

Palestinian Political Rights



Elections

“A person's right to vote cannot be held hostage to any political faction.”

– Nour Odeh,
Spokesperson for the Palestinian Authority

- Palestinian Basic Law states that presidential and legislative elections should be held every four years. There have been no such elections for almost a decade.
- The last and only presidential and legislative elections in the Palestinian Authority took place in 2006.
- Following Fatah's loss in the legislative elections of 2006, Hamas forcefully took control over the Gaza Strip, ending the unity government and dividing the Palestinian territories with Hamas governing in Gaza, and Fatah in the West Bank.
- The Palestinian Legislative Council has not convened for a session since the election in 2006, but they continue to be paid as legislative council members.
- In the absence of a functioning legislative council, presidential decrees are considered law, resulting in no separation between the executive and the legislature, further undermining democracy.
- The last municipality elections in the Palestinian Authority took place in 2012, but only represented 92 of 353 West Bank localities, and did not include Gaza.



Assembly

“Palestinians should be able to express critical political opinions without being arrested or beaten.”

– Sarah Leah Whitson,
Human Rights Watch

Hamas and PA security forces repeatedly break up both private and public assemblies in the West Bank and Gaza using weapons and excessive force.

- **In January 2014**, PA policemen forcefully broke up a protest of 60-70 Palestinian youths near Ramallah using clubs and stun grenades.
- **In March 2014**, Hamas security forces broke up a private indoor assembly in Gaza, organized by the Fatah movement, and raided the premises, arrested, detained and questioned participants.
- **In May 2015**, PA security forces arrested 25 university students for exercising their right to vote in student council elections that pit Fatah and Hamas-supporting students against each other.
- **In September 2015**, PA security forces broke up a rally in Bethlehem with a handgun by opening fire on the crowd.



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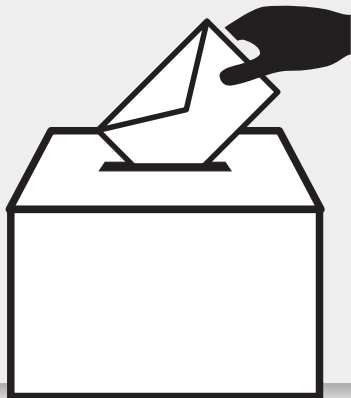
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*“ We Demand
the Right
to Free and Fair
ELECTIONS
observed by
international
monitors.”*

– Gaza protestors

“We lived through the first Intifada, second Intifada and the Israeli occupation. Is that not enough for us to justly demand to live a better life and secure a better future? We, the youth, are more than 65% of the population here. We should have the right to decide that our political division must end and soon.”

– Gaza protestors



Association

“The unions were operating in a normal way but when they started to criticize the performance of the PA, especially its spending, disagreements between them intensified and the decision deeming the union illegitimate was issued.”

– Abdel Sattar Qassem, Professor,
Al-Najah University

In November 2014, the PA declared a prominent trade union in the West Bank, to be illegal. This left over 40,000 public sector employees without representation of their working rights.

Associations in the West Bank and Gaza are refused permission to open bank accounts due to lack of documentation, despite having full legal status under domestic Palestinian law.

Since 2011, by virtue of a presidential decree from Mahmoud Abbas, (rather than lawful legislative process), associations in the West Bank and Gaza do not have control of any remaining funds upon dissolution. The State reclaims these funds.

“Under occupation we felt brute force... But we never felt the humiliation we do today, because we are oppressed by our own Authority.”

– Dr. Eyad R Sarraj, Director,
Gaza Community Mental Health Program



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TERRORIZES
the PEOPLE of GAZA**