

# Palestinian Public Opinion a Year after Hamas's Victory

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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### Brief Analysis

One year after Hamas's sweeping electoral victory, Palestinian politics is not only locked in a dysfunctional stalemate, but also marred by increasingly deadly factional violence in Gaza. Since a roadside bomb exploded on January 25 -- targeting a vehicle carrying members of Hamas's Executive Force -- more than thirty-two people have been killed, seventy-five injured, and dozens kidnapped in the deadliest wave of fighting between Hamas and Fatah to date. Despite a truce that was supposed to have gone into effect this morning, fighting persists in Gaza.

President Mahmoud Abbas's December call for early presidential and legislative elections heightened tensions between the parties, but it remains unclear under what circumstances he would attempt to turn his threat into a concrete plan. His preferred option still seems to be the formation of a unity government, as indicated by his acceptance of Saudi King Abdullah's recent offer to host unity talks in Mecca.

In this context, it is important to evaluate Palestinian public opinion, particularly among those who voted for Hamas but who are not ideological followers of the group's Islamist agenda. To date, Hamas retains a high level of public support because it is not being blamed for the past year's failures, and it has survived the political and economic boycott imposed by the Quartet (the UN, United States, European Union, and Russia). Meanwhile, Fatah has not even begun to unify or to cleanse itself of the stains of corruption that led to its defeat last year, and its public posture has only increased suspicions of its motivations.

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