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Middle East

# The Palestinian Authority and the Completion of the Siege

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**It was only natural for the genocidal war launched by Israel on the Gaza Strip, in the wake of the Hamas-led Operation Al-Aqsa Flood of 7 October 2023, to be accompanied by an onslaught on the West Bank. Indeed, the Zionist state saw in the Hamas-led operation a golden opportunity to pounce on the Palestinian people in the territories it occupied in 1967 in order to complete the 1948 Nakba there. For, when Israel occupied the remaining parts of British Mandate Palestine between the River and the Sea, it was surprised by the resilience of most of their residents and their steadfast refusal to flee the battlefield, unlike what happened in 1948, when the majority of the residents of the land seized by the Zionist forces fled and were never allowed to return, thus becoming refugees. The residents of the West Bank learned the lesson of that bitter historical experience, as did the residents of Gaza (in addition to the fact that the geographical conditions make fleeing to Sinai a hazardous adventure).**

That is why Israel refrained from annexing the territories it occupied in 1967, except for East Jerusalem. Successive Zionist governments discussed various plans to dislodge the population from Gaza and the West Bank in an endeavour to complete the seizure of all of Palestine from the River to the Sea, by annexing the 1967 territories without having to face the dilemma of the fate of their indigenous inhabitants.

Since it was out of the question for the Zionist state to grant them Israeli citizenship as it had granted the Palestinian minority that remained in the territories it seized in 1948 – a gesture which allowed it to claim to be democratic – the Zionist government that supervised the 1967 war also prepared a backup plan, known by the name of the minister who drafted it, Yigal Allon. It planned the permanent seizure of strategic areas of the newly occupied territories, including the Jordan Valley, by deploying military bases and settlements in those areas, and handing over areas with high Palestinian population density to the guardianship of the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan.

The glorious 1988 Intifada put an end to this project, as the Hashemite kingdom shirked responsibility for administering the West Bank, and even abandoned the claim to recover it as a land that had been annexed to the kingdom in 1949. This decision was ostensibly a concession to the Palestinians' desire to enjoy self-rule, confirmed by the Palestinian National Council held in Algiers in the same year, but in reality it was the result of the kingdom's conviction that control over the Palestinian people in the 1967 territories had become intractable and dangerous. This sequence of events is what convinced the Zionist Labour Party, which acted according to the Allon Plan when it was in power, to replace the Hashemite kingdom with the Arafat leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization after the Labourites returned to power under Yitzhak Rabin's leadership of in the summer of 1992.

This was the preamble to the secret negotiations held in Oslo, which Yasser Arafat and Mahmoud Abbas joined behind the backs of other members of the Palestinian leadership, and which led to the famous accords signed at the White House, in Washington, in September 1993. As for the purpose of those accords, it was clear to anyone who did not indulge in the illusion that miracles would occur leading to the "independent Palestinian state" that Arafat had promised. The Zionist government immediately worked to intensify colonial settlement activity in the 1967 territories and entrusted what was called Palestinian National Authority with the task of suppressing any attempt at rebellion or resistance among the Palestinian people. It is the mission for which Israel authorised the entry of the Palestinian Liberation Army (made up of Palestinian refugees) into the 1967 territories and its mutation into a police force equipped with light weapons, responsible for controlling the local population.

When the Oslo Accords began to be implemented with the handover of Gaza and Jericho to the new Palestinian Authority (PA) in the summer of 1994, the latter decided to prove to the occupier its ability to rein in its people by bloodily suppressing a demonstration led by Hamas in Gaza in the autumn of the same year, in an incident known as

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the Palestine Mosque Massacre – the most prominent opening to a series of repressive actions carried out by the security forces affiliated with the PA, against Islamic movements in particular. The truth is that there can be no Palestinian “National” Authority next to the Zionist state and with its consent, but only an authority affiliated with the occupier, similar to the Vichy government that took over the administration of the part of French territory that was not directly occupied by Nazi Germany in 1940. This is the comparison that Edward Said famously made in his critique of the Oslo Accords, which angered the Arafat leadership to the point of banning the writings of the most famous Palestinian thinker in the territories under its supervision.

Said’s analogy was confirmed, except that Yasser Arafat refused to continue playing the role of Maréchal Philippe Pétain, the military commander who headed the Vichy government, after he realized that his dream of “independent state” was nothing but an illusion, and understood the reality of Zionist aims, albeit with great delay. Arafat led the Al-Aqsa Intifada that started in the autumn of 2000, a stance which led to his demise four years later.

While most of the Palestinian people had illusions when the Oslo Accords were announced and started to be implemented, especially due to the personal prestige that Yasser Arafat enjoyed, these illusions completely dissipated after Mahmoud Abbas succeeded him. Abbas has become a symbol of the corruption and oppression inherent in the Ramallah PA to the point that, under his leadership, Fatah, the leading PLO fraction, lost the Palestinian Legislative Council elections in 2006. The rest is well known: Hamas won those elections; then Mohammed Dahlan orchestrated in the Gaza Strip an attempt to bring down the Islamic movement in 2007; it failed, but led to the division of the 1967 territories between two rival Palestinian authorities, that of Mahmoud Abbas in the West Bank and that of Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

Since the completion of the first year of the ongoing Zionist genocidal war on Gaza, that is, since last October, a shameful scene has been taking place before our eyes in the West Bank. The Ramallah PA has decided to complement the onslaught launched by the Zionist armed forces in the West Bank in parallel with their invasion of the Gaza Strip – the most violent Israeli onslaught in the West Bank, including the use of air force, since the suppression of the Al-Aqsa Intifada more than twenty years ago. As in the autumn of 1994, the PA launched a bloody attack on armed youth factions, starting in the city of Tubas and culminating in the ongoing attack on the Jenin refugee camp, home to the Jenin Battalion, a group of resistance fighters against the Israeli occupation.

In its desire to convince the United States and Israel of its ability to quell the Palestinian people, which necessarily implies an imitation of what the Zionist state does, the Ramallah PA has gone so far, while waging war on the Jenin camp at the same time that the Zionist forces were waging war on the Jabalia camp in the Gaza Strip, as to decide to ban the Al Jazeera TV network on its territory, similar to Israel’s ban of the same a few months ago. In the face of this shameful scene, we are torn between resentment of the PA that has sunk to new lows, and contempt for its delusion of managing to convince Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu of its ability to play the role of guards of the large prison in which they want to confine the remaining residents of the West Bank and Gaza.

7 January 2025

Source Gilbert Achcar’s [blog](#).

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