

PALESTINE FATAH

Party Portrait

Founded by Yasser Arafat and other members of the Palestinian diaspora in 1959 and joining the PLO in 1967, Fatah currently leads the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank. Despite its initially violent start, since 1988 Fatah has denounced terror as a strategy and been recognized as a legitimate political party by Israel and the US. The Palestinian Authority took control over Gaza and West Bank Areas A and B following the 1993 Oslo Accords, though Hamas has controlled Gaza since 2007. Militant groups such as the al-Aqsa Martyr's Brigade conducted violent acts during the second intifada; these groups share membership with Fatah, though Fatah does not officially recognize them.

Key Interests

- Achieve a viable, stable, and independent Palestinian state with full sovereignty, recognition, and freedom of movement, with East Jerusalem as its capital
- Maintain access and achieve full control over West Bank natural resources and state finances
- Achieve return of Fatah-affiliated political prisoners and recognition of the Right of Return for Palestinian refugees, with some symbolic return and/or reparations
- Maintain Fatah control over PA

Sources of Leverage

Political - Fatah receives recognition as Palestinian leadership and can leverage the perceived lack of other moderate political groups to threaten more hard-line approaches if they are not in power. Political cooperation with Israel is also a source of leverage for Fatah
Soft Power - Fatah appeals to moral and legal legitimacy from UN Security Council Resolutions and international humanitarian law
Convening Power - Fatah may be able to convene talks between Israel, other countries in the region, and a Palestinian unity government including Hamas

Regional Strategy

Fatah recognizes Israel and coordinates with the Israeli government, including on security and border control in the West Bank. Fatah maintains a strategy of working with Israel and the US on potential tradeoffs and issues that could comprise two-state solution. In addition, Fatah has gained political power through appeals to the United Nations and other international bodies for recognition through observer status and for resolutions declaring the settlements and sieges on Gaza illegal. Fatah also appeals to Western Countries for support for a negotiated settlement with Israel and financial support for Palestinians, and has at times worked with Hamas representatives to create a unified Palestinian government as a way to move forward with peace talks.

Powerful Individuals

Mahmoud Abbas (President of PA, Fatah Party Leader), Rami Hamdallah (Palestinian Prime Minister), Yasser Abed Rabbo (former PLO Secretary-General), Saeb Erakat (Member of Palestinian Parliament, negotiator and spokesperson), Hanan Ashrawi (Leader of Third Way Party & former legislator), Marwan Barghouti (imprisoned Fatah member)

Potential Negotiation Moves

Deal with Internal Conflicts - Address internal Palestinian conflicts between Hamas, Fatah, and other parties to create unity government;
Build Arab Support - Build support for the Arab Peace Initiative among Arab Nations and internationally;
Seek Recognition as a State - Seek recognition as a state from other states and as a full member in international fora;
Build Cross-border Palestinian Solidarity Network - with Palestinian refugees, heightening concerns for all host countries

Internal Conflicts

There is an ideological and political divide between Fatah and Hamas and divisions within each about how much to coordinate with the other and with Israel. There are levels of perceived legitimacy of Fatah within Palestinian Civil Society, based on collaboration with Israel, poor governance, and perceived economic mismanagement. Divisions between older members (led by Abbas) and younger members (led by jailed activist Marwan Barghouti) center around corruption.

Memberships

ARAB LEAGUE, OIC, UN (Non-Member Observer)

Allies

N/A

Partners

EUROPEAN UNION, FRANCE, HOLY SEE, HUMANITARIAN ACTORS, JORDAN, PALESTINE Civil Society, RUSSIA, SAUDI ARABIA, SOUTH SUDAN, SUDAN, TUNISIA, TURKEY, UNITED NATIONS, UNITED STATES

Rivals

EGYPT Government, ISRAEL, PALESTINE Hamas, LEBANON Hezbollah, LEBANON Government, QATAR, SYRIA Government

Adversaries

N/A

Active Armed Opponents

N/A

Proxy

N/A

External Sponsor

N/A

Aid Recipient

N/A

Aid Donor

EUROPEAN UNION, INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, KUWAIT, SAUDI ARABIA, TURKEY, UNITED STATES