

The Challenge of the Palestinian Authority: State Building without Governmental Legitimacy

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The popular uprisings in the Arab world against tyrannical regimes have so far not ignited similar dissent among the Palestinian public on the West Bank.¹ Even al-Jazeera's exposé of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations (January 2011), which sought to present the Palestinian leadership as conceding Palestinian principles and assets, did not spark popular protests. In recent years there has been relative calm on the security front within the PA – a combination of Israeli deterrence, the public's concern about a return to anarchy, and the government's efforts at institutionalization and governmental stability. The PA and its security apparatus enforce law and order and operate against Hamas in cooperation with Israeli security elements, driven by the idea that it is necessary to maintain calm on the security front in order to construct the institutions and economy of a state-in-the-making.²

The policy of President Abu Mazen and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad of abandoning the armed struggle and transitioning to political institutionalization enabled the formation of a government that in recent years has operated with transparency and succeeded in promoting economic and social development programs. The government has rebuilt its ministries and security forces and made great strides in improving their efficiency, is enforcing law and order, has started to root out corruption using the police and courts, and has restored civilian

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life to a manageable routine after the al-Aqsa intifada. The security and stability have drawn foreign investors from the Arab world and the West, promoting business and investments. The PA has made concerted efforts to encourage the private sector in order to promote economic growth and combat unemployment through the creation of jobs. This in turn has moved the international community to continue its support for the PA, both materially and politically.

At the same time, the PA leadership is quite aware that negative sentiments, influenced by events in the Arab world, may arise in the West Bank and perhaps lead to a popular groundswell against it. The leadership understands that notwithstanding the geographical and governmental divide in the territories, Palestinian society recognizes its power as a player, and familiar with the ways of non-violent struggle, might use them to generate a change in its situation.³ The leadership is attentive to homegrown criticism about the legitimacy of its rule and the question marks regarding the authenticity of its representation of the various sectors in the Palestinian population. These questions have become more insistent since Hamas' victory in the general elections (January 2006), the PA's loss of control of the Gaza Strip (June 2007), and the end of the terms of office of the PA presidency and the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) over a year ago (January 2010); the terms of the local governments have likewise expired. Added to this is criticism over human rights violations and the fact that large parts of the population are not enjoying the fruits of the economic development and continue to suffer economic distress and high unemployment rates. For now, the voices of criticism are not overly loud, but they are too poignant for the PA to ignore for long.

The PA leadership has been careful not to support the popular uprisings against the rulers of Tunisia and Egypt, but had no choice but to allow demonstrations of support for these uprisings.⁴ Qaddafi's violent reaction in Libya against protestors allowed the PA to channel expressions of hatred towards him: the leadership has allowed the media to encourage demonstrations against him and thereby deny its own resemblance to tyrannical Arab despots. At the same time, it has started marketing a package of democratization steps, including announcements of a change in government and local and general elections, in an attempt to channel any potential popular protest against the occupation or the

American veto on construction in the settlements in the West Bank, or rally popular sentiment in favor of national reconciliation.

To these ends, the Palestinian leadership has recruited its electronic and print media as well as the virtual social networks. In terms of propaganda, senior officials in the PA have tried to underscore that the Fayyad plan for building a Palestinian state entails sweeping reforms that include economic and social elements and the defense of human rights, while stressing that the essence of these reforms in no way contradicts the demands of protesters throughout the Arab world.

The Challenge of the Young and the Danger of the Social Media

The Palestinian population on the West Bank currently stands at 2.4 million. The birth rate is one of the highest in the world,⁵ and the number of young people is particularly large: 57 percent of the population is age 20 or under, and 65 percent of the population has not yet turned 25.⁶ Some 200,000 live in refugee camps,⁷ and the level of education is relatively high compared to the neighboring Arab countries. Data from the Palestinian Bureau of Statistics indicates an unemployment rate of about 16.5 percent in the first quarter of 2010 (18.1 percent in the fourth quarter of 2009), particularly acute in the 15-29 age bracket.⁸ Despite the high percentage of young women with a high school education, women's participation in the job market is among the lowest in the world (representing only 18.7 percent of the work force).⁹

The Fayyad government's programs to promote economic growth and create jobs on the West Bank have so far borne fruit; signs of recovery and growth are reflected in macroeconomic data such as a steady rise in the GDP, drop in unemployment, increased growth, and decreased inflation.¹⁰ However, the economic growth is felt primarily in the large cities, while the villages and smaller towns are excluded from the fruits of growth and continue to suffer economic distress and high rates of unemployment.¹¹ Unemployment among Palestinian academics is only slightly lower than unemployment among the population at large,

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and is higher in the outlying areas – in the northern and southern parts of the West Bank – than in the center.¹²

Polls and studies show little interest in politics and political activism in Palestinian society, and it appears that young Palestinians distrust the political system and feel alienated by it.¹³ One of the reasons is the disappointment with the various political parties and factions, which failed to make the transition from revolutionary movements to political parties; today they are seen as tools for the advancement of narrow personal or party interests.¹⁴ Most of the Palestinian public does not distinguish between left and right political orientations and is tired of the major parties, Fatah and Hamas, as neither of them has proven itself in resolving the political issue or social and economic problems. Under such circumstances, the young generation is developing an individualistic approach, elevating education, employment, and personal advancement above national, collective issues. Thus, for example, during Operation Cast Lead there were no anti-Israeli demonstrations by young people identifying with the plight of the Gaza Strip.

Palestinian society enjoys satellite TV, private media, and local radio and TV stations, and compared with other Arab regimes, the PA has shown a liberal attitude towards them.¹⁵ The public at large has a wealth of outlets of expression, both electronic and print, and the rate of internet and social media use is high relative to neighboring Arab societies. PA institutions, most of the political parties and splinter groups, the civil organizations, and the private media all make extensive use of the internet. Nevertheless, the nature of the broadcasts in the PA media as well as the private local media shows that these outlets are still in the service of the regime. Thus, for example, the familiar trend to cover PA and local leaders without giving any details remains, typical of reporting in Arab despotic regimes. This suggests the lack of involvement or motivation among the young to generate a media revolution. Similarly, the internet infrastructure of the online media in the West Bank is not as developed as would be expected.

It seems that young Palestinians today lack a concrete collective goal for promoting their own social or political agenda, and therefore have no need of organizing via the internet or social media. Nevertheless, as a result of the events in Tunisia and Egypt, Palestinian society has engaged in public deliberations about the internet and Facebook as agents of

change.¹⁶ The Palestinian leadership hurried to ride the wave and co-opt the discussion for its own needs. It sought to prove that it is closely involved with the public and not disconnected from its troubles, and that it grasps the power of the internet and social media.¹⁷ Indeed, the leadership has started to use these media in order to enlist young people in what it considers to be worthy causes – the occupation and the lack of Palestinian unity – thereby averting the possible danger of the social media being turned against it.¹⁸

However, the young people on the West Bank have demonstrated only a limited desire to take part in protests organized by the PA and Fatah against the occupation and the internal Palestinian rift. The protests that took place were for the most part not spontaneous and were attended by a few thousand young people at most. Nor was there a mass event over a defined issue that would have obligated the Palestinian security forces to respond with force and act to suppress it. “The Young People’s Protest,” scheduled for March 15, was not a mass event of young people moved to go out and protest spontaneously. Those who came were young people who had been recruited, mostly from among Fatah activists, and men and women employed by the PA. Inspired no doubt by the pictures of Tahrir Square, the security forces helped sponsor the event, handing out food, drinks, and flags, and even took part in the post-event clean-up, as a symbol of collective responsibility for restoring order.

A prominent example of young people’s more lively protests has actually been noted within the Palestinians’ left wing splinter groups, such as the Popular Front, the Democratic Front, the People’s Communist Party, and the Initiative Party (al-Mubadra) led by Mustafa Barghouti. Young people’s participation in protests organized by these groups to mark events such as the days the organizations were founded was more extensive than it has been in previous years and seemed to reflect genuine support. So, for example, the People’s Party protest to mark its founding became a show of joy and identification with the Egyptian people. It seems that the political vacuum left by Fatah and Hamas is drawing some young people into smaller alternative settings that have civil platforms not opposed to Fayyad’s state building program and whose leaders are untainted by corruption.

The Question of Legitimacy

Questions about the legitimacy of the PA's rule stem primarily from the fact that though required by law, there have been no elections for the presidency, the Palestinian Legislative Council, or local government since their terms expired. Abu Mazen's term in office as elected president ended, as did the term of the PLC, which has ceased to function. Attempts at national reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah through Egyptian mediation, in order to hold PA presidential and parliamentary elections on time (January 2010) or even later, failed miserably. About a year ago, the PLO's leadership anchored the governmental reality in law, which extended Abu Mazen's term as PA president until the next elections. A constitutional problem regarding local governments likewise arose, once the heads of local councils elected on the Hamas slate were summarily dismissed and the elections that were supposed to have been held in the summer of 2010 were canceled; Hamas supporters were also dismissed from civil service. Furthermore, the PA government lacks public political support and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, who is not a Fatah member, is a thorn in the side of most of the senior Fatah leadership because his economic and social achievements are not credited to Fatah.

The PA government, then, is an appointed government consisting mostly of technocrats. It does not include representation of the society's political powers and it functions without a constitutional basis and without parliamentary oversight. The process of legislation rests on the president's authority to make emergency decisions that have the status of law if the PLC is not functioning. Legislation that government ministries are interested in promoting in various civil fields are drafted by legal consultants in the ministries and passed on to the president to be announced into law. Thus, lacking a separation of powers, the executive branch of the government commands extensive legislative and executive authority without any public oversight.

In light of the popular protests in the Arab world and the toppling of the regimes in Tunisia and Egypt, the PLO Executive Committee rushed on February 12 to announce that presidential and parliamentary elections would be held in September 2011, stressing that elections are the only means to end the internal rift and restore national unity.¹⁹ Furthermore, promises were made that the elections would be free and fair and would take place under international supervision,²⁰ although in later statements

Abu Mazen estimated that it would be impossible to hold general elections because of the split between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.²¹ Another move, made on February 13, was the announcement that the current government was being disbanded and reconvened so that it would include representatives of Fatah and other groups. Members of Fatah's Revolutionary Council told Abu Mazen that they accept Salam Fayyad's appointment as prime minister in order to ensure the support of the United States for the PA, but as the controlling political party, demand the important ministries in the government.²²

Preceding these moves was the PA's decision to respond to a court order issued by the Palestinian Supreme Court, obligating the PA to hold local government elections. The left wing Palestinian political parties, including the Popular Front, the People's Party, and the Palestinian National Initiative Party, had waged a legal and public struggle to force the PA to hold local elections, which were supposed to have been held in the summer of 2010 and were canceled. These political parties submitted a petition to the Palestinian Supreme Court, which in mid-December 2010 instructed the PA to set a date immediately for the elections, as any delay constitutes a violation of the Court's decision. As a result, the Palestinian Minister for Local Government announced that local government elections would be held in the summer of 2011. Party functionaries praised the decision by the Palestinian Supreme Court and rejected claims that elections in the West Bank only would deepen the Palestinian split. They explained that their function is to save democracy from the internal split and from external intervention in matters relating to the Palestinian people.

The Hamas leadership in the Gaza Strip continues to challenge the PA rule in the West Bank and refuses to acknowledge the legitimacy of Fayyad's government and its decisions. In light of the winds of change in the Arab world and the call of the various splinter groups and the PA to end the internal split, Ismail Haniyeh called on Abu Mazen and Fatah to launch a comprehensive national dialogue and respond to the people's demand. In turn, Abu Mazen announced that he is prepared to come to the Gaza Strip in order to end the split and establish a government of independent elements that will organize elections for the presidency, the PLC, and the Palestinian National Council within six months.²³ Hamas' leadership will likely persist in opposing reconciliation as long as the

central questions concerning the future of Hamas' security apparatus and its involvement in security on the West Bank remain unsettled and as long as the PA apparatus is connected to the United States and continues its security cooperation with Israel. Moreover, it seems that the Hamas leadership considers it quite plausible that the Muslim Brotherhood will be incorporated into the government in Egypt and that as a result Egypt will withdraw support from the PA and transfer it to Hamas. Accordingly, Hamas' leadership is likely to wait until the PA falls because of the nonexistent political process and the lack of legitimacy for its continued function.

Representation of the Palestinian People

As head of the PLO, Abu Mazen is aware of the criticism of the status of the organization as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and the refugees in the diaspora, especially given Hamas' victory in the 2006 general elections to the PLC and his loss of control of the Gaza Strip. The attempts to recruit public opinion to endorse the call for elections and national reconciliation have been met by various Hamas conditions, among them reforms in PLO institutions and the election of a new Palestinian National Council, which would allow the integration of Hamas into the organization according to an agreed-upon formula, as well as the demand for changes in the organization's political positions.

The question of representation is liable to grow more acute with the establishment of a new regime in Egypt. The Palestinian leadership is concerned that the secular political parties in Egypt will lack enough power to constitute a coalition without the Muslim Brotherhood after democratic elections; it may even be that the Muslim Brotherhood will win more votes than any other political party and will therefore be authorized to form a coalition.²⁴ Should this happen, a strategic change would occur in Egyptian policy, which would adopt a worldview resembling the Brotherhood school, and accordingly, transfer support to Hamas and hasten the end of both the Palestinian national leadership and Hamas' estrangement from the Arab world.²⁵

The challenge to the PLO and the foot dragging in the political process have heightened doubts as to the PLO's political direction and strengthened the voices within the Palestinian system doubting the viability of the two-state solution. For these reasons, Abu Mazen has in

recent years made the “Arab Initiative,” based on the principle of two-states-for-two-peoples, the foundation of his policy. He views the Arab initiative as the inter-Arab tool that would back up the PLO’s political platform regarding a political settlement with Israel and stabilize its standing as the legitimate national body representing the Palestinian people. Egypt played a central role in this policy and President Mubarak was its principal advocate within the Arab League, which adopted a unified Arab stance on the necessary outlines of the agreement as a condition for renewing the negotiations. The general terms included the establishment of a state within the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, mutually agreed-upon land swaps, and a full freeze on construction in the settlements in the West Bank, including Jerusalem.

The common assessment within the Palestinian leadership is that as long as the present Israeli government is in office no significant political negotiations will take place because of the continued construction in the settlements and the government’s policy on the core issues. This is reinforced by the public discourse in Israel in the wake of the developments in the Arab world, which does not encourage promoting the political process, rather warns of a peace agreement in light of recent events. The Palestinian leadership is also frustrated that the United States and the Quartet will likely not impose a construction freeze and a renewal of direct talks on Israel. And even if the conditions for a renewal of direct talks are somehow created, Abu Mazen would likely be hard pressed to act without Egyptian support and thereby be able to demonstrate flexibility in negotiations. In the past, for example, he vehemently opposed progress in stages, partial agreements, and the establishment of a state within temporary borders, as various elements in Israel have proposed, and one may conclude that without inter-Arab backing he will find it difficult to accede to such ideas, let alone exhibit flexibility on the core issues of the permanent settlement.

Consequently, the Palestinian leadership will likely seek to take advantage of the momentum of recent years, whereby the international community has declared that there is no choice but to end the occupation. It will continue to recruit international support that will allow it to turn to the UN and demand a *de jure* recognition of a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders, on the basis of UN Resolutions 242 and 338. This path will enable the Palestinian leadership to take Israel’s exclusive prerogative of

deciding the fate of the territories and the future of the Palestinian people out of Israel's hands and claim it as its own.

Criticism over Human Rights Violations

In recent years, journalists and human rights organizations have decried the PA's denial of democratic and human rights. For example, the leader of the PA's Independent Palestinian Human Rights Commission, Dr. Mamdouh al-Acre, recently admitted that the level of human rights in the PA is not acceptable and warned that not confronting the problem is liable to turn the PA into a kind of "police state."²⁶ In Commission reports and related interviews, al-Acre points to limitations on the right to congregate and freedom to demonstrate, illegal and random arrests, torture of detainees, screening of candidates for public service by the intelligence and security apparatus on the basis of political criteria, ongoing detention by the security apparatus, and ignoring of court orders. Al-Acre criticized the establishment of the security apparatus under the aegis of the occupying power as well as its inflated size, requiring one-third of the PA's budget to continue to operate, which comes at the expense of health, education, and welfare funds. Criticism is also directed at the lack of party activity in the PA: Fatah is in the grips of a longstanding internal crisis, Hamas activity has been banned in the West Bank, and the small parties have so far not developed a real ability to propose an alternative agenda or command public power.

Mamhoud al-Acre has pointed to a new wind blowing in the Palestinian public, which demands the return of the Palestinian issue to its rightful context: the struggle of the movement for national liberation. In his opinion, it is necessary to reestablish PLO leadership of the Palestinian people with new leaders, and to change the function of the PA so that it retains the authority of a large municipality. Al-Acre said that he feels the incipient changes in the demonstrations taking place in the villages, and in the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) NGOs. These bodies are working to promote economic boycotts such as on products made in the territories, impose cultural and other sanctions against Israel, and block investments there. He estimates that what happened in Tunisia and Egypt will accelerate the process within the territory controlled by the PA.

In the absence of any realistic alternative the PA still enjoys some public support, but its dependence on material assistance from the international community, bought with security cooperation with Israel, the undermining of Hamas infrastructures, and concomitant damage to democracy and human rights is viewed by the public as problematic. This calls into question the government's stability and prospects for successful state building, and nurtures despair and cynicism in Palestinian society. Aware of these sentiments, senior members of the PA and Fatah are working to shake the negative image resulting from security cooperation with Israel and stress, especially to the younger generation, the Palestinian interests involved.²⁷ They hope that the public accepts these explanations and agrees that in the national order of priorities, the political struggle against Israel takes precedence over the internal struggle against the deficient performance of the Palestinian government.

Significance for Israel

The unrest undermining the regimes in the Middle East differs from what characterizes intra-Palestinian dynamics. Palestinian society, split internally, is under occupation and is engaged in a struggle for political independence. Its young people lack a collective goal, either social or political, reflected in their preference to focus on their personal ambitions while integrating into the private or public sector and state building processes. The waning of national symbols of this society in recent years – primarily Fatah, the national liberation movement that lacks internal cohesion, commanding leadership, and public support; the rupture of national unity due to the loss of the Gaza Strip and the split with Hamas; and the abandonment of the notion of resistance (*al-muqawama*) in favor of state building – all indicate that today there is no political movement or force in the West Bank that can jumpstart widespread popular processes such as opposition to the PA or an uprising against the Israeli occupation.

At the same time, the Palestinian leadership is not ignoring a long line of challenges that are liable to change current reality. It is aware that the question of legitimacy, given the lack of elections and the loss

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of control of the Gaza Strip, the ongoing economic and social hardships, the democracy and human rights violations, and security cooperation with Israel without progress in the political process, are all liable to abet popular anti-government dissent, as well as dissent against the central political powers – Fatah and Hamas – that brought about the split and caused the weakening of Palestinian society from within. In this sense, such an awakening, from the bottom up, may be based on social groups similar to those that touched off the events in Tunisia, Egypt, and other states, which were not spurred by the power of political party ideology.

Questions about the legitimacy of the PA's rule and Abu Mazen's presidency will remain for the foreseeable future, at least until the next general presidential and parliamentary elections. However, to the same extent the elements ensuring the PA's continued existence and Abu Mazen's presidency will be maintained: first, despite the geographical as well as political split, Hamas and Fatah have a shared interest to preserve the PA in the territorial setting of two areas and not establish separate entities; second, Israel, the Arab states, and the greater international community all uphold the reason for the existence of the PA, and have continued to support its existence in recent years, both materially and politically.

Yet it is clear that in light of the events in the Arab world, the PA will need more backing and support from Israel and the international community in the form of an invigorated political process, assistance in state building processes, and assistance in the economic and welfare programs. Israel will be able to contribute to the PA's stability if it encourages the leadership for achievements in ensuring the rule of law and order and restoring security to the region, and will continue to view it as a partner for political and security dialogue. In fact, and contra to Israeli popular opinion, the PA is not inciting to violence: in recent years, senior officials have not made statements in support of terrorism or in favor of returning to the armed struggle,²⁸ and as a result of its struggle against Hamas, the mosques and campuses are no longer centers for anti-Israel incitement and activity. Therefore, Israel ought to recognize the Palestinian need to commemorate those who, in their mind, are heroes of the national struggle for liberation and not view this as incitement, while at the same time allow them to continue on the practical route they have chosen: state building and concluding a settlement with Israel.

Progress towards settling the conflict politically will require Israel to modify its support for differentiation between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip,²⁹ even if this happens gradually: first of all, by continuing to demonstrate the advantages to the Palestinians from the alternative proposed by the PA in the West Bank over Hamas' alternative in the Gaza Strip in terms of achieving political independence and state and society building; second, by renewing the political process for a Palestinian state to be established in both geographical areas and making real progress in this direction; third, by enabling elections: under these circumstances the PA would hold elections on the West Bank, even if Hamas' leadership does not respond to reconciliation efforts, as it becomes clear to all that a political solution achieved will apply to both regions. In this case, Hamas will be seen as the entity that prevented progress in ending the occupation and establishing an independent Palestinian state in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip, while the elections will be seen by Palestinian public opinion as a unifying rather than a divisive move. Renewing the political process while continuing security coordination and promoting state building processes are likely to reduce the impact of the events in the Arab world on the PA's rule and contribute to its stabilization. Israel's interests require that the establishment of a Palestinian state result from negotiations with the existing pragmatic leadership, rather than an externally imposed *fait accompli* that obligates recognition of a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders.

Notes

- 1 This essay is based in part on conversations by the author with leaders in the Palestinian Authority, academics, civil society, Fatah, and other activists, West Bank businesspeople and industrialists, and ordinary residents, during visits to the West Bank.
- 2 Abu Mazen has declared that the situation in the PA is stable and that the PA is the only regime in the Arab world that allows demonstrations by its citizens. See *a-Sharq al-Awsat*, March 6, 2011.
- 3 Palestinian society started the first intifada (December 1987) against the occupation and paved the way for the PLO, the Madrid Conference, and the Oslo process; it started the second intifada (September 2000) in order to protest against the continued occupation as well as against corruption in the PA and its human rights violations; it toppled the rule of Fatah and brought Hamas to victory in local elections (during 2005) and in the general elections for the Legislative Council (January 2006).

- 4 As a rule, Palestinian television, identified with the PA, avoided direct broadcast of events in Tunisia and Egypt and did not dedicate a separate discussion program to the ramifications of the events in the Arab world for the Palestinians. So, for example, the Friday sermon by Sheikh Qaradawi in Tahrir Square was not broadcast live on this channel, whereas Hamas' al-Aqsa Channel did broadcast it.
- 5 See the website of the Association of Bureaus of Commerce, February 7, 2010, at <http://www.chamber.org.il/Content.aspx?code=5866&cat=0>.
- 6 *CIA World Factbook*: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/we.html>.
- 7 *PASSIA Yearbook 2009*, p. 327; UNRWA website at <http://www.unrwa.org/htemplate.php?id=95>.
- 8 <http://hala.ps/ar/index.php?act=Show&id=16876>.
- 9 *PASSIA Yearbook 2009*, pp. 344-45.
- 10 Tani Goldstein, "PA Economy Flourishes, Hamastan Economy in Freefall," *Ynet*, December 4, 2009, at <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3813386,00.html>.
- 11 The Palestinian economy maintains some Third World hallmarks: it is based on agriculture and traditional industry such as small plants (carpentries, sewing workshops, metal shops, oil presses, stone quarries), and continues to rely decisively on external budgetary assistance and assistance in the form of food, medication, and equipment distributed by UNRWA and human rights organizations. The labor force is to a large extent dependent on Israel. The PA's Ministry for Social Affairs conducts several social assistance programs with the help of donor nations, such as the PNCTP, which transfers cash to needy families, in order to reduce poverty rates. See the website of the Palestinian Welfare Ministry, June 23, 2010, at www.mosa.pna.ps.
- 12 The PA's policy of boycotting the settlements and prohibiting working there without providing appropriate alternatives has added to the resentment of thousands of laborers (some 25,000) for losing sources of income, and there were voices calling to ignore the prohibition.
- 13 See Bernard Sabila, "The Effect of the Family on Political Involvement of the Youth," in Rafi Netz, ed., *The Palestinian Family* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research, 2003), pp. 74-91.
- 14 Young people on the program "Shu Birasak?" ("What's on Your Mind?"), Radio RAYA FM, March 17, 2011.
- 15 See Rafi Netz, ed., *The Palestinian Media* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research, 2003).
- 16 See, for example, the articles by Baker abu Baker, Akram Massalem, and Salah al-Wadia in, respectively, *al-Hayat al-Jadida*, February 16, 2011; *al-Ayam*, February 20, 2011, and *Maan*, February 17, 2011. These publicists called for young Palestinians to use the social networks only for purposes that advance the Palestinian national cause, such as mending the internal divide and ending the occupation.

- 17 Prime Minister Salam Fayyad has started a direct dialogue with the public via Facebook and is answering questions sent to him with short film clips. Similarly, he gives a weekly radio address on the Voice of Palestine and local stations.
- 18 "A Proper Cause" is a Facebook campaign calling for the return of Palestinian refugees to their homes on May 15, 2011. See MEMRI of March 8, 2011 at http://www.memri.org.il/cgi-webaxy/sal/sal.pl?lang=he&ID=107345_memri&act=show2&dbid=articles&dataid=2714.
- 19 See statements by Yasir Abd Rabo and Azam al-Ahmad on Radio Ajial, February 12, 2011, and by Dr. Muhamad Ashtiyeh on the Voice of Palestine on February 13, 2011, at <http://www.palvoice.com/index.php?id=29012>.
- 20 Nabil Shaath on the Voice of Palestine on February 13, 2011, at <http://www.palvoice.com/index.php?id=29015>.
- 21 *A-sharq al-Aawsat*, March 6, 2011.
- 22 The process of reconvening the government has been frozen in light of Abu Mazen's proposal to the head of the Hamas government, Ismail Haniyeh, to establish a temporary technocratic government until the elections.
- 23 *Al-Hayat al-Jadida*, March 16, 2011; www.palestine-info.info, March 15, 2011.
- 24 This assessment is supported also by the comparison with Hamas, founded by the Muslim Brotherhood, which in the past declared that it had no interest in governing (as the Brotherhood says today in Egypt), but in practice has operated differently whenever it has been possible for it to do so.
- 25 Statements by Palestinian Foreign Minister Dr. Riyad al-Malki at a symposium at Tel Aviv University, March 22, 2011.
- 26 See interview with Dr. Mamdouh al-Acre, *Haaretz*, February 3, 2011, and PNN Agency, March 13, 2011.
- 27 For example, a spokesman for the PA's apparatus, Adnan Damiri, told students at an-Najah University in Nablus, "The security coordination is in the best interests of the Palestinian people and designed to make everyday life easier." Local TV station in Ramallah, *Watan*, February 28, 2011.
- 28 The PA's media does not broadcast incitement by leaders. Senior PA officials state clearly and repeatedly that the lessons of the second intifada have been learned.
- 29 At the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, Yuval Diskin, head of Israel's General Security Service, stated: "The distinction between the Gaza Strip and Judea and Samaria is good from Israel's security perspective. It would be a serious security mistake to reconnect the Gaza Strip with Judea and Samaria. Such a connection would provide the opportunity for building terrorist infrastructures that would harm the State of Israel." *Ynet*, December 29, 2009.