

al-shabaka executive summary

# HOW ISRAEL USES GAS TO ENFORCE PALESTINIAN DEPENDENCY AND PROMOTE NORMALIZATION

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*Since 1967, Israel has systematically colonized Palestinian natural resources and, in the case of hydrocarbons, prevented Palestinians from accessing their own oil and gas reserves. Such restrictions have ensured Palestinians' continued dependence on Israel for their energy needs. This is compounded by the fact that Palestinians' efforts to develop their energy sector fail to challenge Israel's hegemony over resources. Rather, they pursue growth and state building within the framework of the occupation, further reinforcing – even if inadvertently – the asymmetric balance between occupied and occupier.*

- While Israel has become a gas exporter in the past few years, it has prevented Palestinians from tapping the Gaza Strip's gas field, Gaza Marine, for nearly two decades. This forces Palestinians to rely on Israeli energy imports.
- Israel is positioning itself as an energy supplier to resource-poor neighbors. In 2016, Jordan committed to purchasing Israeli gas despite popular protests. The gas deal limits Jordan's ability to bargain on behalf of the Palestinians, thereby further weakening the Palestinian position.
- The Palestinian Authority's inability to negotiate the development of Gaza Marine while continuing to purchase Israeli energy, though it improves Palestinians' quality of life in the short term, ultimately cedes to US calls for "economic peace," which legitimizes the Israeli occupation.

## Policy recommendations:

1. Palestinian negotiators involved in prospective Israeli gas deals must insist on provisions that do not lock out the prospect for future gas from Gaza Marine.
2. Palestinian negotiators should also harness the power of civil society and popular movements against gas deals that benefit Israel at the expense of Palestinian rights.
3. The Palestine Liberation Organization should use the non-observer member state status that Palestine secured at the UN to lobby at international legal forums such as the International Criminal Court, pushing Israel to meet its responsibility as an occupying power under international law; this includes providing inhabitants with electricity and fuel.