



Muhammad Shtayeh intensifies his anti-Israeli rhetoric and malicious defamation

Overview

► **Muhammad Shtayeh has been Palestinian Authority (PA) prime minister since 2019**, and is a member of Fatah's Central Committee. He studied economics and has a PhD. Mahmoud Abbas appointed him to replace Rami Hamdallah as PA prime minister to improve the PA's economic situation, which had been deteriorating for several years.

► In recent months, and especially since the Palestinian terrorist attacks which began in March 2022, **he has increasingly verbally attacked Israel and supported the families of Palestinian terrorists**. One possible reason is that the PA does not want to be perceived as "moderate" when compared to Hamas' radical positions against Israel, which influence public opinion in Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem.

► For example:

◆ **Increasing support for the families of Palestinian terrorists.** He consistently glorifies and praises Palestinian terrorist attacks and the activities of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. He issues mourning notices for Palestinians killed while carrying out attacks and visits their mourning tents to offer his condolences to their families. He exploits every possible opportunity to stress that despite the PA's economic distress, it will continue giving financial support to the families of the Palestinian prisoners and of those killed while carrying out terrorist attacks. **He has never condemned terrorist attacks in which Israelis were killed**, as opposed to Mahmoud Abbas, who sometimes issues weak statements after terrorist attacks, expressing sorrow at the killing of "civilians" on both sides.

◆ **Promoting lawfare against Israel.** He works with international organizations to bring the Israeli leadership to trial for Israel's activities in the PA territories. He promotes investigations by the International Criminal Court, and recently appealed to the International Red Cross to open its archives for material to support the PA's claims against Israel. He also calls for the international community to impose sanctions against Israel.

◆ **Waging a malicious international smear campaign against Israel.** Whenever he meets with heads of state, members of foreign governments and representatives of international organizations, he slanders the State of Israel regarding its relations with the Palestinians. He accuses Israel of being an "apartheid country," a "state that carries out war crimes," etc. In many instances he does not say "Israel," rather, "the occupation."

◆ **Blaming Israel for the PA's bad economic situation:** He exploits meetings with representatives of foreign countries to accuse "the occupation" of taking control of Palestinian natural resources and preventing the growth of the Palestinian economy, unvaryingly referring to Israel's deductions of the tax revenues it collects for the PA¹ as one of the main causes of the PA's economic distress. At various forums he promotes his vision of the PA's economic disengagement from Israel strengthening the Palestinian national product.

◆ **Consistently relating to Israel's activities concerning the sites holy to Islam.** He has variously condemned the tension in Jerusalem and Sheikh Jarrah, as well Israel's project for making the Cave of the Patriarchs more accessible by installing an elevator (March 2022). He refers to the events as "the occupation's invasion and takeover." He repeatedly warns of an "explosion" on the Temple Mount and in east Jerusalem.

Recent Statements

Support for the families of Palestinian terrorists

► On **April 10, 2022**, he paid a visit to the home of Umm Nasser Abu Hamid.² He praised her as representing the mothers of Palestinian prisoners defending their sons imprisoned in Israel and representing their cause to the Palestinian people, part of their "struggle for freedom." He called her a role model for all the mothers of Palestinian prisoners (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, April 10, 2022).

¹ In July 2018 Israel passed a law freezing funds used for terrorism, and deducts the money the PA pays the families of terrorist operatives, shaheeds and prisoners from the tax revenue it collects for the PA.

² One of Umm Nasser Abu Hamid's sons murdered an IDF soldier in the al-Am'ari refugee camp in Ramallah by throwing a marble slab on his head from a rooftop on May 26, 2018. Five of her sons are serving prison terms in Israel for involvement in terrorist attacks.



**Muhammad Shtayyeh pays a formal visit to Umm Nasser Abu Hamid
(Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, April 10, 2022)**

► On **March 8, 2022**, he participated in a ceremony for International Mother's Day, presenting medals to "groundbreaking Palestinian women." The event was held under the aegis of the EU and was attended by Sven Kühn von Burgsdorff, the EU representative on the PA territories; and Layla Ghanem, the governor of the Ramallah district. Muhammad Shtayyeh gave a speech in which he said Palestinian women were exceptional and not like other women. They stood by their partners in the national liberation movement to end the "occupation," establish the [Palestinian] state and realize the "right of return" [of the Palestinian refugees]. He also mentioned the Palestinian women who were refugees in the dispersal who struggled under difficult conditions (Wafa, March 8, 2022).



**Muhammad Shtayyeh presents "medals of honor" to Palestinian women during a ceremony in
Ramallah organized by the EU (Wafa, March 8, 2022)**

► On **February 11, 2022**, Shtayyeh, accompanied by Ibrahim Ramadan, the governor of the Nablus district, visited the mourning tent erected in Nablus for the families of Palestinians who had been killed. He wrote on his Facebook page that he praised the souls of the shaheeds and their families, and offered his condolences to the entire Palestinian people on their deaths. He said as long as the "occupation" continued there would be "sacrifices" (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, February 11, 2022).



Muhammad Shtayyeh and Ibrahim Ramadan, governor of the Nablus district, at a funeral and later in a mourning tent in Nablus (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, February 11, 2022)

► At an event for Palestinian Shaheed Day (marked annually on January 7), he called it the day they "renewed their loyalty to those who had shown them the way and with their bodies created a bridge to the homeland, state, freedom and independence." He said the road was still long. They would continue their commitment to the shaheeds, the prisoners and their families, and would "struggle" against all pressure to continue to provide them with their rights and money [sic] (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, January 9, 2022).



Muhammad Shtayyeh speaking at the Palestinian Shaheed Day event (Wafa, January 9, 2022)

Promoting lawfare and sanctions against Israel

► At every opportunity, Muhammad Shtayyeh calls for the Israeli leadership to be tried in the International Criminal Court (ICC), noting that the Palestinians are preparing files for investigation. For example, after the death of al-Jazeera reporter Shireen Abu Akleh in Jenin on May 11, 2022, he assigned total responsibility to Israel for attacks on reporters, women and children. He said that along with the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate and human rights organizations specializing in lawfare, they were monitoring the case in preparation for

turning it over to the ICC to bring "Israeli war criminals" to trial. He also said the Palestinians has spoken with European leaders and demanded they condemn the attack on the Palestinian reporter (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, May 11, 2022).

► On May 15, 2022, he met with **Elise Dubov, head of the Red Cross delegation in the PA territories**, and called for the Red Cross to open its archives to Palestinian investigators, families of Palestinians who had been killed and the international community so that it would be possible to expose Israel's activities, starting with the Nakba in 1948, and bring those "responsible" to trial (Wafa, May 15, 2022).



Muhammad Shtayyeh and Elise Dubov, head of the Red Cross delegation in the PA territories (Wafa, May 15, 2022)

► At the weekly government meeting on **May 16, 2022**, after the series of deaths of Palestinians killed while rioting against the Israeli security forces, including after the death of the al-Jazeera reporter, he called for a boycott and sanctions to be imposed on Israel. He called on the international community to stop what he referred to as its "double standard" towards Israel and to provide protection for the Palestinians (Wafa, May 16, 2022).

Waging a malicious international smear campaign

► In **March 2022**, Shtayyeh posted his condolences on his Facebook page for the families of the Palestinians killed in the Balata and Qalandiya refugee camps. He condemned their deaths at the hands of Israeli security forces, who he claimed attack young Palestinians and children, and violate international law. He called on the international community to bring the "perpetrators of crimes against the Palestinian people" to justice (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, March 15, 2022).

► He claimed the conflict with Israel was political and not religious and all the talks and negotiations with Israel required the authority of international law and UN resolutions, and an objective mediator for peace and trust-building measures, good intentions and an agreed-upon time framework. He claimed Israel lacked all of them. He added that a number of

international human rights organizations, such as Human Rights Watch and B'Tselem, had issued reports "showing" that the measures used by Israel when dealing with the Palestinians in the territories were "apartheid measures," and that the international community had to enforce international law and UN resolutions regarding the Palestinian cause and stop showing bias [towards Israel] (Wafa, March 14, 2022).

► Meeting with a delegation of Republican congressmen headed by House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, Shtayyeh claimed a serious political vacuum existed which was liable to lead to an "explosion" in the PA territories. He claimed Israel expanded without limits and was responsible for all the activities against the Palestinians. He claimed Israel did not want the two-state solution or the one-state solution, all Israel wanted was to continue its policy of establishing facts on the ground. He called for a congressional committee to be appointed to investigate Israel's policy of apartheid as documented by Amnesty and Human Rights Watch reports. He also condemned Israel's deductions of the tax revenues it collects for the PA, and called on the United States to make Israel stop (Wafa, February 21, 2022).



**Muhammad Shtayyeh meets with a delegation of Republican congressmen
(Wafa, February 21, 2022)**

► Meeting in Ramallah with the German foreign minister, Shtayyeh claimed the Palestinian people were "victims of the Israeli occupation," causing extensive damage to the Palestinian people, property, culture, history and land (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, February 10, 2022).



**Muhammad Shtayyeh meets with the German foreign minister in Ramallah
(Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, February 10, 2022)**

► On **February 10, 2022**, he met with AY Suliman, the South African representative in the PA territories, and called on him to join with Shtayyeh in a joint activity to defame Israel because of its actions against the Palestinians. He also suggested joint international efforts to end the "occupation." He thanked South Africa for publishing its decision to suspend Israel as an African Union observer (Wafa, February 10, 2022).



**Muhammad Shtayyeh meets in Ramallah with the South African representative
(Wafa, February 10, 2022)**

Blaming Israel for the PA's economic situation

► On **May 10, 2022**, Muhammad Shtayyeh attended the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) conference of donor states to the PA in Brussels. He gave a speech in which he claimed that the Palestinian economy suffered from limitations and measures imposed by the "occupation." He claimed the Palestinians had begun instituting administrative and financial reforms but they were not enough to resolve the Palestinians' complex economic situation under the "occupation." He also called for the release of Palestinian funds held by Israel and for Israel to be compelled to fulfill signed agreements. At a meeting held on the sidelines of the conference he called for pressure to be exerted on Israel to end the deductions of the

Palestinian tax revenues and to turn over the money to the PA (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, May 10, 2022).



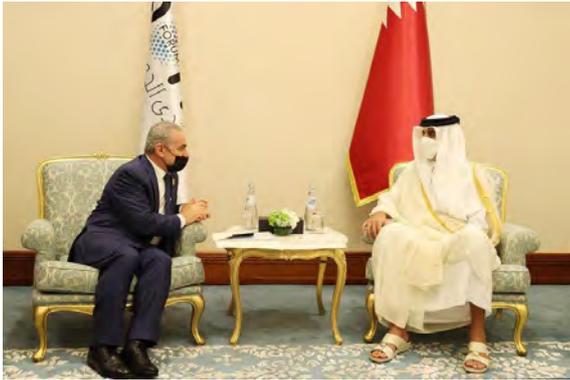
Muhammad Shtayyeh at the AHLC conference in Brussels (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, May 10, 2022)

► On **April 23, 2022**, he met with the Palestinian businessmen's association and explained his vision for economic disengagement from Israel. He said the PA government's strategy was to disengage from Israel by strengthening the Palestinian national economy. He praised the government's cooperation with the private sector, calling the economy leverage for the struggle against the "occupation" and strengthening their firm stance (Wafa, April 23, 2022).



Muhammad Shtayyeh meets with the Palestinian businessmen's association (al-Quds, April 24, 2022; Wafa, April 23, 2022)

► On **March 26, 2022**, while in Doha for the Doha Forum, he met with Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the emir of Qatar. He updated the sheikh about the political and economic challenges facing the Palestinians, especially Israel's [allegedly] "illegal deductions" of Palestinian tax revenues, which, he claimed, had led to the Palestinians' difficult financial situation. He told the Forum that the war in Ukraine had put the Palestinian cause back in the news and exposed the double standard of international law and human rights. He said they were looking for a genuine serious political effort to fill the current political vacuum, claiming their plan and objective was to end the "occupation" (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, March 26, 2022).



Right: Muhammad Shtayyeh in Doha. Left: Muhammad Shtayyeh meets with the emir of Qatar before the forum (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, March 26, 2022)

► On **February 28, 2022**, in a video chat with Alexander Tieman, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) representative in the Palestinian territories, Shtayyeh again claimed Israel was the main cause of the PA's financial crisis. He claimed the PA's financial difficulties were the result of Israel's ongoing looting of Palestinian funds and its preventing the Palestinians from exploiting Area C [the area in Judea and Samaria under Israeli jurisdiction], in addition to the difficulties Israel raised for the Palestinians in transporting goods and the movements of civilians. He called on the IMF to exert pressure on Israel to release the Palestinian funds it was holding so the PA could fulfill its obligations to the Palestinian public (Wafa, February 28, 2022).

► On **March 14, 2022**, he met with a delegation of 300 Harvard students and attacked Israel, claiming that one of the challenges facing the Palestinian people was Israel's continuing looting [sic] of Palestinian funds [the tax revenues]. He claimed it had led to a mounting budget deficit and influenced the government's ability to meet its commitments to the Palestinian public. And the only reason, he claimed, was because the government took care of the families of the shaheeds killed by Israeli gunfire (Wafa, March 14, 2022).



Muhammad Shtayyeh meets with 300 Harvard students in his office in Ramallah (Wafa, March 14, 2022)

Regarding East Jerusalem and al-Aqsa mosque

- ▶ During the Ramadan tension on the Temple Mount in April 2022, Shtayyeh condemned Israel's actions at the site, claiming they were "violations" and attacked Muslim honor [sic]. He called for Israel's "aggression" to end and for practical measures to be instituted (al-Andalou News, April 18, 2022). On April 15, 2022, after the riots on the Temple Mount, he called on the Arab-Muslim world and international organizations to condemn Israel's actions and act to prevent them from reoccurring (Wafa, April 15, 2022).
- ▶ At a meeting with Palestinian businessmen he claimed the Palestinians had a historical right to Jerusalem and "Palestine" (Wafa April 23, 2022).
- ▶ At a Palestinian government meeting he condemned Israel's action in Jerusalem and its recurring "invasions" of the Temple Mount (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, April 11, 2022).
- ▶ During the tension in the east Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah in February 2022, caused by Israel's intention to evict Palestinian families, he warned the situation in Jerusalem would "explode." He said the Palestinians would not surrender to Israel's policy and would "struggle" against it (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, February 22, 2022). In January 2022, he condemned Israel's intention to construct 3,600 dwelling units in Jerusalem, claiming it shattered the idea of the two-state solution (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, January 10, 2022).

Denying Israel's right to access the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron

- ▶ In March 2022 Israel began the construction of an elevator shaft at the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron to improve its accessibility for both Jewish and Muslim visitors. The construction work enraged the Palestinians. At the weekly government meeting Shtayyeh said the excavation and construction were "a Jewish takeover of the Cave of the Patriarchs." He claimed they would defend the holy sites "in Jerusalem and Hebron and everywhere." He called on UNESCO and other UN agencies to intervene to protect the Cave of the Patriarchs as a historic [Islamic] religious site (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, March 14, 2022).



**Preparations for the elevator shaft at the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron
(spokesman for the Jewish settlement in Hebron, March 3, 2022)**

Appendix

Muhammad Shtayyeh's CV

- ▶ **Date and place of birth:** 1958 in the village of Tel in the Nablus district.
- ▶ **Organizational affiliation:** Member of Fatah, member of Fatah's Central Committee since 2009.
- ▶ **Education and profession:** Economist. BA in economy and business administration from Birzeit University. PhD in the study of economic development from Sussex University, Britain.
- ▶ **Previous employment:** Taught at Birzeit University, served as PA minister of housing and public works. Headed the Palestinian economic delegation to the negotiations with Israel. Has written several books on economy and politics (Wafa, March 10, 2022).



Mahmoud Abbas appoints senior Fatah figure Muhammad Shtayyeh to form the Palestinian government (Wafa, March 10, 2019)