliamentary bloc which won the 2006 legislative election. On behalf of Hamas, he signed the [2014 Shati reconciliation agreement](#) with Fatah. He first rose to prominence as a close associate of Hamas's founder and spiritual leader, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin. He served several sentences in Israeli prisons in the 1980s and 1990s, and was deported from Gaza to Lebanon in 1992 along with 400 other figures and activists, before returning to Gaza the following year.

Mofeed al-Hasayneh

PA Minister of Public Works and Housing

Mofeed al-Hasayneh was appointed minister for public works and housing in 2014. A businessman from Gaza, he participated in national reconciliation talks between Fatah and Hamas in 2012.

Nayef Hawatmeh

Secretary General of the DFLP (DFLP)

[Nayef Hawatmeh](#), born in Jordan in 1938, is the secretary general of the leftist Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP). He founded the DFLP in 1969 following his split from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) which he also helped co-found. Before this, he was a member of the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM).

Hawatmeh took part in fighting during the 1958 political crisis in Lebanon, and against Iraqi leader Abd al-Karim Qasim in around 1962, which led to a 14-month imprisonment in Iraq. He then took part in South Yemen's independence struggle against British rule which lasted until 1967.

Despite his opposition to the 1993 Oslo Accords, and previous DFLP attacks on Israeli targets, Hawatmeh was an earlier proponent of a two-state solution based on UN resolutions 242 and 194. He currently lives in exile in Syria.

Khalil al-Hayya

Hamas Politburo Member (Hamas)

[Khalil al-Hayya](#), born in 1960 in Gaza, is a member of Hamas's Politburo, and deputy head of Hamas's regional politburo in Gaza since 2017. He held several positions in student and workers' unions, and was elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) in 2006. He played a key role in negotiating a ceasefire with Israel during the 2014 Gaza war. A number of his family members have been killed by Israel, including his wife and three children during an assassination attempt against him in 2007.

Ahmad Hilles

Fatah Central Committee (Fatah)

Ahmad Hilles was born in Gaza in 1952. He joined Fatah in the early 1970s and is a member of its Central Committee. He was a prominent Fatah militant in Gaza, imprisoned by Israel several times for his military activities. After the Oslo Accords, he was appointed by Arafat to be Fatah's secretary general in Gaza.

Adnan al-Husayni

PA Minister for Jerusalem Affairs

Adnan al-Husayni was appointed minister for Jerusalem affairs in 2014. In 2008 he was appointed governor of Jerusalem. He was previously supervisor of the Islamic Waqfs and worked on several projects, including the renovation of the al-Aqsa Mosque in 1969. Since 1989, al-Husayni has served as general director of the Islamic Waqf Administration. He also maintains ties to a number of educational and charitable institutions in Jerusalem.

Ali Ishaq

PLO Executive Committee (PLF)

[Ali Ishaq](#), born in 1944, is a member of the PLO's Executive Committee (EC). He joined the Palestinian Liberation Front (PLF) in 1963. He has led the EC's Department of Youth and Sport since 1991. He is expected to be replaced after the next EC election by PLF leader Wasel Abu Yousef.

Marwan Issa

Deputy Commander of Hamas's Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (IQB).

Marwan Issa is the deputy commander of Hamas's Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (IQB).

Ismail Jabr

Fatah Central Committee (Fatah)

Ismail Jabr is a member of Fatah's Central Committee and the chairman of the Governorates and Military Affairs Commission. He was previously the director general of the National Security Forces (NSF) from 1994 to 2005. In 2009, he was appointed by Mahmoud Abbas as a senior adviser on military and governorate affairs.

Khalida Jarrar

Member of the PLC (PFLP)

Khalida Jarrar is a PFLP member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) and has been held in administrative detention by Israel since July 2017.

Jihad Jayyousi

Head of Military Liaison in the PA's National Security Forces

Major General Jihad Jayyousi has led the National Security Forces' department of Military Liaison since 2011.

Ahmad Jibril

Founder and leader of the PFLP-GC

[Ahmad Jibril](#), born near Jaffa in 1928, is the founder and leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command (PFLP-GC). He is the co-founder of the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF) and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). He broke from the PLFP in 1968 over ideological differences, and founded the PFLP-GC. Jibril currently resides in Syria, where he has lived for most of his life.

Farouk Kaddoumi

PLO Executive Committee (Fatah)

[Farouk Kaddoumi](#), born in 1930 in Nablus, is a member of the PLO's Executive Committee (EC) and a founding member of Fatah. He has had a very contentious relationship with Mahmoud Abbas and currently lives in Tunisia. Following Yasser Arafat's death in November 2004 he acted as interim chairman of Fatah's Central Committee (CC) until his replacement by Abbas. He was ousted from the Fatah CC in 2009.

In August 2015, 11 members of the EC – including Kaddoumi – announced their resignations. These have yet to take effect, due in part to the inability of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) to convene in order to elect a new EC.

Kaddoumi studied at Cairo University during the 1950s where he met Arafat. Together they moved to Kuwait where they launched Fatah in 1965. Kaddoumi opposed the 1993 Oslo Accords and the creation of the Palestinian Authority, choosing instead to remain in exile in Tunis.

Taysir Khaled

PLO Executive Committee (DFLP)

Taysir Khaled, born in 1941 in Nablus, is member of the PLO's Executive Committee (EC) where he heads the Department for Diaspora Relations. He is also member of the DFLP Executive Committee.

He was first elected to DFLP's political bureau in 1971. After reconciliation between the DFLP and Fatah in 1999, Khaled served as an adviser to Yasser Arafat at the Camp David summit in 2000. He was briefly arrested by Israeli forces in 2002 but released a few months later. Khaled ran as a presidential candidate in the 2005 Palestinian election, obtaining 3.4 percent of the vote.

Majdi al-Khalidi

Presidential Adviser on Diplomatic Affairs

Majdi al-Khalidi is Mahmoud Abbas's adviser on diplomatic affairs.

Sami Khater

Hamas Politburo Member (Hamas)

[Sami Khater](#), born in 1949 near Nablus, has been a member of Hamas's Politburo since its establishment. He has played an important role in the formulation of Hamas's political platform.

Khater currently resides in Doha, after having lived in Kuwait, Amman (where he was twice arrested), and Damascus. During his time in Kuwait he worked as a newspaper editor and media researcher, including for the Kuwaiti government and the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA).

Ghassan Khatib

Palestinian People's Party (PPP)

Ghassan Khatib, born in 1954, is a member of the Palestinian People's Party (PPP) and a lecturer at Birzeit University. He was a member of the Palestinian negotiating teams to the Madrid talks (in 1991) and the Oslo Accords (in 1993). He also served as the Palestinian Authority's minister of labour in 2005, and minister of planning between 2005-2006. Khatib is the founder of the [Jerusalem Media & Communication Centre](#) (JMCC) which conducts polling of Palestinian public opinion.

Riyad Hassan al-Khoudary

PLO Executive Committee

Riyad Hassan al-Khoudary, born in 1943, is a member of the PLO's Executive Committee (EC) and Palestinian National Council (PNC). He heads the EC's Department of Education. He is an academic, founder, and chair of trustees at Gaza University, having served as its president from 2007-2010 and again in 2013. He has organised a number of convenings with independent personalities to advance Palestinian national reconciliation.

In August 2015, 11 members of the EC – including al-Khoudary – announced their resignations. These have yet to take effect, due in part to the inability of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) to convene in order to elect a new EC.

Hasan Khreisheh

Deputy Speaker of the PLC (Independent)

Hasan Khreisheh, born in 1955, has been the deputy speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) since 2006. He was elected as an independent candidate for Tulkarem, reportedly supported by Hamas. He has been a member of the PLC since 1996.

In December 2017, he [criticised](#) Saudi Arabia's [detention](#) of billionaire Jordanian-Palestinian businessman Sabih Masri as an attempt to pressure the Palestinians to join Saudi-led efforts to confront Iran. Khreisheh has also [accused](#) the Palestinian Authority (PA) of conducting a politically motivated crackdown against Hamas supporters following the assassination attempt targeting [Rami Hamdallah](#) and [Majed Faraj](#) in March 2018. In 2004, he headed a

commission of inquiry into the provision of Palestinian-produced cement for settlement construction, [blaming](#) the Palestinian government for lack of oversight.

Nasser Kidwa

Fatah Central Committee (Fatah)

Nasser Kidwa, born in Gaza in 1954, is a member of the Fatah Central Committee and the Palestinian National Council (PNC), which he joined in 1975. He has been a member of Fatah since 1969 and is currently the head of Fatah's Media, Culture, and Intellectual Affairs Commission. He is also Yasser Arafat's nephew.

Kidwa has had a rocky relationship with Mahmoud Abbas, and is thought to be on good terms with Mohammed Dahlan.

After serving as the PLO's representative to the United Nations between 1991-2005, Kidwa briefly served as Palestinian foreign minister in 2005. He played a key role bringing Palestine's case against Israel's separation wall to the International Court of Justice, which issued an [advisory opinion](#) declaring the wall's illegality in 2004. Since 2007, Kidwa has held various international roles including the UN secretary general's special envoy to Afghanistan, the Arab League envoy to Syria under Kofi Annan and Lakhdar Brahimi, and the Arab League's special envoy to Libya.

Constantine Kormosh

Deputy Chairman of the PNC

Father Constantine Kormosh is deputy chairman of the Palestinian National Council (PNC).

Rula Maayah

PA Minister of Tourism and Antiquities

[Rula Maayah](#) became minister of tourism and antiquities in 2014. She was a student activist for Fatah during the First Intifada, and has held several positions within the previous Palestinian governments, including in the ministry of youth and sports, and the ministry of justice.

Ahmad Majdalani

PLO Executive Committee (PPSF)

Ahmad Majdalani, born in Damascus in 1956, is the secretary general of the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front (PPSF) and a member of the PLO's Executive Committee (EC). He is also a member of the Palestinian National Council, and former Palestinian Authority minister of labour. Majdalani currently heads the PLO's [Palestine Planning Centre](#). He is seen as a close ally of Mahmoud Abbas and has served as his envoy to Syria, among other posts.

In August 2015, 11 members of the EC – including Majdalani – announced their resignations. These have yet to take effect, due in part to the inability of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) to convene in order to elect a new EC.

Riyad al-Maliki

PA Foreign Minister

Riyad al-Maliki has been the minister of foreign affairs and minister of information since 2007. He is a former professor and head of the Civil Engineering Department at Birzeit University. He was the founder and director of [Panorama](#), the Palestinian Center for the Dissemination of Democracy and Community Development.

Abdel Rahim Mallouh

PLO Executive Committee (PFLP)

[Abdel Rahim Mallouh](#), born in 1945 in Qalqilya, is a PFLP member of the PLO's Executive Committee (EC) and the head of its Department of Arab Relations. Until 2013 he was the deputy secretary general of the PFLP which he co-founded in 1967. He is expected to lose his seat at the next EC election.

Prior to this he was a member of the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) in Baghdad in 1965. Mallouh was involved in the battle of Karameh in 1968 between the PLO and the Jordanian army, and was detained and tortured by Jordan between 1977-1978. He later became the PFLP commander in Beirut in 1982. Mallouh returned to the West Bank in 1999 following the Oslo Accords, and in 2001 ran for secretary general of the PFLP, but lost to Ahmad Sa'adat. He was arrested by Israel in 2002 and sentenced to seven years in prison.

Muhammad Madani

Fatah Central Committee (Fatah)

Muhammad Madani, born in 1942, has been a member of Fatah's Central Committee since 2009. He heads Fatah's commission for relations with Israel, and has been criticised by Palestinians for facilitating the PA's 'normalisation' with Israel.

During the 1980s, Madani worked for Fatah's deputy leader Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad) in organising militant activities against Israel. Upon returning to the West Bank after the Oslo Accords, he served as the governor of Bethlehem. In December 2012, he was appointed as the head of the Committee for Dialogue with Israeli Society, a government initiative that [arranges](#) meetings between Israeli civil society and Palestinian officials to build trust between the two sides.

Moussa Abu Marzouk

Hamas Politburo Member (Hamas)

[Moussa Abu Marzouk](#), born in 1951 in the Gaza border town of Rafah, is a member of Hamas's Politburo, and has been a leading figure in reconciliation talks with Fatah since 2009. He helped found Hamas in 1987.

Marzouk began his political career in the United Arab Emirates, where he helped establish a branch of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood. He later went to the United States where he helped found a number of Islamic institutions and foundations, including ones focused on the Palestinian cause. He is a founding member of the Islamic University in Gaza.

He was deported twice by Jordan in 1995 and 1999 for his work with Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood; the first time he was extradited to the US, where the FBI arrested and detained him without charge until 1997 when he was sent back to Jordan; and in 1999, when he was deported to Syria. He left Syria in 2012 and has since split his time between Gaza, Egypt, and Qatar.

Khaled Mashal

Hamas Politburo Member (Hamas)

[Khaled Mashal](#), born in the West Bank town of Silwad in 1956, was the head of Hamas's Politburo between 1996-2017.

He lived in Kuwait between 1967-1990, during which time he headed the Palestinian Islamic movement at Kuwait University. After the start of the Gulf war in 1990 he moved to Jordan where he remained until his expulsion to Qatar in 1999. Between 2000-2012 he resided in Damascus before moving back to Doha. It was while living in Amman that he was the target of an Israeli [assassination attempt](#) in September 1997, provoking a diplomatic crisis between Jordan and Israel.

Zakaria Misleh

Since 2015 Major General Zakaria Misleh has led the department of Military Intelligence in the PA's National Security Forces.

Jamal Mohsin

Fatah Central Committee (Fatah)

Jamal Mohsin, born in Hebron in 1949, was elected to the Fatah Central Committee in 2009. He had previously been a member of the Fatah Revolutionary Council since 1989 and a member of the Palestinian National Council (PNC). He is a vocal opponent of Hamas.

Mohsin started his political life representing Fatah in the Student Council at Beirut University. Since then he has taken on various roles within Fatah, including as commissioner for foreign regions, responsible for the Palestinian diaspora. He has also been a member of the financial auditing committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) since 1991 as well as governor of Nablus from 2007 to 2009.

Alam Moussa

PA Minister for Communications and Information Technology

Alam Moussa has been minister of communications and information technology since 2014. He was previously a lecturer at al-Najah University in Nablus.

Rawhi Mushtaha

Hamas Politburo Member (Hamas)

Rawhi Mushtaha is a member of Hamas's Politburo. He reportedly helped co-found Hamas's armed wing, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (IQB). Mushtaha was arrested by Israel in 1988 and was part of the group of Palestinian prisoners released in 2011 in exchange for the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit held by Hamas. In September 2015 he was [listed](#) as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) by the US Department of State.

Tawfiq Naim

Head of Hamas's Internal Security Force (Hamas)

Hamas's Internal Security Force is led by Major General Tawfiq Naim, who survived an assassination attempt in October 2017. Naim was an activist with the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (IQB) before his arrest by Israel in 1989. He was released in the 2011 Israeli-Hamas prisoner exchange.

Ziyad al-Nakhalah

Deputy Secretary General of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)

Ziyad al-Nakhalah, born in 1953, is the deputy secretary general of Palestinian [Islamic Jihad](#) (PIJ). In January 2014, the United States' Department of State [designated](#) him as a Global Terrorist under Executive Order (EO), freezing his property and interests in the US. In April 2018, al-Nakhalah was reportedly made acting secretary general of PIJ after its leader, [Ramadan Shalah](#), suffered a stroke.

Mohammad Zuhdi al-Nashashibi

PLO Executive Committee (Independent)

[Mohammad Zuhdi al-Nashashibi](#), born in 1925 in Jerusalem, is an independent member of the PLO's Executive Committee (EC). He is head of the EC's Economic Department. He served as minister of finance in the first three cabinets of the PA between 1994-2000, and before that as head of the PLO's Palestine National Fund (PNF).

In August 2015, 11 members of the EC – including al-Nashashibi – announced their resignations. These have yet to take effect, due in part to the inability of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) to convene in order to elect a new EC.

Mohammad Nazzal

Hamas Politburo Member (Hamas)

[Mohammad Nazzal](#), born in 1963 in Amman, has been a member of Hamas since 1989 and a member of its Politburo since 1996. In 1992 he was chosen as the movement's representative in Jordan. Following an 18-month detention by the Jordanian authorities he moved to Damascus in 2002 where he remained until the eruption of the civil war in 2011.

Sami Nofal

Head of Hamas's General Intelligence

Sami Nofal leads Hamas's newly established General Intelligence, which comes under its Internal Security Force (ISF) in Gaza.

Maher Obeid

Hamas Politburo Member (Hamas)

[Mahed Obeid](#), born in 1958 in Amman, has been a member of Hamas since 1974 and a member of its Politburo since 2010. He was arrested several times by Israel during the First Intifada, and was a Hamas leader in Israeli prisons until he was deported to Lebanon with 400 other figures in 1992. He has been involved in the running of a number of schools and Islamic charities in Hebron and Jerusalem.

Abeer Odeh

PA Minister of national economy

[Abeer Odeh](#) has been the minister of national economy since August 2015. She has worked as a financial adviser for World Bank and USAID projects, and was the general manager of the Palestine Capital Market Authority.

Ayman Odeh

Leader of the Joint List

Ayman Odeh is the head of the Joint List and chairman of the Arab-Jewish Hadash party. He was previously a lawyer in Haifa.

Sami Oudeh

Head of Hamas's Internal Security Agency (ISA)

Sami Oudeh leads the Internal Security Agency (ISA) which is a part of the Hamas Internal Security Force (ISF) in Gaza.

Hassan al-Ouri

Presidential Adviser on Legal Affairs

Hassan al-Ouri is President Mahmoud Abbas's adviser on legal affairs.

Tayseer Quba'a **

Deputy Speaker of the PNC (PFLP)

Tayseer Quba'a was a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and deputy speaker of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) until his death in 2016; his post remains vacant.

Ahmed Qurei

PLO Executive Committee (Fatah)

Ahmed Qurei, born in Abu Dis in 1938, is member of the PLO's Executive Committee (EC) and heads its Department of Jerusalem Affairs. He is also a member of the Palestinian National Council. In 2003, Qurei served as acting prime minister following Mahmoud Abbas's resignation from that position, and remained in his post after Yasser Arafat's death in 2004, until the 2006 legislative election.

Qurei was a senior negotiator involved in the Oslo Accords and the Paris protocol on economic relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Qurei worked in the financial sector until the late 1960s, when he started his political career with Fatah. He helped to establish and manage several PLO institutions, such as the Foreign Investment Branch, as well as various PA institutions, such as the Central Bureau of Statistics.

Yasser Abed Rabbo

Founder of FIDA; PLO Executive Committee (FIDA)

Yasser Abed Rabbo, born in Jaffa (present-day Israel) in 1944, founded the Palestinian Democratic Union (FIDA) in 1990, after breaking away from the DFLP. He is also a member of the PLO's Executive Committee (EC). In 2016, Abbas removed him as secretary general of the EC – a position he had held since 2009 – and replaced him with Saeb Erekat.

Abed Rabbo served in several official positions in the PLO and PA, including in the fields of media and culture. He was a member of the track-II 2003 Geneva Initiative.

Tayeb Abdel Rahim

Secretary General of Mahmoud Abbas's Office (Fatah)

Tayeb Abdul Rahim is the secretary general of the president's office. He is a former member of Fatah's Central Committee (CC).

Asaad Abd al-Rahman

PLO Executive Committee (PFLP)

[Asaad Abd al-Rahman](#), born in 1944 in Jerusalem, is a member of the PLO's Executive Committee (EC) and a founding member of the PFLP. In August 2015, 11 members of the EC – including al-Rahman – announced their resignations. These have yet to take effect, due in part to the inability of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) to convene in order to elect a new EC.

He began his political career in Beirut, where he initially joined the Arab Nationalist Movement. As a student, he was involved with the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS) branch in Lebanon. He worked closely with the leading Palestinian literary figure and PFLP spokesperson Ghassan Kanafani editing the “al-Muharrer” literary magazine.

Saleh Ra'fat

Secretary General of FIDA; PLO Executive Committee (FIDA)

[Saleh Ra'fat](#), born in Arraba (present-day Israel) in 1945, is a member of the PLO's Executive Committee (EC) and head of the EC's Military and Security Department. He is also a member of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) and deputy secretary general of the Palestinian Democratic Union (FIDA).

Ra'fat helped establish the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS) branch in Algeria as a student activist. He joined the Arab Nationalist Movement in 1961, and helped found both the PFLP and DFLP in 1968 and 1969 respectively.

Akram Rajoub

Fatah Revolutionary Council (Fatah)

Akram Rajoub is a member of [Fatah's](#) Revolutionary Council. In April 2016 [Mahmoud Abbas](#) dismissed him as governor of Nablus, eliciting a [heated response](#) from Rajoub.

Jibril Rajoub

Secretary General of Fatah's Central Committee (Fatah)

Jibril Rajoub, born in Hebron in 1954, is secretary general of Fatah's Central Committee. He is a former chief of Preventive Security (PS) in the West Bank. He is regarded as a potential candidate to succeed Mahmoud Abbas.

In 1970 Israel sentenced Rajoub to 17 years in prison for attacking Israeli soldiers, releasing him in 1985 as part of a prisoner swap orchestrated by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (PFLP-GC). In 1987 he was deported to Lebanon, from where he relocated to Tunis as an adviser to Fatah deputy leader Khalil al-Wazir. He returned to the West Bank in 1994 as part of the Oslo peace process, where he headed Preventive Security (PS) until his removal by Yasser Arafat in 2002. During that time, he served as the main Palestinian representative responsible for security coordination with Israel and the CIA.

Since 2006, Rajoub has led the Palestine Football Association, and been credited with professionalising the institution and advancing the national team's standing; he was involved in the unsuccessful 2017 campaign to exclude Israeli settlement clubs from FIFA.

His brother, Naif Rajoub, is a Hamas member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) for Hebron currently in Israeli administrative detention.

General Ziad Hab al-Reeh

Head of Preventive Security (PS)

General Ziad Hab al-Reeh heads Preventive Security (PS) which acts as the Palestinian Authority's internal intelligence agency. He was appointed to this position by Yasser Arafat in 2003.

Samir Rifai

Fatah Central Committee (Fatah)

Samir Rifai is a long-time member of the Fatah Central Committee (CC) and is currently based in Syria. He is also the PLO's representative for Palestinian political parties in Syria, and Fatah's representative to Syria.

Izzat al-Risheq

Hamas Politburo Member (Hamas)

[Izzat al-Risheq](#), born in 1960 in Hebron, is a member of Hamas's Politburo, and part of its negotiating team in reconciliation talks with Fatah. He is a founding member of Hamas and has been in its politburo since its establishment.

Al-Risheq was arrested in 1996 by Jordan for his involvement with Hamas and deported to Qatar in 1999. He then moved to Syria in 2001, returning to Qatar in 2012 following the outbreak of the civil war there. He has held several senior positions in Hamas, heading its media department and 2006 electoral committee.

Nabil Abu Rudeineh

Fatah Central Committee; Presidential Spokesperson (Fatah)

Nabil Rudeineh, born in 1953 in Bethlehem, was appointed to Fatah's Central Committee by Mahmoud Abbas in June 2017. He was regarded as a loyalist to Yasser Arafat and now as a loyalist to Abbas, travelling frequently with the latter. He worked under Fatah's deputy leader Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad) until his assassination by Israel in 1988. Rudeineh was appointed by Arafat as presidential spokesperson, and was reappointed to the same position by Abbas.

Ahmad Sa'adat

Secretary General of the PFLP; Member of the PLC (PFLP)

Ahmad Sa'adat took over as the secretary general of [Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine](#) (PFLP) after Israel's assassination of Abu Ali Mustafa in 2001; he was imprisoned by the [Palestinian Authority](#) (PA) in Jericho a year later. In January 2006, while in prison, he was elected as a member of the [Palestinian Legislative Council](#) (PLC). A month later, Israel stormed the PA prison and took Sa'adat and five other inmates; he was then sentenced to 30 years in prison by an Israeli military court. He is currently held in solitary confinement.

Marwan Ali Muna al-Sa'di

Deputy Secretary General of the PNC

Marwan Ali Muna al-Sa'di is the deputy secretary general of the Palestinian National Council (PNC).

Afif Safieh

Fatah Revolutionary Council (Fatah)

Afif Safieh, born in Jerusalem in 1950, is a member of Fatah's Revolutionary Council (RC). He has held a number of diplomatic postings, including as PLO representative in Moscow (2008-2009); in Washington, DC (2005-2008); to the Vatican (1995-1998), in London (1990-1995); and in the Netherlands (1987-1990). He was also deputy head of the PLO delegation in Geneva, and to the UN, as well as a member of Yasser Arafat's office in Beirut.

Safieh was involved in back-channel talks with Israel, hosted in Stockholm, that began in 1988. He studied at the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium, then in the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris. During this time, he headed the Belgian branch of the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS) between 1969-1971; and the French branch of GUPS between 1974-1975.

Sabri Saidam

PA Minister of Education; Fatah Central Committee (Fatah)

[Sabri Saidam](#), born in Damascus in 1972, was elected to Fatah's Central Committee (CC) in December 2016. He has served as Palestinian Authority (PA) minister of education since July 2015, and was previously minister of communications and information technology between 2005-2006.

The son of one of Fatah's first leaders ([Mamdouh Saidam](#)), Saidam is the youngest CC member, and has been the youngest cabinet member since he first served as the minister of telecommunication and information technology. He has founded various initiatives including the Palestine Telecom Regulatory Authority, e-Government Initiative, and the Palestine Education Initiative. He has also served as an adviser to Mahmoud Abbas in various related fields.

Raed Salah

Leader of Israel's Islamic Movement (Northern Branch)

Raed Salah, the leader of Israel's Islamic Movement (Northern Branch), has most prominently been active in Jerusalem's local politics particularly around al-Aqsa. He has been arrested and convicted several times by the Israeli authorities including on charges of incitement to terrorism and violence; he is currently serving an 11-month sentence in prison.

Dalal Salameh

Fatah Central Committee (Fatah)

Dalal Salameh, born in 1966 in the Balata refugee camp, is a member of the Fatah Central Committee where she heads Fatah's Civil Society and NGOs Commission. In 1996 she became one of the first Palestinian women to be elected to the PLC, where she served for ten years.

A member of Fatah since 1977, Dalal Salameh was placed under house arrest by Israel for her student activism at al-Najah University, where she had been in charge of the Student Council's public relations. She has been involved in a number women and community leadership roles; she headed the General Union for Palestinian Women in Nablus, and is a board member of the [Association of Women Committees for Social Work](#).

Bassam al-Salhi

Secretary General of the PPP; member of the PLC (PPP)

Bassam al-Salhi is secretary general of the Palestinian People's Party (PPP) and a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC). He ran in the 2005 presidential election.

Mohammad Sbieh

Secretary General of the PNC

Mohammad Sbieh is the secretary general of the Palestinian National Council (PNC).

Nabil Shaath

Member of the PLC; Foreign Policy Adviser to Mahmoud Abbas (Fatah)

Nabil Shaath, born in 1938 in Safad (in present-day Israel), is Mahmoud Abbas's adviser on international and foreign relations, as well as a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) for Khan Younis. He served as the Palestinian Authority's first foreign minister between 2003-2005. For a few days in December 2005 he also served as acting prime minister. He was a member of Fatah's Central Committee between 1990-2016.

Shaath has been intimately involved with peace negotiations, including as a member of the Palestinian delegation to the Madrid talks and the 1993 Oslo Accords. Between 1971-1981 he was the head of the PLO Planning Centre. Prior to this, he taught at the University of Pennsylvania and the American University of Beirut (AUB).

Ibrahim al-Shaer

PA Minister for Social Development

[Ibrahim al-Shaer](#) has been the minister for social development since December 2015. He took over when Shawqi al-Ayasa [resigned](#) over what he saw as widespread corruption within the Palestinian Authority. Al-Shaer was previously director of al-Quds Open University in Bethlehem.

Ma'moun Abu Shahla

PA Minister of Labour

Ma'moun Abu Shahla, born in 1944 in Acre, was sworn in minister of labour in June 2014. He has lived in Gaza since 2006 and holds British citizenship. He has served on the board of directors for the Bank of Palestine, al-Azhar University, the Palestinian Trade Center, and the Palestinian Telecommunications Company.

Ghassan Walid Shakaa **

PLO Executive Committee

Ghassan Walid Shakaa was a member of the PLO's Executive Committee (EC) and the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC). He was a former mayor of Nablus. In August 2015, 11 members of the EC – including Shakaa – announced their resignations. He died in January 2018 and has yet to be replaced.

Ramadan Shalah

Secretary General of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)

Ramadan Shalah, born in Gaza in 1958, is the current secretary general of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). Based in Syria, he is one of the founders of PIJ and became secretary general after the assassination of Fathi al-Shikaki by Israel in 1995. In April 2018, he reportedly suffered a stroke and was hospitalised in Beirut. He has temporarily been replaced by his deputy Ziyad al-Nakhalah. Shalah is on the FBI's most wanted list.

Hussain Sheikh

PA Minister for Civil Affairs; Fatah Central Committee (Fatah)

[Hussain Sheikh](#), born in 1960 in Ramallah, was elected to the Fatah Central Committee in 2009 and is the Palestinian Authority (PA) minister for the coordination of civil affairs since 2013. In this capacity, he serves as the primary contact with Israeli authorities regarding civilian matters in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Following the 2014 Gaza war, he was appointed as the PA's representative on the trilateral Gaza reconstruction committee alongside Israeli and Egyptian representatives. Hussain Sheikh is also a member of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) and the PLO Central Council.

Mohammad Shtayyeh

Fatah Central Committee (Fatah)

[Mohammad Shtayyeh](#), born in 1958 in Nablus, was elected to the Fatah Central Committee in 2009 where he heads the Economic Commission, and the Commission for Political Mobilisation. He has a close relationship with Mahmoud Abbas and has been deeply involved

in peace negotiations with Israel, from the 1991 Madrid peace conference where he helped establish negotiating parameters, to the US-led talks mediated by John Kerry in 2013-2014.

Shtayyeh has founded or been involved in various economic initiatives, including the international Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLIC) overseeing international donor aid to the Palestinians, the [Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction](#) (PECDAR), the [National Institute for Information and Technology](#), the [National Administration Institute](#), and the [Palestine Islamic Bank](#).

Shtayyeh was twice minister of public works and housing between 2005-2006, and 2008-2010. Although historically a supporter of the two-state solution, he [warned](#) in January 2017 that it may not survive Donald Trump's policies.

Yahya Sinwar

Hamass Politburo Member (Hamass)

[Yahya Sinwar](#), born in 1962 in Gaza, is Hamass's leader in Gaza and a member of its Politburo. He is considered to be one of the main figures connecting Hamass's politburo with its armed wing, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (IQB). He has led a re-evaluation of Hamass's external relations, including an improvement in relations with Egypt. Sinwar has also let it be known he will punish anyone obstructing the reconciliation process with Fatah. He has reportedly also sent emissaries to Mahmoud Abbas offering to integrate the IQB into a national Palestinian security force under PA control.

Sinwar has been arrested by Israel on a number of occasions, spending a total of 24 years in prison. He was among the Palestinian prisoners released in exchange for Hamass's freeing of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in 2011. Sinwar reportedly helped establish Hamass's internal security force ("al-Majd") in 1988. In September 2015 Sinwar was [listed](#) as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) by the US Department of State.

Sufian Sultan

PA Minister of Agriculture

Sufian Sultan has been minister of agriculture since July 2015. He has held various positions in academic and civil society organisations, including at al-Najah University in Nablus and at Hebron University. He is a member of the Palestinian negotiating team, and was an adviser to Yasser Arafat on environmental issues, including as head of the PA's Environment Authority.

Samih Tbeileh

PA Minister for Transport

Samih Tbeileh was appointed minister of transport in 2014. He is a businessman and a member of various trade and business bodies, including the Nablus Chamber of Commerce. He is also a lecturer at al-Najah University in Nablus.

Tawfiq Tirawi

Fatah Central Committee (Fatah)

Brigadier-General [Tawfiq Tirawi](#) was born in the West Bank town of al-Tira in 1949. He was elected to the Fatah Central Committee in 2009 and is also the president of the board of directors of Istiqlal University in Jericho, and chair of the committee investigating the death of Yasser Arafat. He is rumoured to maintain ties with Mohammad Dahlan (Mahmoud Abbas's main Fatah rival).

After joining Fatah as a student leader in Beirut University, he became a member of the Palestinian National Council (PNC), and of the Fatah Regional Committee in Lebanon. He was previously a member of Fatah's al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade. From 1985 to 1990, Tirawi was imprisoned in Syria. Upon returning to the West Bank in 1994, he helped to establish the PA's General Intelligence Service (GIS) which he headed until 2008 when he was removed by Abbas.

During the Second Intifada, Israel included Tirawi on its terrorist list due to his involvement with the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade. He was removed from the list in 2007 as a goodwill gesture to Abbas.

Karim Younis

Fatah Central Committee (Fatah)

Karim Younis, born in the Israeli town of Ara in 1957, was appointed to Fatah's Central Committee by Mahmoud Abbas in May 2017. He is a Palestinian citizen of Israel and the longest-serving Palestinian prisoner in an Israeli jail.

Younis was arrested in 1983 for allegedly carrying out an attack on an Israeli soldier in the occupied Golan Heights, and sentenced to life imprisonment (later reduced to 40 years). He was to be included in a fourth batch of Palestinian prisoners to be released as part of the 2013 mediated peace negotiations mediated by John Kerry; however, Israel ultimately refused to release them, leading to the breakdown of negotiations.

Wasel Abu Yousef

Leader of the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF)

Wasel Abu Yousef leads the [Palestine Liberation Front](#) (PLF).

Mahmoud al-Zahar

Hamas Politburo; Member of the PLC (Hamas)

[Mahmoud al-Zahar](#), born in 1945 near Gaza City, is a member of Hamas's Politburo, and a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) since 2006. He was appointed Palestinian foreign minister following Hamas's 2006 electoral victory.

Al-Zahar was briefly detained by Israeli authorities in 1988, and eventually exiled to Lebanon along with a large number of other Islamist activists in 1992. Following his return to Gaza he was the target of a failed Israeli assassination attempt in 1992 which killed his oldest son. Another son – a member of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (IQB) – was killed during an Israeli raid in 2008. Al-Zahar previously worked as a hospital doctor in Gaza, and established a number of medical and Islamic charities.

Bassam Zakarneh

Fatah Revolutionary Council; Head of the Palestinian Civil Servants Union (Fatah)

Bassam Zakarneh is a member of Fatah's Revolutionary Council (RC) and head of the Palestinian Civil Servants Union. In November 2015 he was briefly [detained](#) by Palestinian Authority (PA) security forces under orders from Mahmoud Abbas after [disputes](#) between the PA and public sector unions opposing cuts to civil servant wages.

Abbas Zaki

Fatah Central Committee (Fatah)

Sharif Ali Meshaal (better known as [Abbas Zaki](#)) was born in 1943 near Hebron. He has been a member of the Fatah Central Committee (CC) since 1986, and was once a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (for Hebron). He is the PLO's main representative in Lebanon and heads the CC's Relations with China and the Arab World Commission.

After joining Fatah in 1962, Zaki became a member of the Fatah Revolutionary Council (RC) in 1970. He has held several diplomatic roles, including as the PLO's representative to Yemen (1971-74), the PLO's general director of national and international affairs (1986), and director of the PLO's relations with Jordan. Upon returning to the Occupied Palestinian Territory in 1995, he served as Fatah's deputy general commissioner for popular organisation. He was elected to the PLC for Hebron in 1996, and served as a member of its Education and Social Affairs Committee, and its Reform Committee.

Salim Zanoun

Speaker/Chairman of the PNC (Fatah)

Salim Zanoun is the current chairman and speaker of the Palestinian National Council (PNC). Born in Gaza in 1933, Zanoun is a lawyer by training and was a member of the Fatah Central Committee until 2016.

Munir al-Zoabi

Head of the Palestinian Authority's Presidential Guard

Major General Munir al-Zoabi leads the Palestinian Authority's Presidential Guard.

Husam Zomlot

Fatah Revolutionary Council; PLO Representative to the United States (Fatah)

[Husam Zomlot](#) was born in Gaza and is a member of Fatah's Revolutionary Council, and head of the PLO's General Delegation to the United States. Prior to this, he was strategic adviser to Mahmoud Abbas, and Fatah's deputy commissioner for international relations. He was also previously a professor at Birzeit University.







10. Acknowledgements

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ANNEX: MAPS AND DATA

West Bank: Freedom of movement

Checkpoint











-  Green Line checkpoint
-  Checkpoint
-  Partial checkpoint
-  Agricultural gate
-  Roadblock and earthmound
-  Earthmound, road barrier and trench

61 Permanently staffed checkpoints
(including barrier checkpoints).

35 out of the 61 are located at road intersections with the barrier and are used by Israeli authorities to control access.

35 Barrier checkpoints and **26** Permanently staffed checkpoints.

(UNOCHA Data)

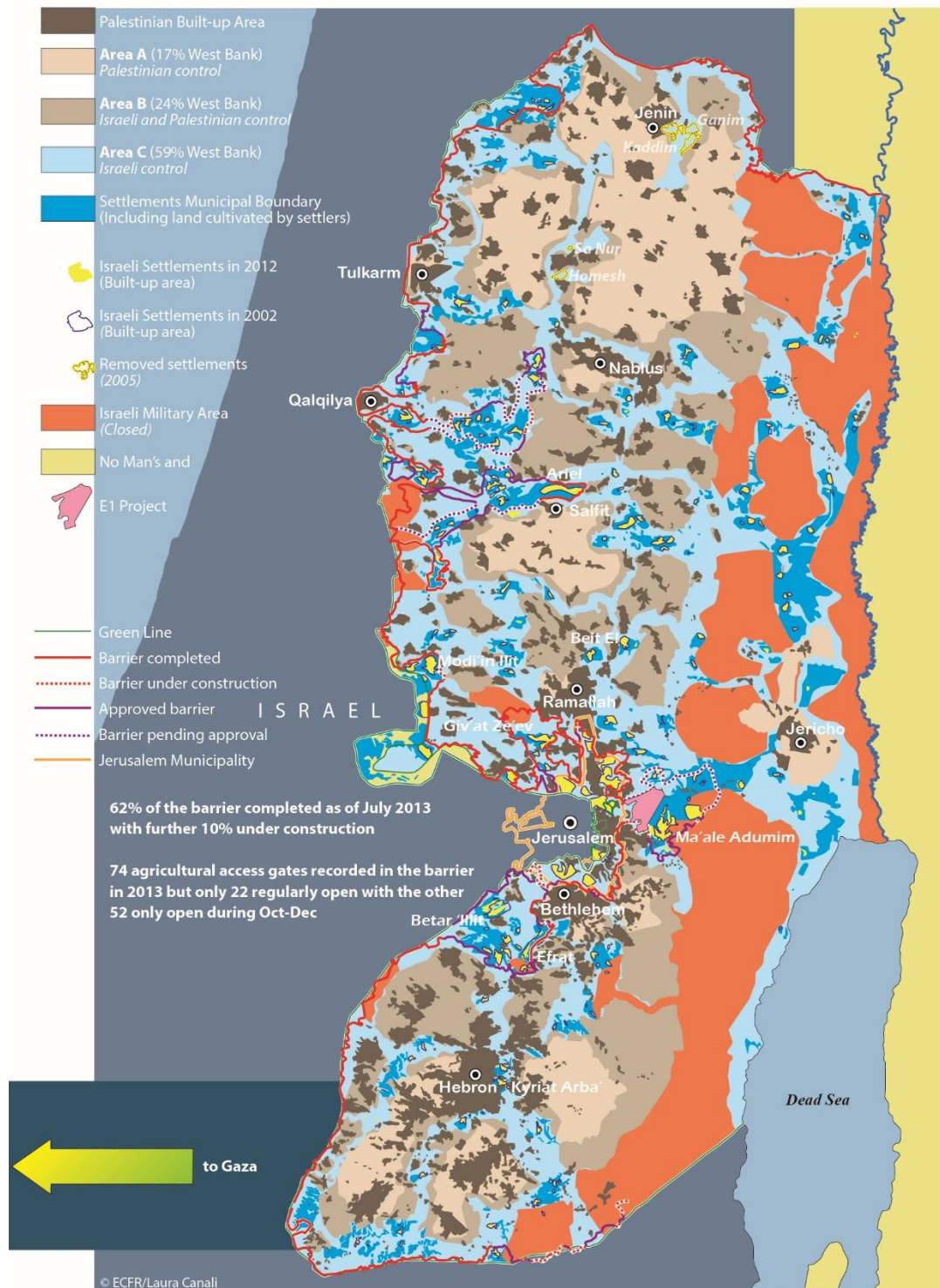
-  Green Line
-  Barrier completed
-  Barrier under construction
-  Approved barrier
-  Barrier pending approval
-  Jerusalem Municipality
-  **Area A** (17% West Bank)
Palestinian control
-  **Area B** (24% West Bank)
Israeli and Palestinian control
-  **Area C** (59% West Bank.)
Israeli control
-  No Man's Land



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Sources: United Nations, West Bank: access and movement. European Council on Foreign Relations, "Two State Stress Test". www.ecfr.eu.

West Bank: Palestinian built-up areas, Israeli settlements, Separation Barrier



Sources: United Nations, "Firing zones" in the West Bank - 2012. B'Tselem, Jewish Settlements in the West Bank - 2002. European Council on Foreign Relations, "Two State Stress Test". www.ecfr.eu. Limes, rivista italiana di geopolitica. www.limesonline.com.

Palestinian refugees: map and statistics

LIVING STANDARDS OF REFUGEES						
	JORDAN		LEBANON		SYRIA	
	National (Most recent data)	Refugees (2013)	National (Most recent data)	Refugees (2013)	National (Most recent data)	Refugees (2013)
EDUCATION						
Educational staff n° of pupils	1/17.4 (2011/2012)	1/20.97	1/41.23 (2011)	1/15.93	1/18 (2002) NA	1/24.75
Female pupils (%)	50.03% (2010)	50%	51.83% (2011)	53%	4.35% (2010)	48%
Primary education drop out rate	6.57% (2010)	2.42% (male) and 0.79% (female) (2011/2012)	9.53% (2010)	5.10% (male) and 6.68% (female) (2011/2012)	4.35% (2010)	1.82% (male) and 2.1% (female) (2010/2011)
HEALTHCARE						
- Health staff or physician/person	1/412 (2005) (physicians)	1/2.863.11	1/475 (2005) (physicians)	1/1,257.43	NA	1/1,261.84
COUNTRY ASSESSMENT	3 Moderately poor		3 Moderately poor		2 Moderately good before uprising	

Key to symbols

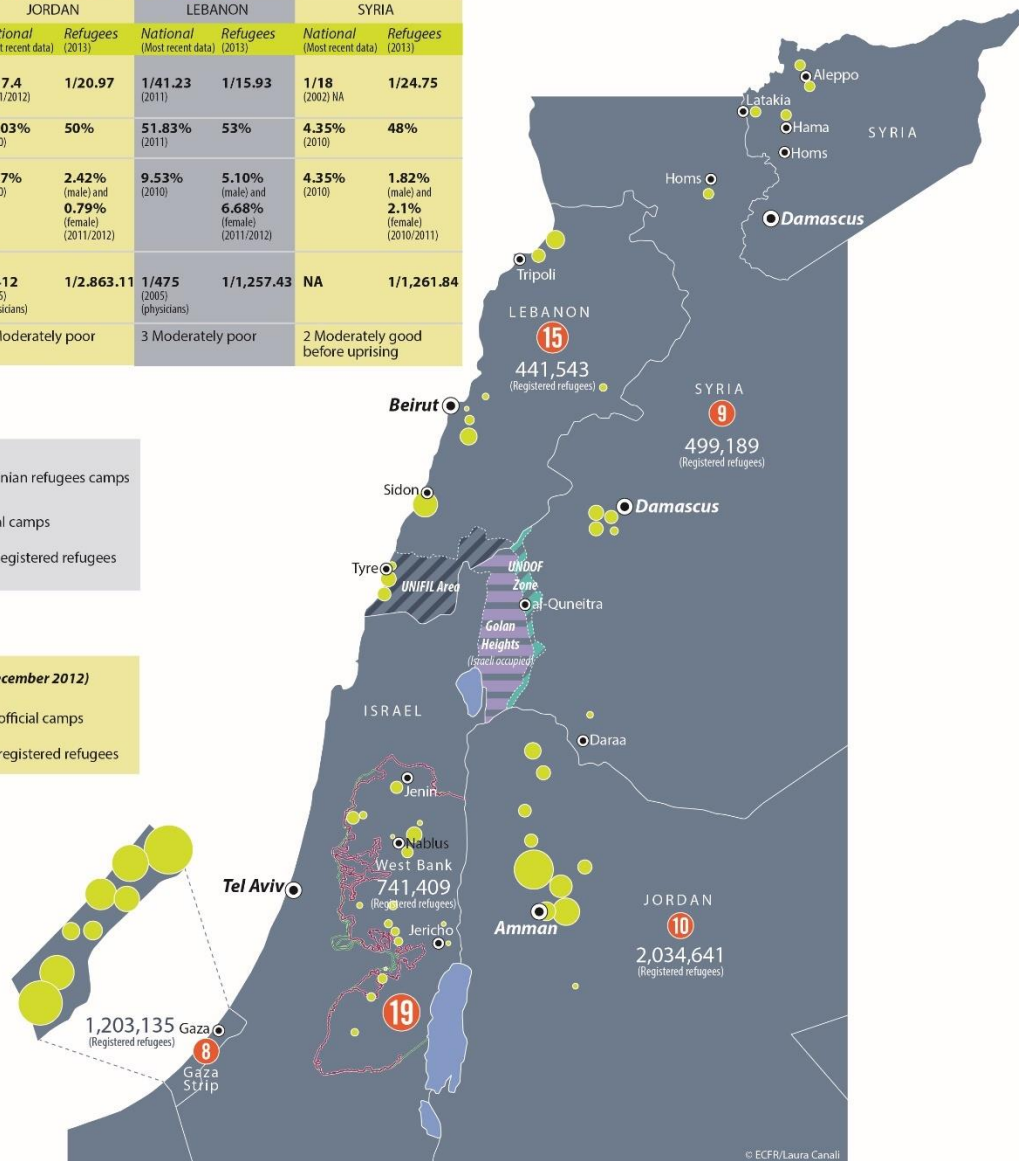
-  Palestinian refugees camps
-  Official camps

441,543 N° of registered refugees
(Registered refugees)

UNRWA (31 December 2012)

 61 Total official camps

4.919.917 Total registered refugees



Sources: Passia, European Council on Foreign Relations, "Two State Stress Test", www.ecfr.eu.

The Jerusalem area

