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Palestinian society sinks into shambles—further from peace and statehood than ever

Dear Friend of Israel, Dear Friend of FLAME:

Palestinian society is in disarray.

In two major West Bank towns—Jenin and Nablus—the Palestinian Authority (PA) has lost control of security, and rogue gangs rule the land. Last week, thousands of Gazans protested in the streets— risking brutal backlash from the Hamas regime. Meanwhile, talks in Egypt meant to reconcile the PA and Hamas after 17 bitter years, have again hopelessly failed.

All this takes place as the Biden Administration tries to pressure Israel and Saudi Arabia into a “normalization” deal contingent on concrete steps toward a Palestinian state. Both sides are resisting.

No surprise: Despite billions of dollars in “welfare” from the U.S., Arabs states and the European Union, Palestinian institutions are in a death spiral. Both the PA and Hamas lack political stability or security control, their economies are bankrupt, the two rival dictatorships cannot reconcile, and neither has a vision for statehood, let alone peace . . . other than the destruction of Israel.

Discouragingly, the Palestinians appear further from independence than ever.

The political instability of both Palestinian regimes undermines citizens' trust in their leadership and further radicalizes them—imperiling their independence movement.

According to the latest poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, 80% of Palestinians want 87-year-old PA President Mahmoud Abbas to resign. An Arab News/YouGov poll indicates 63% of Palestinians feel underrepresented by both Hamas and Fatah, the two most powerful Palestinian factions. In fact, just 11% have confidence in Fatah, while only 19% have confidence in Hamas.

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At the same time, the majority of Palestinians—71%—support the formation of armed groups like Lion’s Den. In addition, 52% of Palestinians support continued armed struggle—more terrorism—against Israel.

Palestinians’ lack of trust in their rulers isn’t surprising given their rulers’ lack of legitimacy. President Abbas is in the 19th year of his four-year term. Though in ill health, he has yet to choose a successor. A bloody power struggle will likely follow his death. The Palestinian parliament has not functioned since 2006. And of course, no one elected Hamas to rule the Gaza Strip since 2007.

Neither the PA nor Hamas has full security control over its respective territory—making it inconceivable that either could control a unified, sovereign state.

The PA has all but ceded control of Jenin and Nablus in Samaria (northern West Bank) to armed terrorist gangs. Last month, Israel conducted a large-scale raid in Jenin to neutralize its terrorist infrastructure and halt murders of Israeli civilians. While Israel temporarily cleaned up the PA’s mess, the rebels will surely regroup.

Meanwhile, in the Gaza Strip, Hamas shares power with several terrorist militias. Last May, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) spent days bombarding Israel with rockets, forcing the Jewish state to retaliate. Hamas refrained from fighting, yet did not prevent PIJ from attacking Israel—demonstrating the Hamas rulers were either unwilling or unable to curb rival terrorists.

The failure of both the PA and Hamas to effectively control their respective territories—and prevent their use as terrorist bases to attack Israel—proves convincingly the Palestinians are unprepared for statehood.

A nation-state must have reasonable economic independence—yet both the PA and Hamas are bankrupt, entirely devoid of sustainable industries and utterly dependent on international welfare.

Between 1994 and 2020, the Palestinians received more than \$40 billion in aid. About a third came from the West—18.9% from the EU and 14.2% from the U.S. With all this financial aid, the Palestinians could have built a spectacularly successful economy.

Instead, Palestinians live from hand to mouth. About one in four Palestinians has no job. The unemployment rate in the Gaza Strip alone is 45%. In addition, nearly half of young graduates aged 19-29 are unemployed.

Why, then, haven’t the billions in aid not improved the lives of ordinary Palestinians? One reason is that much of it goes toward terrorist activities. For example, the PA spends between \$170 and \$283 million yearly on its pay-for-slay policy—rewarding Palestinians who murder Jews with generous monthly salaries. President Abbas has obstinately gone on record saying, “If we had only a single penny left, we would pay it to families of the martyrs and prisoners.”

Another reason is economic corruption. The PA is a cesspool of insider family- and tribal-business deals. Abbas’ millionaire sons control huge businesses. In

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Gaza, a leading German newspaper *Die Welt* reported in 2021 that Hamas has a secret investment portfolio worth \$500 million, which, according to the World Bank, could have repaired all the physical damage in the Gaza Strip from Hamas' war with Israel in 2021.

Misappropriating funds for terrorism and economic oligarchies have led to the failure of the Palestinians to create a self-sufficient economy—a key requirement of any viable, functioning state.

The violent fragmentation of the Palestinian political establishment also makes a unified government—and in the future, a unified state—inconceivable.

Notwithstanding numerous attempts at reconciliation between the PA and Hamas in order to reunite the autonomous Palestinian territories, all attempts have failed. Most recently, in Egypt last month, Hamas insisted on violent resistance to Israeli occupation of the region, whereas Abbas advocated “peaceful” resistance, despite his regime's generous incentives to murdering terrorists.

Above all, neither the PA nor Hamas has a strategy to achieve statehood, preferring their hopeless quest to destroy Israel over peaceful coexistence. Hamas continues to reject any recognition of the Jewish state, while the PA occasionally pays lip service to the two-state solution. But in reality, the PA also rejects Israel's existence.

Both the PA and Hamas fail to prepare their people for peace. Palestinian children in both territories still learn from their textbooks to hate and murder Jews—who allegedly stole land the Palestinians never possessed. The PA continues to spend hundreds of millions of dollars to reward the murder of innocent Israelis.

Please make the point when speaking with family, friends, colleagues—or in letters to the editor—that the Palestinian independence movement is languishing, because its structures are crumbling.

Palestinian dictatorships continue internecine warfare. Neither Hamas nor the PA effectively controls its own territory. Neither has a self-sustaining economy. Rather than a hopeful dream, they are animated by hate. In short, the Palestinians haven't achieved an independent state because, sadly, they lack the prerequisites—viable institutions and a life-affirming spirit.

I hope you'll also take a minute, while you have this material front and center, to forward this message to friends, visit FLAME's lively [Facebook page](#) and review the P.S. immediately below. It describes FLAME's new *hasbarah* campaign—“Can Biden's Plan Beat Antisemitism?”—which boldly challenges the Administration to use its new Strategy to Counter Antisemitism courageously, prosecuting and condemning all antisemitism from every corner of American society—including Congressional members, ethnic studies programs, and attacks on Jews by minority groups.

Best regards,
James Sinkinson, President

Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME))

P.S. You've surely seen headlines describing skyrocketing attacks on Jews in recent years and months—and you probably heard about the President's new National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism. But all evidence indicates that the Administration is *not* committed to fighting antisemites among its own voters and party officials. I hope you'll agree that we opponents of antisemitism across all sectors of American society need to speak out. FLAME's new *hasbarah*—explanatory message—“[Can Biden's Plan Beat Antisemitism?](#)”—enumerates some of the antisemitic offenders most damaging to American Jews . . . and most likely to be *ignored* by the Administration. I hope you'll review this convincing, fact-based editorial, which FLAME intends to publish in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *New York Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Star Tribune* and *Los Angeles Times*. This piece will also be sent to all members of Congress, Vice President Harris and President Biden. If you agree that this kind of public relations effort on Israel's behalf is critical, I urge you to [support us](#).

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Facts and Logic
About the Middle East
PO Box 3460
Berkeley, CA 94703

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