

## The Palestinians need new leaders

But few believe that Israel will ever let them have a state of their own

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Few experiences are more humiliating for Palestinians than plodding through the Israeli checkpoint at Qalandiya, where the West Bank's administrative headquarters at Ramallah are separated from the Palestinians' would-be capital in east Jerusalem. Young Israeli conscripts bark orders at middle-aged labourers queuing to cross. Meanwhile the Palestinian workers can hear the roar of Israeli commuters who live in settlements on nearby Palestinian land zooming along a four-lane motorway barred to Palestinians, en route to jobs in Tel Aviv. "The humiliation is a tax I have to pay to feed my six children," says a day labourer trudging to work in Israel.

[...]

Gaza is more hopeless still. "It's practically a separate state," says a former head of Israeli intelligence, **Tamir Hayman**. Israel controls its borders, sea and air space so its 2.2m people feel besieged, as if in an open-air prison. Income per person is less than a third that of the West Bank. Hamas rules with a heavy hand, by decree. It is officially wedded to armed struggle but, since Israel has smashed it whenever it fires too many rockets into the Jewish state, it has practised a measure of restraint.

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