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**PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY REFORM:
A KEY INGREDIENT TO PEACE DIPLOMACY**

by Mohammed S. Dajani

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PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY REFORM: A KEY INGREDIENT TO PEACE DIPLOMACY

Mohammed S. Dajani

Introduction

A major controversy erupted recently regarding Palestinian Authority (PA) reform which raised the following questions: Did Arafat promise PA reform out of personal convictions, to improve his public image, to consolidate his power, to blame others for his mistakes and failures, or due to domestic and outside pressures? What would give Arafat strong incentive to introduce genuine reform? Will President Arafat allow premier Abbas to succeed where he had failed? Why is Arafat using the language of reform? How much PA reform is needed? How much will be allowed? Would it be window dressing as some PA officials plan or a heart transplant as the Israeli and Americans hope or an overhaul for the whole system as the Palestinians aspire? What comes first: PA reform or peace settlement? Which constitutes the major impediment to a successful peace process: Lack of PA reform, as the Israelis affirm or continued Israeli occupation, as Palestinians maintain? Is PA reform a precondition for peace, a component of the peace process, or an unrelated issue to the peace process? Will resumption of final status negotiations detract or bolster PA reform?

The PA Reform¹ Agenda is to design a work plan for reform that is detailed, well-articulated, solid and feasible. The aim of PA reform is to establish a political system that is democratic, transparent, accountable, reliable, efficient, productive, stable, rational, and peace oriented. The objectives are to provide better public services, to ensure more productivity, to affirm rule of law, to acquire good functioning public management apparatus, to develop skilled resources in the civil service, to have an honest transparent and accountable government, to prevent waste of limited resources, to stamp out corruption, and significantly to restore public confidence.

The PA reform means different things to different people: For the PA, it means looking good facing the Palestinian public and the world. For Israel, it means resolving security problems by ousting Arafat and undermining the PA. Sharon's concept of "reform," "was to change the character and performance of the PA to solve Israel's security, and his own, political problems."² For the United States, it means empowering civil society, Arafat's marginalisation & eventual replacement, and emergence of more peace-minded leadership. For the Europeans, it means creating a modern viable transparent government. European donor countries have contributed substantially for the PA and so they want to be sure that their money is spent properly. Thus to them reform means transparency and accountability. For the Arab states, it means pursuing diplomatic efforts to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. For the Palestinians, it means modernizing

¹ In this paper, I am using the term "Palestinian Authority Reform" rather than "Palestinian Reform" which is a misnomer since who is being targeted for reform in this case is the political system of the Palestinian Authority including its bureaucracy and the laws and regulations that govern its day-to-day activities rather than the Palestinian society as a whole as the term "Palestinian reform" may imply.

² "Reform or reforming corruption?" by Hasan Abu-Nimah, *Tuesday August 27, 2002*. Palestine Independent Media Center. Original article is at <http://jerusalem.indymedia.org/news/2002/08/69146.php>

the government, enforcing accountability, transparency, and efficiency, and establishing strong sustainable democratic institutions.³

A number of factors spurred the current reform movement. Pressures for PA reform came from within and without. Domestically, the main reason was Palestinian dissatisfaction with the general performance of the PA, its inability to provide better public services, and the growing corruption within the public service. Calls for PA reform came from a wide spectrum of the Palestinian society, mainly, senior officials, legislators, security heads political leaders and activists, civic & non-governmental organizations, educators, academicians, and ordinary citizens. In the last few years a diverse group of Palestinian reformers has arisen; members of the Palestinian Legislative Council, prominent non-governmental organizations, intellectuals, scholars, and academicians. A public opinion poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research in the West Bank and Gaza during 15-18 May 2002 showed that:

- 91% support fundamental changes in the Palestinian authority,
- 85% support the unification of the security services,
- 95% support dismissal of ministers,
- 83% support holding elections in the next few months,
- 92% support adoption of a constitution.
- But only 48% support, and 43% oppose, changing the Palestinian political system so that power would reside in the hands of a prime minister while the office of the president would become ceremonial.
- 83% believe that corruption exists in PA institutions,
- 89% support a democratic political system,
- 95% support periodic elections,
- 82% support the election of the head of the state for a limited period only, 85% support full freedom to form political parties,
- 82% support free press without state censorship,
- 78% support a judiciary independent of the executive branch.

In his speech to the Palestinian Legislative Council on May 15, 2002, PA President Yasser Arafat promised genuine PA reform conceding that “all administrative, ministerial, and security agencies had to be revamped after many of their flaws had been exposed”. He asserted: “I insist that a new and full formula for the authority, its departments, and agencies be introduced so as to affect restructuring and reform on a stronger basis and to set up the state of Palestine.” Following his speech, Arafat in June 2002 took action to confirm his seriousness on this matter approving a series of

3 See: May 13, 2002 Edition 17, www.bitterlemons.org: "Real reform means free elections" by Ghassan Khatib

[Palestinians have not forgotten Israeli attempts to impose an alternative, collaborative leadership against their will]; "With a little help from their friends?" by Yossi Alpher, [Palestinians need to sweep out the ills of Arafat's mafia rule because it serves their own interests--not ours; "Reform and resistance" by Jamil Hilal [What Sharon means by "reform" is a process of neutralizing Arafat. What Palestinians mean by "reform" is tidying the fight against occupation. Reform for them is envisaged as the separation of powers, the promulgation of a modern constitution or basic law and the holding of presidential, legislative and local elections.

measures to improve PA performance. But the measures taken proved to be “too little too late”.⁴ In an unprecedented move, the PA cabinet was pressured to resign.

In his speech before the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) on April 29, 2003 outlining the work plan of his newly appointed government, Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas affirmed:

“The government will continue to implement and develop its reform plan - mainly the reform plan adopted by the Legislative Council through a joint committee between the Council, the government and in cooperation with all relevant parties including civil society. The government will build the ministerial cabinet with professionalism and with work ethics that will improve the work of all executive authority institutions in order to serve the public interest. One of the most important steps in this regard is the implementation of the financial and administrative components of the civil service law.” The general approach to peacemaking since the Oslo Accords in September 1993 has been that Palestinian internal affairs were irrelevant to peace diplomacy.⁵ Since Yasser Arafat was viewed as the anchorman of Palestinian peace diplomacy, his authoritarianism and the corruption of his system was not only inherent in the deal but even welcomed, in the belief that an unrestricted authoritarian corrupt political system would do the most for maintaining Israeli security and serving Israeli interest. This division between foreign and domestic issues did not work. Ultimately, Arafat sought to deflect attention from his domestic nonperformance and the spreading corruption within all PA institutions and agencies by dumping in the sea of violence Palestinian dissatisfaction with his performance and anger at all the missed opportunities.

On more than one occasion, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon stressed that PA President Yasser Arafat is the leader of a “corrupt entity that must be reformed.” He announced before the Israeli Knesset that his government will not hold any peace talks with the PA because “it is a corrupt dictatorial regime.” He indicated that with a different PA- one that is more democratic and less corrupt- Israel would show more openness for concessions in the future. He specified two conditions for peace talks to be resumed: (a) a complete halt to terrorism; and (b) deep reforms and transparency in all areas of the PA. In their response to this demand, Palestinians affirmed that Sharon is unlikely to ever offer any concessions and that by shifting the focus to reform the PA, he is putting off indefinitely any negotiating process with them.

Internationally, The Europeans exerted much pressure on Arafat to adopt the reform agenda. The Rocard Report entitled “*Strengthening Palestinian Public Institutions*”, prepared by a task force and released in June 1999, produced recommendations for the PA to reform its institutions. The report generated international and domestic attention and put much pressure on the PA to pursue reform more seriously. However, international calls for PA reform intensified following Arafat’s failure to conclude a peace deal with Israeli Prime Minister Barak at Camp David in July 2000; his perceived decision to launch the armed uprising of *Al-Aqsa Intifada* in September 2000, and his inability or rather his unwillingness to put an end to violence targeting Israeli civilians and the military which Palestinians view as a justified “resistance to occupation”.

⁴ “The Meanings of Palestinian Reform,” The International Crisis Group (ICG), Amman/Washington, 12 November 2002.

⁵ “A Reward for Reform,” by David Makovsky, *senior fellow* The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, *Washington Post*, July 10, 2002

On the American scene, Washington stressed its agenda of “reform-first sequence”. The “Arafat Accountability Act” was introduced to U. S. Congress on May 9, 2002. It called for:

1. Imposing sanctions on the PLO for its support of “acts against Israel”.
2. Freezing PLO’s assets in the United States.
3. Preventing PLO members, including Arafat, from entering the United States.

Although the act was not passed into law, yet it was a clear signal to Arafat of the hard times to come if he would not adopt the reform agenda. On June 24, 2002, U. S. President George Bush, in a public statement identified two preconditions for the establishment of a Palestinian state:

1. “A new and different Palestinian leadership untainted by terror and corruption;
2. An entirely new political and economic institutions.”

The three phase-implementation roadmap, presented to Israel and the Palestinians by the U.S., provided details on this reform component.

On their part, the Quartet (US, EU, Russian Federation and the United Nations) underscored reform of PA political, civil, and security institutions as “an integral component of peace making.” They emphasized “the critical need to build new and efficient Palestinian security capabilities.” For that end, the Quartet established in July 2002 an international task force for PA reform. Its objective was “to develop & implement a comprehensive reform action plan for the PA.” The PA reform task force was composed of the Quartet (US, EU, Russia, and UN), Norway, Japan, World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. Its role was to monitor and support implementation of civil reforms, and to guide the international donor community in its support for pa reform agenda. The main objectives of its action plan were fourfold:

1. to highlight PA commitments,
2. to establish benchmarks,
3. to identify obstacles to reform, and
4. to specify areas for donor assistance.

Seven reform support groups worked to operationalize the reform plans and to monitor implementation. They covered the following fields, civil society, elections, financial accountability, judicial and rule of law, market economics, local government, and ministerial & civil service. The target spheres for Palestinian reform were the following:

1. Security reform
2. Constitutional reform
3. Economic reform
4. Judicial reform
5. Administrative reform
6. Governance reform
7. Elections & local governance reform

1. Security Reform

On the Security level, reform was needed to address the following problems:

- Multiplicity of security agencies
- Loose restraints on security actions
- No democratic accountability

- No legal framework to govern the structure and operation of security services
- Involvement in matters unconnected with security, such as tax collection, dispute resolution, and business.

Security reform aims at taking clear and unequivocal policies against violence & terrorism, making visible efforts to arrest and disrupt individuals and groups planning and conducting terror attacks, taking moves to dismantle the infrastructure that supports terrorism, and adopting concrete actions to end incitement. The Security reform agenda includes consolidating all different security agencies into one structure, one budget, and one chain of command. Also, to have security apparatus answer to a civilian authority where the Minister of Interior would have authority over all security functions, and to ensure that security heads have limited mandate, limited term of office, enjoy no special legal privileges, and are forbidden by law from getting involved in business, interfering in domestic politics, making investments for personal gain, and using the media to advance political careers.

Arafat still exercises complete control over the security organization.⁶ The newly appointed Minister of State for Internal Security Affairs, Mohammed Dahlan, is expected to spearhead the war on terror by Abu Mazen's government against the armed militants from Hamas, Jihad Islami and Fatah. Dahlan is expected to collect illegal arms from these militants, rebuild the preventive security services appointing new commanders in the West Bank, and train a new security force to halt the armed *Intifada* (which is the central agenda of Abu Mazen's government).

2. Constitutional Reform

During the past century, constitutions have become an important hallmark of statehood and sovereignty throughout the world. Thus Palestinian constitutional reform aimed at drafting a modern constitution that is based on:

1. Principles of democracy
2. Political pluralism
3. Rule of law
4. Independence of judiciary
5. Protection of individual freedoms & human rights
6. Ability to constrain the authority of the head of state and to limit his tenure in office
7. Transfer of authority from the president to the prime minister

Efforts of Palestinian Constitutional reform efforts focused on two documents:

1. The Basic Law legislated by the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) to serve as a provisional temporary interim constitution to govern the Palestinian Authority. It was adopted by the PLC in 1997. However, Arafat ignored it because it limited his powers. But under mounting pressure to reform, Arafat approved it on May 29, 2002 and went into effect on July 7, 2002. Yet Arafat still ignores it. The basic law defined the character of Palestine as a parliamentary democracy, delineated its branches of government, and determined its capital, flag, citizenship requirements, and the role of religion. In its preface, it calls for the Right of Return for all Palestinians in the Diaspora.

⁶ See: Ha'aretz, 15/6/2003, "Analysis / Accord still depends on Arafat", by Amon Regular.

The Palestinians are not taking the Basic Law seriously since it has been on the books for more than a year “without visible result”.⁷

2. The Constitution of Palestine, a permanent constitution for future State of Palestine. In its Declaration of Independence of 1988, the PNC called for “a democratic, secular constitution with a parliamentary government”. In September 1999, the PLO Central Council (PCC) established the Constitution Committee, to draft a constitution. The Palestinian Authority is still working on a revised draft constitution for a Palestinian state that still needs to be completed.⁸ This constitution is viewed by drafters as a document that would organize the future state, proclaim society’s fundamental values & principles, and outline Palestinian positions on final status issues: refugees, borders, and Jerusalem.

The proclaimed main features of the Draft Constitution are its representative democracy and political pluralism, based on the rule of law; its parliamentary system; its establishment of three separate branches of government - Executive, Legislative and Judiciary; its system of checks and balances; its liberal orientation (emphasizes rights, accountability and gender equality); its legal mechanisms to ensure that political authority are exercised through clear legal channels. However, in reality the Constitution confuses politics with law and contains much contradiction:

a. The Constitution includes policies not found normally in other constitutions such as: Article 3: “Palestine is a peaceful state, condemns terror, occupation and aggression; and Article 13: “The State of Palestine shall strive to apply the legitimate right of return of the Palestinian refugees to their homes”.

b. The political system proposed by the Constitution is in reality neither parliamentary nor presidential system. Article 8 states that: “The Palestinian political system shall be a parliamentarian representative democracy”. However, the Prime Minister was appointed by the PA President⁹ rather than elected by the people and the cabinet includes appointed ministers who are not members of the PLC. Article 141 states that “half the members of the Council of Ministers at most shall be members of House of Representatives”. It is not a presidential system since power is shared between the President and the Prime Minister who in some cases have similar powers as the President. For example Article 88 gives both the President and the Prime Minister the right to dissolve the House of Representatives.

c. Policy is normally made by the legislature in the form of laws and is carried out by the executive branch with the judicial branch supervising all breaches to the constitution. In this conception, administration is execution, carrying out the laws passed by the legislature with a clear distinction existing between legislative and administrative powers. The judicial restrains public administrators from unconstitutional, illegal, and arbitrary acts. In the proposed Palestinian political system, there is no separation of powers among the three branches of government and the three branches do not exercise check and balance. Chapter 3, Article 64, stipulates that the three public powers are independent: “The relationship among the three public authorities on

⁷ See: Nathan Brown, “Taking a Palestinian Constitution Seriously”, 14/02/2003.

⁸ The Constitution Committee which started its work on drafting this Constitution back in 1999, had modified its drafts many times, but the work is not finished yet. In February 2001, the Committee published the first official Draft Constitution in booklet form making it available to the public through internet publication and newspapers. The latest version of this constitution dates to April 22, 2003.

⁹ On February 14, 2003, PA President Arafat declared his approval for the institution of a prime minister’s post. The Basic Law was amended to include this major modification.

exercising their powers, shall be of independence.” However, one power, the executive branch, includes members of another, the legislative branch, and has the power to dissolve it; and it appoints members of the third, the judicial branch. Article 88 states: “In case of necessity, the President of the State or the Prime Minister may propose dissolution of the House of Representatives before the Council of Ministers. If such proposal is being accepted by a two-third majority of the total membership of the Council of Ministers, the President of the State shall declare the House of Representatives dissolved”. At the same time, the House of Representatives has the power to remove the Prime Minister.

d. While the Constitution protects the rights of the majority, it includes no article that would guarantee the rights of the Christian minority. Article 7 states: “The principles of Islamic Shari’a shall be a major source of legislation.” Article 186 allows the Constitution to be amended by simple majority of people which may infringe on the rights of the minority who would have no say in such amendments.

e. True to the Arafati form of governing, the Constitution ignores the issue of the vice-presidency.

In sum, there still exists no ratified operational Palestinian Constitution that would make a statement of differences between legislative, judicial and administrative powers and which would prevent one branch of government (executive) to encroach upon the powers, functions, and duties vested in the other two branches of government (legislative and judiciary). As a result in the Palestinian scheme of government, law-making, law-implementing and law-interpreting entities are so far practiced by the Executive, and the PA President in particular.

3. Economic Reform

The PA reform on the economic and financial level is needed for many reasons including:

1. Opaque nature of PA finances
2. Finances are micromanaged by PA President Arafat
3. Large portion of PA budget in secret personal accounts
4. No PLC & MOF (Minister of Finance) oversight of public expenditure & economic activities
5. No systematic policies on public expenditures
6. Weak internal audit
7. Hiring does not follow set procedures
8. No accountability & no transparency
9. Fiscal priorities favor security expenditures rather than health, social security, & education

The main objectives of the economic reform are to consolidate all public finances, to ensure MOF and PLC oversight of all public expenditure, to strengthen internal audit capacity, to establish the concepts of transparency and accountability as a matter of routine rather than an exception, and to obtain full public disclosure of PA budget & holdings.

Dr. Salam Fayyad who has been serving as the PA Minister of Finance since October 2002, has shown strong commitment to transparency and proper accounting practices

instructing extensive audits of PA accounts. In January 2003, he submitted the first publicly disclosed PA budget that was approved by the PLC.¹⁰ In late February 2003, he published a detailed report on PA financial and investment activities.¹¹ One important reform move he took was the direct deposit of police salaries in local bank accounts. This measure stripped Palestinian security chiefs of the control they had over their forces' pay, which helped them to collect salaries on the payroll for non-existing employees in order to build unaccountable fiefs. Complicating his work is Israeli withholding of PA funds as a tool to punish the Palestinian leadership and people for their resistance to the Israeli military occupation.

4. Judicial Reform

So far, PA President Arafat has failed to act on many pieces of legislation passed by the PLC. Thus judicial reform is important to establish a strong & independent judiciary, to create a new supreme judicial council, and to have state security courts abolished. Some initiatives are taken to establish a new liberal legal framework and to pass some liberal laws. Under severe pressures and four years after the PLC passed it, PA President Arafat on May 18th, 2002, signed the Judicial Authority Law which established an independent and accountable Palestinian judiciary.

5. Administrative Reform

There is a general lack of managerial skills and knowledge in public administration management among PA civil servants. This prompted calls for PA administrative reform to address the problems of weak institutions, unclear procedures, duplication of functions, competing chains of command, weak delegation of authority, inadequacy of formal procedures, insufficiency of information flows, inadequacy of routine audit, and the overweight civil service body.

6. Governance Reform

The primary focus of the PA efforts at governance reform at the present time focuses on the development of a new system of governance, and the building of local capabilities and a competent civil service necessary to meet future challenges of social and economic development in a democratic state. The reform priorities include the following objectives:

- Strengthening the technical, financial and managerial capabilities of the central as well as local government.
- Building up a legal basis for public administration to enhance public sector accountability.

¹⁰ See: (<http://www.mof.gov.ps>); "Palestinian Seeks Reform by Following the Money", by James Bennet, New York Times, January 1st, 2003.

¹¹ See: Al-Quds daily newspaper, "In the framework of Financial Reform: Fayyad publishes a detailed report listing PA trade and investment activities," March 1st, 2003, p. 1.

- Creating within Palestinian institutions solid capacities for research, policy analysis and policy implementation which will enhance economic and social development.

- Emphasizing public-citizen collaboration to achieve security, law and order

- Forming a broader, more honest, and more technically competent cabinet

The major initiative in this field was the Democracy Bill, signed by PA President Arafat on May 28, 2002, pledging the creation of a democratic government. The bill guaranteed political and personal rights for the Palestinians, established a separation of powers among executive, legislative and judiciary branches, and called for presidential elections.

7. Elections and Local Governance Reform

The aim of the reform in this area focuses on building democratic mechanisms through electoral process and to introduce financial accountability procedures and mechanisms. The term of the Palestinian Legislative Council, and PA President expired a full three years ago in the year 2000 since the 1996 elections of the PA President & PLC stipulated a four year term for both. The legislature initially had 88 members, but two have died and one has resigned. Another member, Marwan Barghouti, is at present in an Israeli prison while he stands trial on charges of involvement in a string of fatal attacks on Israelis. So far, no elections were held for the local governments since the PA took charge.

8. Looking Ahead: Future Strategies

Initiative One: Public Administration Development Strategy

There is an urgent need to establish a PA Public administration development strategy aiming to address all institution-building goals, problems and obstacles at all levels within the context of Palestinian priority objectives. It would call for reorganization and implementation to empower the functions performed by PA Ministries and other public institutions through the development of a unified modern administrative system consistent with defined roles, responsibilities and authorities that are firmly enforced and clearly identified in a civil service manual.

Initiative Two: Public Administration Institute

There is an urgent need to establish a Public Administration Institute to conduct training activities:

- To promote and develop human resources
- To increase efficiency of civil servants.
- To enhance managerial and operational capacities of civil servants.
- To build substantive knowledge within public sector.
- To facilitate exchange of knowledge and skills among various PA ministries and agencies.
- To promote and strengthen governance structure.
- To design modern policies and working procedures

Initiative Three: Anti-corruption Task Force

True reform cannot be achieved without eliminating corruption. Corruption cannot be eliminated without removing those who practice it. Corrupt official cannot be removed without enforcing stiff anti-corruption laws. Anticorruption laws cannot be enforced without instituting an anti-corruption task force. Thus the primary focus of the PA at the present time should be to create an anti-corruption task force whose aim is to investigate corruption cases and bring to court all those civil servants accused of corruption.

PA Reform: Ray of hope or a big dream?

No doubt, conducting PA reform would greatly contribute to the foundation for self-rule and would provide the nuts and bolts of day-to-day efficient administration, and would ensure financial accountability and operational transparency, essential for the continuing progress of the peace process. The core of PA reform agenda is to establish clear procedures, a sound legal basis, and good fiscal transparency: Is this too much to ask? Is it impossible to achieve? Since we stand on the threshold of the post-Oslo era, PA reform becomes number one priority.

ANNEX I

THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY CABINET

[Appointed April 30, 2003]

1. **MAHMOUD ABBAS - PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR (FATEH)** **Education:** Holds a Ph.D. in History (Oriental College, Moscow) and a B.A. in Law (Damascus University).
2. **YASSER ABED RABBO - MINISTER OF CABINET AFFAIRS (FIDA)** **Education:** Holds an M.A. in Economics and Political Science (American University in Cairo).
3. **HAKAM BALAWI - CABINET SECRETARY (FATEH)** **Education :** Holds Diplomas in Administration, Journalism and Education.
4. **NABEEL SHA'ATH - MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (FATEH)** **Education:** Holds a J.D. in Law (University of Pennsylvania), a Ph.D. in Economics and Administrative Science (Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania), an MBA in Finance and Banking (University of Pennsylvania) and a B.A. in Business Administration (University of Alexandria, Egypt).
5. **SAEB EREKAT - MINISTER OF NEGOTIATION AFFAIRS (FATEH)**
RESIGNED **Education:** Holds a Ph.D. in Peace Studies (Bradford University), and a B.A. and M.A. in Political Science (University of San Francisco).
6. **MOHAMMAD DAHLAN - MINISTER OF STATE FOR INTERNAL SECURITY AFFAIRS (FATEH)** **Education:** Holds a B.A. in Business Administration (Islamic University of Gaza).
7. **SALAM FAYYAD - MINISTER OF FINANCE (INDEPENDENT)** **Education:** Holds a Ph.D. in Economics (University of Texas), an MBA in Accounting (University of Texas) and a B.Sc. in Engineering (American University of Beirut).
8. **NABIL KASSIS - MINISTER OF PLANNING (INDEPENDENT)** **Education:** Holds a Ph.D. in Nuclear Physics (American University in Beirut) and a B.Sc. in Nuclear Physics (University of Mainz, Germany).
9. **ABDUL KARIM ABU SALAH - MINISTER OF JUSTICE (INDEPENDENT)** **Education:** Holds a B.A. in Law (Cairo University) and an M.A. in International Relations (Cairo University).
10. **NABIL AMR - MINISTER OF INFORMATION (FATEH)** **Education:** Holds a degree in Law (Damascus University) and a diploma in Media and Radio Broadcasting (Damascus University).
11. **MAHER MASRI - MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND TRADE (FATEH)** **Education:** Holds an M.A. and a B.A. in Economics (American University of Beirut).
12. **RAFIQ AL-NATSHEH - MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (FATEH)** **Education:** Holds a Ph.D. in Political Science (Moscow University) and an M.A. in Political Science (Cairo University).
13. **HAMDAN ASHOUR - MINISTER OF HOUSING AND PUBLIC WORKS (FATEH)**
14. **GHASSAN KHATIB - MINISTER OF LABOR (PALESTINIAN PEOPLE'S PARTY)** **Education:** Holds an M.A. in Development Studies (Manchester University) and a B.A.

in Economics and Business Administration (Birzeit University). He is pursuing a doctorate in Middle East Politics (University of Durham).

15. NAIM ABU HOMMOS - MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION (FATEH)

Education: Holds a Ph.D. in Education (San Francisco State University), an M.A. in Special Education (San Francisco State University) and a B.A. in Education (University of Jordan).

16. JAMAL SHOBAKI - MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE (FATEH)

Education: Holds a B.A. in Geography (Beirut Arab Univeristy).

17. ZIAD ABU AMR - MINISTER OF CULTURE (INDEPENDENT)

Education: Holds a Ph.D. in ComPARative Politics (Georgetown University).

18. AZZAM SHAWWA - MINISTER OF ENERGY (FATEH)

Education: Holds a B.Sc. in Mathematics (University of Memphis).

19. KAMAL AL-SHIRAFI - MINISTER OF HEALTH (INDEPENDENT)

Education: Holds a diploma in Teaching (Ramallah Teachers' College); holds a medical degree and is a certified surgeon (University of Bulgaria).

20. MITRI ABU AITA - MINISTER OF TOURISM (FATEH)

Education Holds a B.A. in Law (Damascus University).

21. HISHAM ABDUL RAZIQ - MINISTER OF PRISONER AFFAIRS (FATEH)

Education: Holds a B.A. in the Israeli Political System (Al-Quds University).

22. INTISAR AL-WAZIR (UM JIHAD) - MINISTER OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS (FATEH)

Education: Holds a B.A. in History (Damascus University).

23. SA'EDI AL-KROUNZ - MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION (FATEH)

Education: Holds a Ph.D. in Mathematics and Statistics (Purdue University), an M.Sc. in Mathematics (University of Saskatchewan, Canada) and a B.Sc. in Mathematics (Mansura University, Egypt).

24. ABDUL FATTAH HAMAYEL (FATEH) - MINISTER OF STATE (WITHOUT PORTFOLIO)

Education: Attended Military College in Baghdad.

25. TO BE APPOINTED - MINISTER OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS