

Inside the PA



March 8, 2006

Produced by the Center for Near East Policy Research
03-636-4017 policyresearch1@yahoo.com

Editor's note:

Welcome to the eleventh 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

" We will work to Islamize the penal code and impose Islamic penalties for murder, theft, adultery and trade in alcoholic beverages."

—Hamis legislator Abu Halabiya outlines his movement's plans for the Palestinian Authority.

This Week in the PA

- *In Brussels, EU calls on Israel to relay funds to PA*
- *In Ramallah, PLC session begins*
- *In Gaza City, Islamic Jihad threatens to strike Israeli city*

NEWS DIGEST

1. HAMAS PLANS TO CHOP HANDS, HEADS
2. PA TV ENCOURAGES SUICIDE MISSIONS
3. ABBAS TO TRANSFER SECURITY TO HAMAS
4. FATAH CHAOS IN GAZA
5. HAMAS PRESENTS PALESTINIAN ARMY

Hamas plans to chop hands, heads

Hamas plans to institute Islamic legislation that calls for stoning adulterers and chopping the hands of thieves.

This legislative program was disclosed as Hamas took over the Palestinian Legislative Council and began shaping the national agenda. Hamas has pledged to replace the penal code with Islamic law

The most detailed outline of Hamas's program came in an interview with Ahmed Abu Halabiyah that ran in the PA-owned daily Al Ayyam on February 22. Abu Halabiyah, a newly elected member of the PLC as well as a professor of Islamic thought at the Islamic University, declared, "We will work to Islamize the penal code and impose Islamic law penalties for murder, theft, adultery and commerce in alcoholic beverages." He stated that this would be the priority of Hamas. The PA had passed a Basic Law that draws on Islamic law as the basis of legislation, but for the most part had avoided passing criminal legislation that called for Islamic punishment.

On March 4, the rival Fatah movement decided it would not join any Hamas-led government. The following day, Hamas used the first session of the newly constituted PLC to overturn laws passed by Fatah. Fatah legislators walked out in protest.



**Al Quds. March 1, 2006
Awaiting the guillotine of Arab election results.**

"We see this as a coup attempt to change the regime and they [Hamas] have to seriously reconsider their decisions," Fatah legislator Tayeb Abdul Rahim said.

Hamas's agenda would turn the PA into a Taliban- or Saudi-type regime. Saudi Arabia employs the Sharia, or Islamic law, and routinely beheads murderers, stones adulterers and chops off the hands of thieves. These punishments are conducted after Friday mosque prayers in the center of Saudi cities.

As Abu Halabiyah put it, "We are not far from the point at which religious penalties will be enforced against criminals in Palestinian society just like in other societies that implement Islamic law."

According to Abu Halabiyah, Hamas has long sought to impose Islamic law in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. He said the previous session of the PLC suspended deliberations of such law amid what he termed a slander campaign.

Abu Halabiyah explained that a previous bill to introduce Sharia was opposed by many in Hamas because the legislation was selective in its approach. The bill failed to specify the Islamic penalties for such offenses as adultery and drinking liquor. (Liquor is banned in Islam.)

For example, he said, the legislation, which only reached the first reading, did not punish drinking alcoholic beverages in private. In addition, adultery was not punished if conducted by mutual consent. The exception was if somebody sought a police complaint for adultery.

In addition, the penalty for theft was not cutting off the hand of the convicted thief. Abu Halabiyah said this was not a sufficient deterrent to stop the crime wave in the PA.

Abu Halabiyah said Islamic law in the PA would supersede any human rights principle. He said Islamic law would also override any international law or treaties signed by the PA. "At first we should pass the laws," Abu Halabiyah said. "Later we will gradually prepare society to understand and accept them. It is possible to do so."

PA TV Encourages Suicide Missions

Palestinian Authority television has resumed its open support for suicide strikes against Israel.

Since Hamas's victory in elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council, PA television has resumed programming that supports suicide bombings. PA television has interviewed women whose children have volunteered for and died in suicide missions against Israel. In other programs, Palestinian children recited poems and stories that told of their wish to massacre Israelis.

On February 20, PA television interviewed the parents of a 21-year-old Palestinian woman who sought to bomb Soroka Hospital in the southern Israeli city of Beersheba. In June 2005, Wafa Al Bas was arrested after she was searched and found with a 20-pound bomb in her clothing. Al Bas was on her way to Soroka to receive treatment for burns sustained from an explosion of her gas oven.



Al Ayyam. March 5, 2006
Israel's Olmert refuses to see PA Chairman Abbas.

Al Bas's parents expressed understanding for their daughter's mission. Her mother, however, said she did not encourage Al Bas in her desire to die in an attack against Israel: "If it was a boy, I would have supported this, but since she is a girl I discouraged it."

PA television has also resumed programming for children that encourage attacks against Israel. On February 26, a Palestinian pre-teen read a poem that told of a machine gun and rifle received from her father. The poem contained such lines as "When I am big I will join the liberation army. The liberation army has taught us how to liberate our homeland."

Abbas to Transfer Security to Hamas

The Palestinian Authority has been preparing to transfer security authority to the new Hamas-elect government.

PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas has held meetings with Hamas representatives to discuss the transfer of security agencies to the authority of Prime Minister-designate Ismail Haniyeh. Abbas said several security agencies would come under Hamas control.

"We'll grant Hamas authority over Palestinian national security because we need to have one body that controls the situation to ensure security," Abbas told the Qatari-based A-Jazeera satellite channel on March 2. "I don't intend to deprive Hamas of what I demanded in the past from Yasser Arafat."



**Al Quds. March 5, 2006
Palestinians receive promises instead of their salaries.**

Abbas served as prime minister under Arafat in 2003. During his brief tenure, Abbas had demanded control of police and several security agencies.

"There are the three security apparatuses," Abbas said, "the preventive security forces, the police and the civil service. All of these belong to the Interior Ministry, but the national security belongs to the president."

In remarks reported by the PA media, Abbas said he would transfer control of the National Security Forces, civilian police and civil defense to any Hamas-led government. The paramilitary National Security Forces, said to contain 25,000 troops, has been the largest single PA security agency.

The police and security agencies would come under the authority of the Interior Ministry. Outgoing Interior Minister Nasser Yusef has been appointed Abbas's adviser on security affairs.

The Hamas government, however, would not be granted authority over PA intelligence agencies. Abbas said this would include General Intelligence, directly controlled by the chairman.

Abbas also plans to deny Hamas control over the Preventive Security Apparatus, regarded as the most powerful domestic security organization. PSA chief Gen. Rashid Abu Shback has been appointed head of "internal security in the West Bank and Gaza."

"This National Security Council is what plans the security policies, and the interior minister implements them," Abbas said. "There is no difference between a minister from Hamas, from the Islamic Jihad or a minister from any other side."

Abbas's policy ultimately may be without significance, however. On March 6, the Hamas-dominated PLC reversed legislation passed by Fatah, including additional powers for Abbas.

In an interview with the London-based Al Hayat daily on March 2 and reprinted on March

4 in Al Hayat Al Jadida, Abbas justified his retention of the intelligence agencies. He said Al Qaida has established a presence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and pointed to Hamas's links with Iran and Syria. Later, PA officials said one Al Qaida suspect was arrested.

"I have received irrefutable intelligence over the past three days of an Al Qaida presence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip," Abbas said. "We haven't yet reached the stage of capturing them. If Al Qaida is allowed to enter the region, the entire area would be destroyed."

Fatah Chaos in Gaza

Despite its loss in Palestinian legislative elections, Fatah continues to sow terror in the Gaza Strip. Fatah has attacked universities, stormed Palestinian Authority offices and attacked rivals.

The Palestinian Center for Human Rights has recorded the Fatah policy. On February 28, Fatah gunmen from the Al Rish Brigades stormed Al Quds Open University in Khan Yunis. The gunmen forced staff and students off campus and announced the university would be closed until their demands were met.

The demands were free tuition for any student whose father was killed in the war against Israel, the transfer of 50,000 Jordanian dinars [about \$80,000] and new elections for student council.

PA police arrived and did not confront the Fatah gunmen. Instead, a PA officer agreed that the campus would be closed while some of the demands would be fulfilled.

On the same day, the Center reported the killing of one Palestinian and the wounding of two others in a clan dispute in Gaza City. The center said the incident, in which there were no reported arrests, was part of the "internal security chaos and proliferation of arms" in the Gaza Strip.

On March 1, unidentified gunmen abducted Atef Al Khodari, the director-general of the Palestinian Land Authority, from his office in Gaza City. Al Khodari was held for several

hours and then released.



**Al Quds. March 6, 2006
The broken home of Fatah.**

Hamas Presents Palestinian Army

Hamas has outlined its plans to establish a Palestinian army in the Gaza Strip to fight Israel and the West.

The army is based on Hamas's Izzedin Kassa military wing. A senior commander in Izzeddin Kassam told the Palestinian newspaper Dunya Al Watan on March 4 that Hamas has established units in every major city and refugee camp in the Gaza Strip.

The commander said thousands of Palestinians have been trained to fight Israel and the West. They said the army would be used in the holy war against non-Muslims.

The training was designed to last four months, the commander, identified as Abu Huzaifa, said. The first month consists of basic training and the next comprised special operations as well as unit maneuvers.

Abu Hazaifa said Palestinian cadets were taught firearms training, rappelling buildings and outposts, launching Kassam-class, short-range missiles and infiltrating enemy bases. He said the instructors were Hamas fighters who were trained abroad. Hamas has been trained in such countries as Iran, Lebanon, Sudan and Syria.



**Al Hayat Al Jadida. March 4, 2006
Israel angry as Hamas welcomed in Russia.**

Abu Hazaifa said the army included an intelligence unit to warn against Israeli strikes. Recruits have been trained to deploy in strategic locations of the Gaza Strip and provide reconnaissance of Israeli ground, air and artillery units.

The army has also overseen the development of new weapons, which, according to Abu Huzaifa, include extended-range Kassam rockets and bombs.

Hamas has already developed a system to quickly mobilize thousands of fighters. He said the fighters would ensure fierce resistance to any Israeli attempt to capture the Gaza Strip.