

# Palestinian Authority to Hold Sham Elections

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In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

Longtime Israeli collaborators Mahmoud Abbas and Salam Fayyad scheduled West Bank municipal elections on October 20, 2012. Democracy isn't on the ballot. Palestinians are skeptical for good reason.

For the first time since January 25, 2006, they'll vote in an election much different from then. Fed up with institutionalized Fatah corruption and subservience to Israel, Hamas candidates swept to victory.

They won 74 of the Palestinian Legislative Council's (PLC) 132 seats. Hamas became Palestine's legitimate government. It remains so despite Fatah's complicity with Israel. Doing so separated West Bank authority from Gaza.

Ismail Haniyeh is Palestine's prime minister. Fayyad's PM appointment lacks legitimacy. He represents lawless coup d'état authority. Abbas' term as president expired in January 2009. He remains in office illegally.

Palestinians suffer because of their allegiance to Israel and Washington, not them. Elections this month assure continuity, not democratic change.

On October 10, the Los Angeles Times headlined "Palestinian voters skeptical about value of elections."

Hebron City Council aspirant Maysoun Qawasmi expressed popular frustration, saying:

"We are seeing the same people running, and they aren't offering anything new. Voters are looking for independent voices."

In fact, they want officials representing them, not Israel. Abbas and Fayyad won't tolerate them. Everything is arranged for Fatah candidates to win. "They always win," said Qawasmi. "And nothing ever changes."

One Palestinian perhaps spoke for others, saying:

"I don't understand how we can have elections in just half the territory. I don't even know who's running."

Given a rigged process, Hamas opted out. Doing so got Abbas/Fayyad to hold elections they might have cancelled otherwise, knowing they might lose. They tolerate no opposition.

They crack down hard against challengers. They mock democratic freedoms. They represent despot authority. They're complicit Israeli puppet stooges.

They dismissed about 50 Fatah members wanting to run as independents. Prominent former Nablus Mayor Ghassan Shaka'a was bumped illegitimately.

Other PLO candidates running independently were denied funding. They include candidates representing the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), and People's (Communist) Party.

Al Haq human rights group legal consultant, Issam Abdeen, said:

"The sound basis for any election to take place is a healthy, political atmosphere. (It's) clearly lacking here."

According to Palestinian Central Electoral Commission (CEC) chairperson Hanna Nasser, the West Bank has over 350 districts. However, 181 won't participate because only Fatah candidates are running.

In addition, another 78 postponed voting until November. At issue is getting enough candidates to stand in a fraudulent process.

On October 18, the Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR) expressed great concern about upcoming elections. At issue is limited public freedoms and "continuing widespread" PA human rights violations.

On July 10, Palestine's CEC was "instructed to make the necessary arrangements in order to organize the elections in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip by the Council of Ministers in Ramallah."

After Hamas CEC participation was terminated, "the Council of Ministers annulled their previous decision." They decided on only West Bank elections.

The most recent local council ones were held in stages from December 2004 to December 2005. In December 2009, the mandate for these elections expired.

Since then, separate West Bank/Gaza authorities appointed local council members directly. Favoritism substituted for democracy.

"As the mandate granted by the Palestinian people in local, legislative and presidential elections has expired, these institutions have lost their authorization to represent the will of the Palestinian voters."

"Therefore, the holding of renewed elections is the democratic entitlement of the Palestinian people."

Fatah denies them that right. Abbas and Fayyad take orders from Israel. They salute and obey. Palestinians lose out altogether.

Legitimate general or local elections require certain conditions in place. Transparency is fundamental. So is a free, fair, and open process. The popular will of the electorate must be prioritized.

Public freedoms must be protected. They include "the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the right to peaceful assembly, the right to form associations, freedom of the

press, the release of political detainees, and an end to restrictions placed on political activities.”

Nothing resembling electoral freedom is in place. How could it be with democracy excluded from the ballot. Palestine is fractured in two pieces. Abbas repeatedly delayed elections. After promising Fatah/Hamas unity, he backed off and did nothing.

Security forces he controls also compromise human and civil rights. Israeli diktats are prioritized over democratic freedoms and legitimate governance. Palestinians deserve better. They’re denied it under Israeli-enforced occupation rules.

Abbas/Fayyad began corrupting the process months ago. Fatah outliers, other challengers, and Hamas members were targeted. Arrests were made. Palestinians wanting legitimate government were imprisoned.

What’s upcoming this weekend assures continuity of lawless government and Fatah-enforced occupation harshness. Palestinians should opt out and stay home. With choice off the ballot, nothing they do electorally will change things.

Separately, Haaretz headlined “Netanyahu cabinet to adopt part of Levy report on legal status of West Bank outposts.”

All settlements and outposts violate international law. Israel spurns it dismissively. In January, Netanyahu appointed a three-member committee. Former Supreme Court Justice Edmond Levy headed it.

He excluded fairness and rule of law principles from consideration. Three issues were examined:

(1) Legal aspects of Israel’s occupation.

(2) The 2005 Sasson Report’s conclusion that dozens of outposts built on privately owned Palestinian land were illegal.

(3) Whether Israel’s presence in the West Bank is, or is not, an occupation.

Levy’s report rewrote international law. It claimed that occupation “as set out in the relevant international conventions cannot be considered applicable to the unique and sui generis historic and legal circumstances of Israel’s presence in Judea and Samaria spanning over decades.”

“Israelis have the legal right to settle in Judea and Samaria and the establishment of settlements cannot, in and of itself, be considered illegal.”

It recommended legalizing illegal outposts. It said zoning officials should authorize them without further political approval. It urged no restraints on settlement construction.

Netanyahu praised the report, saying:

“In my opinion, this report is important because it deals with the legalization and the legitimization of the settlement enterprise in Judea and Samaria on the basis of facts, a variety of facts and arguments that should be seriously considered.”

It's unsurprising given Likud's position on settlements, stating:

"The Jewish communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza (all Occupied Palestine) are the realization of Zionist values. Settlement of the land is a clear expression of the unassailable right of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel and constitutes an important asset in the defense of the vital interests of the State of Israel."

"The Likud will continue to strengthen and develop these communities and will prevent their uprooting."

Likud rejects Green Line separation of Israel and Palestine. It incrementally steals Palestinian land. It declared all Jerusalem sovereign Israeli territory.

Likud's Charter also rejects Palestinian self-determination, saying:

"The Jordan river will be the permanent eastern border of the State of Israel."

"Jerusalem is the eternal, united capital of the State of Israel and only of Israel. The government will flatly reject Palestinian proposals to divide Jerusalem."

"The Government of Israel flatly rejects the establishment of a Palestinian Arab state west of the Jordan river."

Levy's Likudnik standing remains unblemished. He's more shyster than jurist. He's little more than a retired Likud Party hack. His opinions are entirely separate from legal principles. Revisionism defined his ruling.

Haaretz said Netanyahu plans to legalize West Bank outposts. Previously he stopped short. No longer. Together with other hardliners they'll do it to appease settlers ahead of planned January elections.

Doing so will make it easier to steal land, expand settlements, and dispossess more Palestinians. Adopting key parts of Levy's report effectively annexes all West Bank territory Israel wishes.

Maybe taking it all is planned. Put nothing past fascists like Netanyahu. Some of his policies exceed what some despots would dare.

Surprisingly, Defense Minister Ehud Barak opposes his move, saying:

Approving the Levy report "will backfire on those who support it. The report's adoption won't strengthen the settlements in the West Bank, but will instead cause diplomatic damage and will increase Israel's isolation in the world."

He urged cabinet members reject what's now approved. Labor leader Shelly Yacimovich agreed. He called Netanyahu's move a transparent pre-election stunt. He'll do more harm to Israel's security than improve it.

Kadima MK Yisrael Hasson said Netanyahu's "playing with a flame-thrower over a barrel of gasoline. (He) wants to enslave the State of Israel for the sake of political interests and we will pay the price for that."

Other opposition party members also expressed criticism. Likud MK Danny Danon said he's

trying to enlist congressional support. He wants Washington to legitimize what's illegitimate. Getting it he calls "a rare historical opportunity." With US elections approaching, perhaps he'll succeed. No one considers what's right for Palestinians important.

Decades ago, Washington made them non-persons. Israel did earlier in 1948. Effectively, they're denied all rights. Occupation harshness demands it.

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