

# *Inside the PA*



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**Editor's note:**

**Welcome to the sixth edition of "Inside the PA," a weekly on-line publication designed to provide an open-source and yet valuable insight into the workings of the Palestinian Authority. We will review important statements by senior PA officials and developments within Palestinian society as taken from the Palestinian and Arab media.**

**QUOTABLE**

**" The Palestine is a land of Islamic trust that cannot be given up."**

-- Hamas leader Zahar reiterates that there has been no change in his movement's goal to destroy Israel.

**This Week in the PA**

- *In Ramallah, PA holds Palestinian Legislative Elections*
- *In Ramallah, former U.S. President Carter meets PA Chairman Abbas*
- *In Ramallah, Palestinian intellectuals threaten exile if Hamas wins*
- *In Nablus, Fatah leader shot to death by Palestinian gunmen*
- *In Kabatya, Islamic Jihad cell seeks to enter Israel on Election Day*
- *In Gaza City, PA forces placed on full alert*
- *In Gaza City, Egypt and PA officials meet*
- *In Gaza City, gunmen try to kill Hamas leader*
- *In Khan Yunis, Hamas uses Gaza mosques for campaign*

**NEWS DIGEST**

1. FATAH GETS U.S., ISRAELI HELP IN ELECTIONS
2. VIOLENCE EXPECTED TO MAR PLC ELECTIONS
3. HAMAS USES MOSQUES; FATAH USES PA POLICE
4. PA DECIDES TO CLOSE DOWN HAMAS TV
5. PA ENABLES HAMAS TO EXPAND MEDIA
6. NO RECONCILIATION DURING PLC CAMPAIGN

### **Fatah Gets U.S., Israeli Help in Elections**

The ruling Fatah movement has obtained significant help from Israel and the United States to beat Hamas in the Palestinian Legislative Council elections.

The United States has pumped about \$2 million to the PA for ads that help bolster the Fatah movement. The ads were seen and heard throughout PA newspapers and electronic media.

The ads were sponsored by U.S. Agency for International Development and the PA. They were prominently published in all three Palestinian dailies and reported on development programs throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip. One U.S. AID announcement on January 23 reported on a project to refurbish 110 apartments in the Rafah area of the Gaza Strip. The announcement said the administration of the project was conducted by the PA Finance Ministry and called for bids by contractors. The contractors were asked to apply to the PA Public Works Ministry.

Another U.S. AID announcement reported on a tender to refurbish 183 apartments in the Jabalya area of the northern Gaza Strip. Jabalya was the target of numerous Israeli attacks



**Al Quds. Jan. 23, 2006**

**Palestinian tells voter to disregard polls.**

on Palestinian terrorist targets, particularly missile and other weapons facilities.

Israel also helped Fatah by allowing the movement to campaign in Jerusalem. Hamas candidates were not accorded the same treatment and campaign posters by the Islamic party were torn down.

Israel also permitted interviews of Fatah candidate Marwan Barghouti, sentenced to five life terms for killing several Israelis and others in the West Bank. Three foreign television stations were allowed to enter prison to interview Barghouti, 46, who heads the Fatah list of candidates.

The content of the January 22 interviews of Barghouti were widely broadcast on PA television and reported in PA-owned or controlled newspapers. Barghouti, wearing his brown prison uniform, called on Hamas to join a national unity government.

Barghouti acknowledged that Fatah was hurt by the wave of Palestinian internecine violence. He said the violence has hurt Palestinian resistance of Israeli rule in the West Bank.

"What happened was shameful and harms the image of the resistance," Barghouti said. "The role of this rifle is to protect the Palestinian people and not be pointed at it."

Fatah has sought to exploit Barghouti's prisoner status. Fatah campaign posters as well as newspaper ads show Barghouti brandishing his handcuffed wrists above his head in a victory salute. The movement has sought to portray Barghouti as a successor of PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas, who said he would resign after his current term expires in 2008.

PA-owned dailies employed the Barghouti interview to campaign for Fatah. Al Ayyam led the Barghouti interview as the lead story on Jan. 23. Underneath the story was a huge ad that trumpeted Barghouti as the "symbol of the resistance."

### *Violence Expected to Mar PLC Elections*

Despite a pledge by insurgency groups, the Palestinian Authority has braced for massive violence during the Palestinian Legislative Council elections.

PA security forces have been on alert around polling stations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. At the same time, messages in the PA media have warned Palestinians of approaching polling stations or government buildings with firearms. "We call upon all our people, regardless of their preferences and political affiliations, to participate widely in this democratic festival," a statement by Palestinian groups said on Jan. 24. "We assert that we will not allow any element to confiscate your right to vote and elect your representatives."



**Al Quds. Jan. 23, 2006**

**Palestinian counters the Israeli flag  
at the West Bank security wall with an election flag.**

But PA officials were bracing for violence. The Fatah-sponsored Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades has already announced it would support police in guarding polling stations. Hamas has demanded the same privileges.

On the eve of elections, violence peaked in the West Bank. In Nablus, a Fatah leader, Abu Ahmed Hassouna, was killed by gunmen from his own movement.

The Palestinian Center for Human Rights reported that the gunmen came to Hassouna's house and asked him to remove a picture of PLC candidate Ghassan Shakaa from the wall of his house. Several hours later, the gunmen returned and tried to remove the picture. Hassouna came out of his house with a gun and the assailants opened fire.

Later, Hamas reported that unidentified gunmen tried to kill Hamas militia leader Abdul Halim Sayam in Gaza City. Sayam was reported to have escaped without injury.

Other Palestinians have been killed during Fatah rallies. On January 20, an 11-year-old from Gaza City, identified as Mohammed Shuhaiber, was struck and killed by a bullet fired by a Fatah supporter, later identified by the Palestinian Center for Human Rights as a PA security officer.

"It is worth noting that Palestinian gunmen, including members of the security services, do not hesitate in opening fire during electoral rallies and gatherings organized in the streets and public sites, thus threatening the lives of civilians," the Center said on January 21.

A day earlier, the deputy coordinator of the Third Way was shot and seriously wounded in an ambush in the Maghazi refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip. The Third Way is headed by former PA Finance Minister Salam Fayyad, who is pro-American.

Fatah has sought to exploit the victims of Palestinian violence in the election campaign. A Fatah radio station in the Gaza Strip interviewed the son of a PA officer killed in a shootout with Hamas in 2005.

"Don't forget that Hamas is colored by my father's blood," the son of Ali Mawaki, Hassan, said.



[www.mahjoob.com](http://www.mahjoob.com)

### **Palestinian anarchy: "Papa where are you"**

Deputy Prime Minister Nabil Shaath said Fatah would not dismantle Hamas or Islamic Jihad after the PLC elections. Shaath acknowledged the promise to do so by PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas.

"We can't honor Abbas' commitment to dismantle the Hamas and Islamic Jihad militias," Shaath said in an interview with Spain's El Pais newspaper on January 24.

Shaath said the PA would require additional training and weapons to confront the insurgency groups. He also cited the need to develop the Palestinian economy and reduce employment.

"We must rebuild the security forces, have more weapons and munitions at its disposal and plan better training for the police and army," Shaath said. "That will take time. It will take a long time before these three prerequisites are met."



On January 21, more than 60,000 PA police officers began to vote for PLC. The officers concluded voting on January 23. "On what grounds do you enslave people when they were born free," Hamas said in a statement.

Hamas said PA police commanders ordered all officers to vote for Fatah. The memorandum was said to have warned that anybody who does not vote for Fatah will be fired.

The Palestinian Center for Human Rights reported that PA security forces were seen using their vehicles for the Fatah campaign. The group said Fatah placed campaign posters on police and security force vehicles.

In other cases, officers waved placed Fatah flags on their police cars. PA law bans police or other government agencies from taking sides in the election.

The Interior Ministry said Hamas has sent gunmen to polling stations where security officers were voting. The ministry said one Hamas supervisor arrived at a voting station with a gun and a hand grenade in an attempt to intimidate policemen.

For its part, Hamas used mosques in the campaign. The Palestinian Center for Human Rights reported that dozens of mosque preachers called on worshippers to vote for Hamas during Friday prayers on January 20.

In the Sousi mosque at the Shati refugee camp in Gaza City, the preacher urged Muslims to vote for Hamas and denounced other parties. The sermon prompted threats from some of the worshippers who at one point tried to remove the imam from the pulpit.

Another commotion ensued in a mosque in Zahra south of Gaza City. The preacher called worshippers to vote for Hamas and in response some of the worshippers protested. One hurled a water bottle toward the preacher.

PA Elections Law No. 9 of 2005 bans the use mosques for campaigning activities. This includes the use of sermons to support candidates or hanging election posters on the walls of houses of worship.

### **PA Decides to Close Down Hamas TV**

The Palestinian Authority has decided to close down Hamas's new television station.

On January 22, PA public prosecutor said he would close the Hamas television station Al Aqsa. Prosecutor Ahmad Maghni said Al Aqsa TV did not acquire a broadcast license.

"The decision to close Al Aqsa television was made today," Maghni said on January 22. "A complaint was filed and inquiries were made, and we found out that the station had not legally applied [for a license]."

Al Aqsa began broadcasting in Gaza City on January 9. Hamas used the television station to broadcast ads during the campaign for the Palestinian Legislative Council elections.

Maghni said the PA Interior Ministry would be authorized to enforce the decision to close Al Aqsa. On the eve of elections, the Hamas television station, which acknowledged that it was operating without a license, continued to broadcast. "It is up to the interior minister and the police to enforce this decision," Maghni said.

Al Aqsa was said to have been the first private television station to apply for a license in the Gaza Strip. So far, most of its programming has been limited to Koran readings and children shows.

Hamas has used mosques to help transmit Al Aqsa's signal throughout the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian Center for Human Rights said Al Aqsa television has set up a transmission antenna from the third floor of the Bashir mosque in the Jabalya refugee camp north of Gaza Strip. The group said this was a violation of the law that prohibited the use of mosques for election activity.

### ***Hamas: Goal Remains to Destroy Israel***

Hamas has told Palestinians that its goal remains the destruction of Israel. Hamas has broadcast television ads that stressed that it has not changed its platform that called for the destruction of Israel. Hamas leaders have been quoted as saying that all of Israel is Islamic land that must be reclaimed.

On January 17, PA television broadcast a message from Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar. Zahar said his movement seeks to destroy Israel in accordance with Islamic law.

"Our principles are clear," Zahar said. "Palestine is a land of Waqf [Islamic trust], which can not be given up."

In the election ad, Zahar outlined Hamas's platform. He said the movement has drafted a plan that would teach Palestinians the history of the country and that of the Arab and Muslim nation.

Zahar stressed that Hamas would not recognize Israel nor allow any rights to Israelis.



[www.omararts.com](http://www.omararts.com)

**Palestinian call to stop internal violence**

He also ruled out any cooperation with the Jewish state. "We do not recognize the Israeli enemy, nor his right to be our neighbor, nor to stay [on the land], nor his ownership of any inch of land," Zahar said. "Therefore, we do not see [Israel] as an ally, not in policy, neither in security, economy or any form of cooperation."

"Israel is an enemy who is interested in uprooting us, and we are interested in restoring our full rights to return all the people of Palestine to the land of Palestine," Zahar said.

The ad was broadcast amid reports in the Israeli media that Hamas was ready to recognize and negotiate with Israel. The Israeli reports quoted Hamas candidates as saying they had nothing against Jews and would first seek an Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders.

On January 23, Zahar held a final news conference in Gaza City that was heavily covered in the PA-controlled media. Zahar did not rule out negotiations with Israel after the PLC elections. But he said Hamas would not halt attacks against Israel. "Negotiations are not illicit," Zahar said. "However to sit down with Israel [at the negotiating table] and smile and falsely claim to be making progress when it's not the case would represent a political crime and we are not going to deceive the Palestinian people. Our entry into the political arena in no way signifies that we are renouncing our right to resistance."

In interviews in the Palestinian media, including the movement's Al Risala, Ismail Haniyeh, said Hamas has not changed its positions. Instead, Israel has changed its position amid the Palestinian "steadfastness," a reference to the Palestinian war against Israel since 2000. Haniyeh said Israel, which left the Gaza Strip in September 2005, was now ready to withdraw from 80 percent of the West Bank.

In an interview with A-Jazeera television broadcast in the PA, Haniyeh distinguished between what he termed concrete strategies and election issues. The concrete strategies, he said, began with Israel.

"First, to cling to the land of Palestine as a historic right for the Palestinian people, to hold on to the choice of Palestinian resistance and resistance as a concrete choice to liberate the land and gain our rights back, to protect Palestinian unity, to consider the Palestinians in the Diaspora as one of the main factors in outlining the Palestinian rights and features, and to

### *No Talk of Reconciliation During PLC Campaign*

Hamas and Fatah might have confronted each other during the campaign for the Palestinian Legislative Council. But the 11 Palestinian political parties have agreed on one thing: There will not be any conciliation with Israel.

Newspaper and television ads reviewed by all the parties do not raise the prospect of conciliation with Israel. Parties that range from Hamas to U.S.-financed Palestinian parties have stressed resistance to the Israeli occupation.

Fatah and Hamas campaign ads appear extremely similar. Fatah ads show rifles and the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in the foreground. In the background are young men with stones and rifles. The ad is entitled "The first with the gun. The first with the stone. The fight and building will continue."

Hamas election ads feature its late founder, Ahmed Yassin. The ad shows Hamas lead candidate Ismail Haniyeh waving to a laughing Yassin in heaven. The ad contains a saying of Mohammed.

In an ad on PA television, Hamas has broadcast footage of Palestinians fighting the Israel Army accompanied by footage of the Temple Mount. "Our blood will be a wall to protect our holy site," the Hamas narrator says.

In a televised debate on PA television on Jan. 23, the Western-financed Independent Palestine list stressed the need for resistance against Israel. The head of the list, Mustafa Barghouthi, said such resistance would be "massive, popular and non-violent."

Barghouthi, whose television ads focus on social issues, said that his party would not support any settlement with Israel that failed to "meet conditions set out under international law and resolutions, and numerous peace agreements." He said his priority would be to release Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli administrative detentions.