



# Focus On: Palestinian Political Leadership

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The Palestinian national movement is in an acute state of crisis, and the Palestinian political system and institutions are incapable of bringing the Palestinian people closer to realize their rights. The existing style of governance and models of leadership prove on a daily basis to be unfit for present and future Palestinian generations seeking equality, justice, and freedom above all. The Palestinian people urgently need a new political leadership that is representative, legitimate, responsible, responsive, and accountable.

In this selection of pieces, Al-Shabaka policy analysts reflect on the history of leadership in Palestine and explore what lessons can be learned from the past with an eye to the future. They discuss the shortcomings of the existing political leadership and argue for the utmost need for youth-led leadership to emerge and flourish, and for that, they propose a number of concrete steps and actions, envisaging what a new leadership model might look like.

## Learning from the Past

### Reflections on Palestinian Leaderships Past

**Jamil Hilal**



In this commentary, Jamil Hilal reflects on Palestine's history of leadership. He draws on his own rich experience in the Palestinian national movement, as well as on his scholarship for and about that movement, to identify strengths on which to build and weaknesses to avoid. [Read more...](#)

## **Palestinians and Their Leadership: Restoring the PLO**

**Marwa Fatafta**

Can we envisage a representative and accountable leadership that enables Palestinians to contribute to the political decisions that shape their lives, that provides them avenues for action, and that serves as an arena for Palestinian political engagement and participation? Marwa Fatafta explores how Palestinians can reclaim and redefine their leadership in the PLO. [Read more...](#)

## **Abbas and the Farce of Palestinian Democracy**

**Yara Hawari**

What's behind Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' dissolution of the Palestinian Legislative Council in 2018/19? Yara Hawari analyzes the move, uncovering likely motives and consequences in light of Abbas' broader grip on power, and proposes ways to increase Palestinian democratic space. [Read more...](#)

## **An Illegitimate Leadership Can Sign Away Rights**

**Zachariah Sammour**

It is clear that Palestinians are fast approaching a juncture at which decisions of extreme national importance may be taken. Zachariah Sammour argues that this requires an immediate and sustained response from all Palestinians, including those in the diaspora. [Read more...](#)



## **Youth and the New Generation of Leaders**

### **Palestinian Leadership Through Resistance or Leaderless Subsistence? The Role of Youth**

**Fadi Quran**

Fadi Quran addresses the real, indeed, sometimes deliberate, obstacles placed in the way of developing authentic leadership among Palestinians, particularly the youth, and insists that leadership through resistance is the way out of the morass. [Read more...](#)

### **A Leadership Model from the Palestinian Diaspora in the US**

**Dana El Kurd**

The Palestinian diaspora in the US has achieved success in effective organization and activism. Dana El Kurd offers insights into how the experiences of this diaspora can offer new models for leadership that benefit Palestinians everywhere. [Read more...](#)

### **Upending the Palestinian Leadership: The Role of Youth**

**Fadi Quran**

Though prospects for self-determination appear hopeless under the current Palestinian leadership, Fadi Quran argues that a new generation of young leaders is emerging with the potential to achieve Palestinian liberation. He outlines their challenges and opportunities in light of past leadership trends. [Read more...](#)

## **A New Model for Leadership**

## **Beyond Sterile Negotiations: Looking for a Leadership with a Strategy**

### **Noura Erakat**

Noura Erakat explores how a national liberation strategy can be elaborated and who can lead it. She explores the South Africa model, and argues for a dual approach of working for rights while at the same time actively seeking answers to the pressing need for a unified political program and leadership. [Read more...](#)

## **Looking for a Leadership with a Strategy**

### **Haidar Eid, Samah Sabawi, Loubna Qutami, & Noura Erakat**

In this roundtable, Haidar Eid, Samah Sabawi, Loubna Qutami, and Noura Erakat critique issues relating to the questions of representation and self-determination, the colonial condition, and the future of the struggle, all from a leadership perspective. [Read more...](#)

## **Palestinian Leadership: What a New Model Might Look Like**

### **Inès Abdel Razek, Ali Abdel-Wahab, Tareq Baconi, Marwa Fatafta, & Dana El Kurd**

In this roundtable, Inès Abdel Razek, Ali Abdel-Wahab, Tareq Baconi, Marwa Fatafta, and Dana El Kurd engage in an open-ended discussion about what can and should be done to ensure a Palestinian leadership that fully represents Palestinians, restores their unity, and respects their rights while they struggle for freedom. [Read more...](#)



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