Overview

On August 10, 2023, Mahmoud Abbas announced the enforced retirement of most of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Gaza Strip district governors, with three exceptions. Only on March 3, 2024, about seven months after the announcement, did an official round of appointments of eight new district governors begin, ending on March 10, 2024, after they were sworn in at Mahmoud Abbas' office in Ramallah.

The PA is divided into 11 districts, each headed by a governor who is directly subordinate to Mahmoud Abbas' office and appointed by him by presidential edict. The governor's role is to manage the civilian and security affairs of the district and he is in direct contact with the heads of the local authorities and of the Palestinian security mechanisms.

An examination of the new district governors reveals the following:

- Unlike previous years, when Mahmoud Abbas appointed governors who did not necessarily live in the districts themselves, this time (with the exception of the governor of the Jericho district), Mahmoud Abbas appointed local people who were familiar with and had connections to the territory and the population. However, most of them did not come from the district's largest city, but from towns and villages.
- All eight governors are veteran Fatah members who belong to the movement's "middle generation," that is, between 40 and 60 years of age who participated in the first intifada, some of whom spent time in prison in Israel. For years they have been conducting power struggles with Fatah's founding generation for leadership, influence and reforms in Fatah institutions, and are the reserves for replacing the founding generation.
- Some of them served or still serve in senior positions within Fatah.
- Before their appointment, six of the eight (the governors of the Hebron, Bethlehem, Jenin, Tulkarm, Qalqilya and Tubas Districts) served as deputy governor of the district.
in which they currently serve, and therefore have a personal familiarity with the
district and its problems.

- The new governors are active and often tour the territory and meet with local
residents and with the various parties in the district, and some of them are also aka
mediators in local conflicts.
- Most of them governors are hostile to Israel, which they usually mention in their
statements.
- So far, no new governors have been appointed in the Gaza Strip.

Appointing governors who are familiar with the district and its issues and have and good
relations with the local residents is intended to strengthen the PA's control and improve its
position and image. Moreover, it is part of a more extensive, recent process of reorganization
in all the PA institutions, which includes appointing a deputy commander for the preventive
security apparatus. It also includes the resignation of outgoing prime minister Muhammad
Shtayyeh and all the PA ministers, and replacing them with a government of technocrats, that
is a government of experts of Palestinian personalities who are not politically identified with
any organization.

Muhammad Shtayyeh, the outgoing PA prime minister, justified the decision to disband the
government during the political, security and economic developments related to the war in
the Gaza Strip and the escalation in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem. However, apparently the
PA’s reorganization measures are mainly the result of an American, European and Arab effort
to restore the PA’s status and position for “the day after” the war in the Gaza Strip as a possible
factor involved in the restoration of the Strip and its management which will also be
acceptable to Hamas.

Further Information

On August 10, 2023, Mahmoud Abbas issued a "presidential" edict ordering the retirement of
12 district governors in the PA and the Gaza Strip. They were the governors of the Jenin,
Nablus, Qalqilya, Tulkarm, Bethlehem, Hebron, Tubas and Jericho Districts, and the
governors of the northern Gaza Strip, Gaza City, Khan Yunis and Rafah. He also issued a
"presidential" edict establishing a "presidential committee" to select candidates for the now-
vacant positions and to submit recommendations to make it easier for the PA chairman to
choose the final appointments (Wafa, August 10, 2023). The governors who were being retired
said they were surprised to hear about it from the media and they were puzzled (Ma'an, August 10, 2023).

On August 20, 2023, an official ceremony for the retiring governors was held at Mahmoud Abbas' office, led by Majdi al-Khaldi, Mahmoud Abbas' advisor on diplomatic affairs. No speeches were made (Wafa, August 20, 2024).

The ceremony held for the outgoing district governors in Mahmoud Abbas' office (Wafa, August 20, 2023)

On March 3, 2024, about seven months later, Mahmoud Abbas issued a "presidential" edict for the appointment of three new district governors: Khaled Dodin, governor of the Hebron District, Ghassan Daghlas, governor of the Nablus District and Kamal Abu al-Rub, governor of the Jenin District (Wafa, March 3, 2024). The swearing-in ceremony took place on March 9, 2024 in Mahmoud Abbas' office in Ramallah, along with them, three other district governors appointed by Mahmoud Abbas were sworn in about an hour before the official ceremony. They were Hussein Hamail, governor of the Jericho District, Ahmed al-As'ad, governor of the Tubas District, and Muhammad Taha, and the governor of the Bethlehem District (Wafa, March 9, 2024).

On March 9, 2024, Mahmoud Abbas issued two additional edicts ordering the appointments of Hassam Abu Hamda, governor of Qalqilya District, and Mustafa Taqatqa, governor of Tulkarm Province. The swearing-in ceremony was held the next day in Mahmoud Abbas' office (Wafa, March 10, 2024).
The six new district governors after being sworn in in Mahmoud Abbas’ office in Ramallah
(Mahmoud Abbas’ Facebook page, March 9, 2024)

The New Governors

Khaled Dodin – Governor of Hebron District

Right: Khaled Dodin (Khaled Dodin’s Facebook page, September 17, 2020). Left: Khaled Dodin interviewed by Palestinian television as acting governor of the Hebron district (Khaled Dodin’s Facebook page, February 24, 2024)

►Biographical information: Khaled Abd al-Aziz Taha Dodin, aka Abu Yafa, from the town of Dura, in the south of Mount Hebron (Khaled Dodin’s Facebook page).

►Education: Graduated from Hebron University in 1999. Graduated from the boys' high school in Dura (Khaled Dodin’s Facebook page).

►Professional background: On December 29, 2018, he was appointed by Mahmoud Abbas as acting district governor. He had previously been the CEO of the Hebron District governor's office. Given his public activities in various positions in the District governor's office, it can be said that he knows the district well, often visits its villages and towns, and meets with businessmen and local residents.

►His appointment was well received by many, who emphasized he was the right person for the position. Dodin is often interviewed by the Palestinian media and he usually condemns
the actions of the Israeli security forces in Hebron. He usually meets with foreign and diplomatic officials and briefs them on the situation in Hebron. On February 22, 2024, he met with a delegation of ambassadors, consuls and foreign representatives of 36 European countries and briefed them about the "suffering of the residents of Hebron caused by the occupation and attacks of the settlers" (Wafa, February 22, 2024).

Khaled Dodin takes an oath of allegiance in Mahmoud Abbas' office in Ramallah (Mahmoud Abbas' Facebook page, March 9, 2024)

Kamal Abu al-Rub – Governor of the Jenin District

Biographical information: Kamal Muhammad Mahmoud Abu al-Rub, from Qabatya (south of Jenin). His son Shameh, who was a doctor, was killed on November 25, 2023 during an Israeli security force operation in Qabatya. According to reports he was mortally wounded when he left his home while there were clashes with IDF forces (Wafa, November 25, 2023).

Professional background: In April 2016, he was appointed as deputy governor of Jenin province by Mahmoud Abbas (http://site.eastlaws.com/). Has spoken at length in recent years criticizing the actions of the Israeli security forces in Jenin and their harm to the Palestinians.
For example, he said "real force is needed to deter Israel from its actions in Jenin" (Palestine Post Facebook page, March 7, 2023).

►Following his appointment, he was reported as "hating resistance operatives " because he condemned their mass participation at the funeral of senior Hamas official Wasfi Qabha in Jenin in 2021 and called a "serious sign" (al-Shahad website, March 5, 2024).

Kamal Abu al-Rub takes an oath of allegiance in Mahmoud Abbas' office in Ramallah (Mahmoud Abbas' Facebook page, March 9, 2024)

Ghassan Daghlas – Governor of the Nablus District

Ghassan Daghlas lectures on the IDF checkpoints and the restrictions on movement in the Nablus district (QudsN X account, February 22, 2024)

►Biographical information: Ghassan Muhammad Bakr Daghlas (Abu Bakr), from the village of Burqa, northwest of Nablus. Member of Fatah.

►Professional background: Senior Fatah activist, serves as a member of the Fatah leadership in the Nablus region. Elected in the movement's elections, March 2022 (Wafa, March 27, 2022). Held the "Settlements in the northern West Bank" portfolio (Wafa, October 30, 2022).

►Daghlas is often interviewed and appears in the Palestinian media, where he condemns the actions of Israel and the security forces in Judea and Samaria and displays hawkish, hostile attitudes towards Israel. He strongly opposes the Israeli settlement in Judea and Samaria and the settlers, and has called on the Palestinians in Judea and Samaria to "come out and
confront the settlers' marches" (Wafa, January 18, 2022). On another occasion, he called for guard committees to be established in villages in the Nablus district to clash with the settlers when they took action against the Palestinians (al-Quds, May 29, 2022). On occasion he updated the number of Palestinians who were killed or injured by the "aggression of the occupation" in northern Judea and Samaria or about "damage inflicted by settlers" (Wafa, June 21, 2023). He also criticized Israeli policy towards Palestinian prisoners, claiming Israel [allegedly] employed "a policy of killing Palestinian prisoners " (Wafa, February 27, 2024).

Ahmed al-As'ad – Governor of the Tubas District

Biographical information: Ahmed Mahmoud As'ad Saleh, aka Ahmed al-As'ad. Lives in Tubas, Fatah member.

Professional background: Deputy governor of Tubas District since 2013.

Very active in the district, often meets with various civilian and security officials, tours the markets and villages in the district and is very active in resolving conflicts between clans. Customarily pays condolence calls to families whose members are killed in clashes with the
Israeli security forces. Works to strengthen the Palestinian presence in the Jordan Valley while providing aid to Palestinian farmers (Governor of Tubas District Facebook page).

On December 31, 2020, he participated in a rally to mark the 56th anniversary of the establishment of the Fatah movement. He claimed Fatah pioneered of the "actions of sacrifice" and whose shaheeds were "stars," calling Fatah a "sea of martyrs." According to him, the shaheeds are their way to Jerusalem (Wafa, December 31, 2020).

On October 19, 2023, he gave a speech at a rally organized by Fatah in support of the Gazans and Mahmoud Abbas (Governor of Tubas District Facebook page, October 19, 2023).

Ahmed al-As'ad delivers a speech at a Fatah rally in support of the Gazans and Mahmoud Abbas (Governor of Tubas District Facebook page, October 19, 2023)

Ahmed al-As’ad takes an oath of allegiance in Mahmoud Abbas’ office in Ramallah (Mahmoud Abbas’ Facebook page, March 9, 2024)
Hussein Hamail – Governor of the Jericho District

Hussein Hamail (Qalqilya al-Hadath Facebook page, March 7, 2024)

▶ **Biographical information:** Hussein Jadallah Hussein Hamail. Born in 1979. Resident of Khirbat Abu Falah (north of Ramallah). Fatah member in the Ramallah District (Fatah information and culture commission Facebook page, January 6, 2020). The only one of the governors who is not from the district.

▶ **Education:** PhD in educational administration. In 2015 he completed his PhD at the University of Jordan in Amman. In 2008 he completed his MA studies in the al-Quds Open University in educational administration. In 2001 he completed a BA degree in psychology at al-Najah University in Nablus. From 2017 he worked at al-Quds Open University, where he was the head of the university branch in Ramallah and al-Bireh (al-Quds Open University website, March 14, 2024).

▶ **Professional background:** Served in several organizational positions in the Fatah movement and currently also serves as Fatah’s official spokesman. He speaks eloquently and runs an updated Facebook page of Palestinian arena affairs. He is often interviewed and appears on Palestinian and Arab media outlets while regularly slandering Israel (Dr. Hussein Hamail’s Facebook page). Since taking office, he has regularly reported on his activities via the Jericho district’s Facebook page. As Fatah’s official spokesman, he publishes the same content on his Facebook page.

▶ In August 2023, the media reveal he had given his son Jad a Mercedes Benz for his success in the matriculation exams (al-Shahed website, August 31, 2023).
Muhammad Taha – Governor of the Bethlehem District

▶Biographical information: Muhammad Taha Hassan Abu Alia, aka Muhammad Taha, from the Dheisheh refugee camp; Fatah activist.

▶Education: BA in business administration.

▶Professional background: Served as acting governor of the Bethlehem District since August 2023. Member of Fatah’s Revolutionary Council. Served as Fatah secretary in Bethlehem for many years. In the 1980s he spent four years in an Israeli prison because of membership in
Fatah. In the past he also served as the director of religious endowments (wakf) in Bethlehem and worked in the Bethlehem district governor's office for several years. In 2010, he was appointed the deputy district governor (Ma'an, June 14, 2010).

Right: Muhammad Taha takes an oath of allegiance in the office of Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah (Wafa, March 9, 2024). Left: Taha visits the markers in Bethlehem on the occasion of Ramadan (governor of the Bethlehem District Facebook page, March 13, 2024)

Mustafa al-Dirawi (Taqatqa) – Governor of the Tulkarm District

Mustafa al-Dirawi (al-Fajr TV Facebook page, March 9, 2024)

►Biographical information: Mustafa Ahmed Faisal al-Dirawi (Taqatqa), from the village of Illar, northeast of Tulkarm.

►Education: BA from al-Quds Open University, 2009. Submitted a thesis on the contribution of the general elections to strengthening democracy in the PA's institutions.

►Professional background: In April 2016, he was appointed by Mahmoud Abbas to the position of deputy governor of Tulkarm District. Prior to that, he was a clerk in the PA's employees' bureau (Eastern Law network, April 26, 2016). In 2009, he was Fatah secretary in Tulkarm.
In September 2023, as the deputy governor of Tulkarm District, he hosted a delegation from the University of Liverpool, briefing them on the situation in Tulkarm District and Israel's [alleged] "violations" against the Palestinians (Dunia al-Watan, September 10, 2023).

Mustafa Taqatqa interviewed as the Fatah secretary in Tulkarm (al-Fajr YouTube channel, September 29, 2012)

Mustafa Taqatqa takes an oath of allegiance in Mahmoud Abbas' office in Ramallah (Mahmoud Abbas' Facebook page, March 11, 2024)

Husam Abu Hamda– Governor of the Qalqilya District

Husam Abu Hamda (al-Fajr YouTube channel, January 17, 2024)

**Biographical information**: Major General Husam Muhammad Abdel Rahim Abu Hamda (Abu Ihab), from Qalqilya.
Professional background: In 2007, was a member of the Fatah leadership in the Qalqilya district (Maan, January 23, 2007). He served as a senior officer in the directorate of political guidance of the security apparatus in the Qalqilya District. Since November 2014 he has been the deputy district governor (PA general security forces website, November 2, 2014).

As deputy governor he often visited the area and met with village heads and authorities. In the past he claimed that Israel’s construction of roads in Qalqilya was intended to cut the district off from the rest of the PA territories and make it difficult for the PA to control it (aljazeera.net, January 24, 2024). Involved in resolving clan conflicts in the district (March 12, 2024). Enjoys connections with Fatah figures and members of Fatah’s revolutionary council, including Colonel Iyad al-Aqra (his Facebook friend) and also appears at events with Mahmoud Walwil, Fatah secretary in Qalqilya. Attacks Israel’s policies towards Palestinian prisoners (Fatah website Media, January 29, 2021).

Husam Abu Hamda takes an oath of allegiance in Mahmoud Abbas’ office in Ramallah (Mahmoud Abbas’ Facebook page, March 11, 2024)