

House Foreign Affairs Committee

Subcommittee on the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia

No Incentives for Terrorism: U.S. Implementation of the Taylor Force Act and Efforts to Stop ‘Pay to Slay’

DR. JONATHAN SCHANZER

Senior Vice President for Research

Foundation for Defense of Democracies

Washington, DC
September 27, 2023

Introduction

Chairman Wilson, Ranking Member Phillips, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, on behalf of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, thank you for the opportunity to testify. My testimony is built upon the premise that the Palestinian Authority (PA) is valuable to Israel and the United States but only if it functions properly. Today, with chaos in the West Bank mounting, the PA is in danger of collapse, due primarily to Iranian malign activity and corruption. These and other issues in the Palestinian arena all contribute to the challenge of curbing the deplorable Palestinian policy of rewarding terrorism through “pay-for-slay.” At the conclusion of this testimony, I will offer a handful of concrete recommendations on how to tackle some of these challenges.

Iran’s Hand in the West Bank

The Islamic Republic of Iran has for years supported the Hamas terrorist group, which controls the Gaza Strip. The regime helped Hamas conquer the coastal enclave in 2007. Since then, Tehran has provided significant funding, weapons, and other assistance to the Hamas government ruling Gaza. Today, however, the regime is focusing its efforts on the West Bank. As Israeli defense minister Yoav Gallant noted, the recent West Bank violence “is related to Iranian funding, and to the proliferation of weapons under the Iranian directive. Iran seeks every means to harm the citizens of Israel.”¹

Israeli officials point to March 2022 as the starting point for the current wave of terror.² My colleague Joe Truzman at *FDD’s Long War Journal* has tracked more than 2,100 attacks against Israelis since then.³ Some were carried out by known groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Others were conducted by relatively new groups like the Lions’ Den.⁴ All of these groups receive funds and arms from Iran. They may also be receiving instructions from Iran by way of a “nerve center” based in Lebanon that coordinates the violent activities of the Iranian “axis” in the Palestinian theater.⁵

At the same time, Iran is flooding weapons into the West Bank. This is the result of a sustained smuggling operation by the Lebanese Hezbollah at the direction of the group’s paymasters in Tehran.⁶ The group is exploiting the long and porous border that Jordan and Israel share. More

¹ Seth Frantzman, “How is Iran Influencing Palestinian Terrorism in the West Bank?” *The Jerusalem Post* (Israel), August 22, 2023. (<https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-755675>)

² Phone interview with Israeli official, September 20, 2023.

³ Joe Truzman, “Mapping Terrorism in the West Bank,” *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, last updated September 20, 2023. (<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2022/12/14/mapping-west-bank-insurgency>)

⁴ Joe Truzman, “A newly Established Militant Organization in the West Bank Claims Several Attacks,” *FDD’s Long War Journal*, September 16, 2022. (<https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2022/09/a-newly-established-militant-organization-in-the-west-bank-claims-several-attacks.php>)

⁵ Jonathan Schanzer, “Iran-Hezbollah Intelligence Center May Help Hamas Target Israel,” *Foreign Policy*, September 13, 2022. (<https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/09/13/iran-hezbollah-hamas-israel-beirut-lebanon-intelligence-sharing-center>)

⁶ Joe Truzman, “Hezbollah Smuggling Weapons to the West Bank Amid Surge in Military Activity,” *FDD’s Long War Journal*, September 20, 2022. (<https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2022/09/hezbollah-smuggling-weapons-to-the-west-bank-amid-surge-in-militant-activity.php>)

than 330 handguns and rifles have been seized at the border this year.⁷ Earlier this year, one Jordanian lawmaker was caught smuggling large numbers of weapons and monetary instruments into Israel, as well.⁸ Many weapons cross the border without detection.

Tehran also appears to be trying to replicate its success in arming Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon with rockets. With training and assistance from Iran, West Bank terrorist groups have recently attempted to fire crude rockets at Israel.⁹ So far, the Israelis have managed this threat. Still, it is a development that must be monitored closely.

The ruling Fatah faction openly acknowledges the dangers of Iranian dominance in the West Bank.¹⁰ Israel, for its part, continues to conduct operations throughout the West Bank in a bid to mitigate the chaos. There have been more than 2,000 such operations by the Israel Defense Forces since March 2022,¹¹ including a large two-day operation in Jenin in July of this year.¹² Such operations are a gambit for Israel, however. While they are intended to neutralize the threat of Iran-backed terrorist groups, the Palestinians view the very presence of Israeli military personnel in their towns as a provocation. The temperature continues to rise.

The New Iranian Strategy

The crisis in the West Bank is the result of a new Iranian strategy. Hamas' Gaza-based leadership — notably Yahya Sinwar¹³ — is now rethinking its practice of provoking Israel with rocket fire. Israel responds with airstrikes that take out Hamas military targets. This consistently leads to misery and destruction in Gaza. The beleaguered population blames Israel, but Hamas does not emerge unscathed. To deflect this discontent, the group began exporting violence against Israel to the West Bank with the ultimate goal of taking it over.¹⁴

The new strategy is fully consistent with the goals of both Hamas and the Islamic Republic. Rather than waging war in a territory that they already control (Gaza), Hamas leaders are now attempting to spark a wider conflict in territory that the group does not control (the West Bank).

⁷ Ibrahim Hussein, "Mossad Accuses Iran of Jordan Border Arms Smuggling into West Bank," *The New Arab* (UK), September 20, 2023. (<https://www.newarab.com/news/mossad-accuses-iran-jordan-border-arms-smuggling#:~:text=It%20said%20its%20investigation%20revealed,border%20so%20far%20this%20year>)

⁸ Tia Goldenberg, "Israel Releases Jordan Lawmaker Said to Have Smuggled Guns," *Associated Press*, May 7, 2023. (<https://apnews.com/article/israel-jordan-guns-arms-smuggling-lawmaker-f632ef3be3adafdd34d161777f074e94>)

⁹ Yoni Ben Menachem, "Hamas Begins to Establish a Rocket Production Infrastructure in Jenin," *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*, August 21, 2023. (<https://jcpa.org/hamas-begins-to-establish-a-rocket-production-infrastructure-in-jenin>)

¹⁰ Gianluca Pacchiani, "Amid Tensions, Fatah Offshoot Accuses Islamist Rivals of Turning West Bank into Syria," *Times of Israel* (Israel), September 20, 2023. (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/amid-tensions-fatah-offshoot-accuses-islamist-rivals-of-turning-west-bank-into-syria>)

¹¹ Joe Truzman, "Mapping Terrorism in the West Bank," *Foundation for Defending Democracies*, last updated September 20, 2023. (<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2022/12/14/mapping-west-bank-insurgency>)

¹² "Israeli Military Officially Ends Two-Day Operation in Jenin," *Deutsche Welle*, July 5, 2023. (<https://www.dw.com/en/israeli-military-officially-ends-two-day-operation-in-jenin/a-66119529>)

¹³ Davide Lerner, "'We Can't Prevail Against a Nuclear Power': Hamas' Gaza Chief Says He Doesn't Want War With Israel," *Ha'aretz* (Israel), October 4, 2018. (<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2018-10-04/ty-article/hamas-chief-in-gaza-says-he-doesnt-want-war-with-israel/0000017f-e60c-d62c-a1ff-fe7f08cc0000>)

¹⁴ Nidal al-Mughrabi, "Hamas Sees West Bank as Battleground with New Israel Gov't," *Reuters*, January 18, 2023. (<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/hamas-sees-west-bank-battleground-with-new-israel-govt-2023-01-18>)

This strategy could yield two key benefits for the terror group and its sponsors in Tehran. First, it could enable yet another Iranian proxy, armed with Iranian weapons, to take control of another chunk of valuable territory in the ongoing war against Israel. This strategy of encirclement can already be seen in Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria.¹⁵ The West Bank is the final frontier. Second, the success of this strategy could help Hamas emerge as the unquestioned leader of the Palestinians. Indeed, Hamas sees this as an opportunity to bring down the Palestinian Authority (PA) — Hamas' bitter political rival since the Palestinian civil war of 2007.¹⁶

The Failure of the Palestinian Security Forces

Despite the clear threat that Iran-backed terrorist groups pose to the viability of the PA, the Palestinian Authority has failed to respond. Specifically, the Palestinian Security Forces, the paramilitary force tasked with defending the people and interests of the Palestinian proto state, have largely failed to preserve order in the areas where the PA exercises full control.¹⁷ Indeed, the PSF has been a non-factor since the wave of violence began in March 2022.

Admittedly, low morale could be a byproduct of the impossible mission of the PSF. As Neri Zilber and Ghaith Al-Omari note, the PSF is an “Army with No State,” with severe limitations placed on the armaments and training it receives.¹⁸ Poor performance could also be linked to the spiking diplomatic tensions between Israel and the PA leadership, which periodically vows to halt security coordination with Israel after IDF operations in the West Bank.¹⁹ There have even been reports of PA security forces clashing with their Israeli counterparts (justifying the limits on military training and materiel for the PSF).²⁰

It's also worth noting that when the Palestinian Security Forces do their job in the West Bank, they can find themselves clashing with the local population,²¹ which has prompted some extremist voices to accuse them of doing Israel's dirty work.²²

¹⁵ Jonathan Schanzer, “Iran's Multifront Strategy Against Israel,” *Commentary*, June 2023.

(<https://www.commentary.org/articles/jonathan-schanzer/irans-multifront-strategy-against-israel>)

¹⁶ Jonathan Schanzer, *Hamas vs. Fatah: The Struggle for Palestine* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

(<https://www.amazon.com/Hamas-vs-Fatah-Struggle-Palestine/dp/0230609058>)

¹⁷ Miriam Berger, “What to Know about Palestinian Security Forces and their Role in West Bank,” *The Washington Post*, July 11, 2023. (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/07/11/palestinian-authority-security-forces-west-bank-faq>)

¹⁸ Neri Zilber and Ghaith Al-Omari, *State with No Army, Army with No State: Evolution of the Palestinian Authority Security Forces 1994-2018* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2018).

(<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/state-no-army-army-no-state-evolution-palestinian-authority-security-forces-1994>)

¹⁹ Jacob Magid, “PA Announces Halt to Security Coordination with Israel; US Cautions Against Move,” *The Times of Israel* (Israel), January 26, 2023. (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/pa-announces-halt-to-security-coordination-with-israel-us-cautions-against-move>)

²⁰ Joe Truzman, “Mounting Evidence of the PA's Security Forces Clashing With IDF Troops in the West Bank,” *FDD's Long War Journal*, September 11, 2022. (<https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2022/09/mounting-evidence-of-the-pas-security-services-clashing-with-idf-troops-in-the-west-bank.php>)

²¹ “Man Killed in Rare Clash Between Palestinian Security Forces and Gunmen,” *Reuters*, August 30, 2023. (<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/one-killed-rare-clash-between-palestinian-security-forces-gunmen-2023-08-30>)

²² Alaa Tartir, “The Palestinian Authority Security Forces: Whose Security?” *Al Shabaka*, May 16, 2017. (<https://al-shabaka.org/briefs/palestinian-authority-security-forces-whose-security>)

Whether due to an inability or unwillingness to contain the violence in the West Bank, the absence of the PSF is palpable. Iran continues to gain strength, thereby increasing the likelihood of additional IDF operations in an already-tense environment, prompting periodic (and sometimes hyperbolic) warnings of a possible third intifada.²³

Political and Economic Corruption

The poor performance of the PSF mirrors the poor performance of the Palestinian Authority. It is an utterly dysfunctional government. One could easily try to blame the PA's dysfunction on the lack of diplomatic progress toward a two-state solution. However, this argument does not hold up. In the nearly 30 years since the PA was founded, there have been many instances in which the prospects for a two-state solution have been bleak.²⁴ Yet, it's hard to recall a time in which the Palestinian government has been this irrelevant.

The Palestinian Authority's crisis of legitimacy is the responsibility of one man: Mahmoud Abbas. He is currently more than 18 years into his four-year term as president. He took power in 2005.²⁵ The following year, the political crisis with Hamas erupted. Then, in 2007, the civil war erupted. Ever since, the octogenarian leader has refused to vacate his seat, and he has refused to take responsibility for the basic functions of his government. And yet, successive American administrations, both Democrats and Republicans, have declined to seek his resignation.

The lack of pressure from the West, coupled with the fear of a Hamas conquest in the West Bank, has enabled Abbas to eviscerate the political space in the West Bank. There are no political parties that can challenge the ruling Fatah party. There are no political candidates to conceivably replace him. He refuses to hold elections²⁶ — and derides the prospect of holding them.²⁷ His critics are harassed and arrested,²⁸ or even killed.²⁹ In other words, the political corruption in the West Bank rivals that of many other autocratic regimes in the Middle East.

Remarkably, the economic corruption in the West Bank is even worse. Poll after poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research shows that the Palestinian people view

²³ Daniel Byman, "The Third Intifada? Why The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict May Boil Over Again," *Foreign Affairs*, February 7, 2023. (<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/israel/third-intifada-israeli-palestinian-conflict>)

²⁴ Ben Birnbaum, "The End of the Two-State Solution," *The New Republic*, March 11, 2013.

(<https://newrepublic.com/article/112617/israel-palestine-and-end-two-state-solution>)

²⁵ "Abbas Declares Victory in Palestinian Presidential Vote," *The New York Times*, January 9, 2005.

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/09/international/middleeast/abbas-declares-victory-in-palestinian-presidential.html>)

²⁶ Daniel Estrin, "Palestinian Authority Postpones Parliamentary Elections," *National Public Radio*, April 29, 2021.

(<https://www.npr.org/2021/04/29/992065009/palestinian-authority-postpones-parliamentary-elections>)

²⁷ Jacob Magid, "'They're Animals': Abbas Blasts EU Over its Stance on Palestinian Elections," *The Times of Israel* (Israel), September 19, 2023. (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/theyre-animals-abbas-blasts-eu-over-its-stance-on-palestinian-elections>)

²⁸ Daoud Kuttab, "How the Autocratic Rule of Mahmoud Abbas Fails Palestinians," *The Los Angeles Times*, June 26, 2021. (<https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2021-06-26/palestinian-authority-nizar-banat-killing>)

²⁹ Ali Sawafta, "Autopsy Shows Head Blows in Death of Abbas Critic, Palestinian Group Says," *Reuters*, June 24, 2021. (<https://www.reuters.com/breakingviews/critic-abbas-dies-palestinian-custody-un-demands-investigation-2021-06-24>)

economic corruption as a huge problem.³⁰ The problem certainly didn't begin with Abbas. It began with Arafat and the seemingly unlimited Western assistance that poured in during the 1990s and the peak of the peace process. However, Abbas has taken financial corruption to new heights. Abbas, his family, and his cronies all benefit from a system that American taxpayers have financed. I testified about this in the past.³¹ I was even sued (unsuccessfully) by Mahmoud Abbas' son for my work.³² It is an issue that I believe is worthy of additional congressional inquiry, given this subcommittee's interest in Palestinian financial crimes.

Pay-For-Slay

Perhaps the most outrageous financial crime perpetrated by the PA is the payment of stipends to the families of jailed or slain terrorists through what it calls a "Martyrs' Fund." This is not new, of course. It is a longstanding practice of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which was founded in the 1960s and remains the official representative of the Palestinian people to this day. It is a practice deeply rooted in the violent, revolutionary ideology that accompanied the rise of Palestinian nationalism after the Arab defeat in the 1967 Six-Day War. Antisemitism is a significant driver of this phenomenon, too. Abbas occasionally lets this slip; a recent antisemitic slur recently earned him unwanted headlines.³³

Pay-for-slay was tolerated to various extents from the founding of the PA in 1994 until the murder of American citizen and Army veteran Taylor Force in Old Yaffo on March 8, 2016.³⁴ Since then, Congress has halted all direct assistance to the PA so long as payments continue. The Taylor Force Act, introduced in 2017 and signed into law in 2018,³⁵ has ensured this. What little Washington provides to the Palestinians now flows to accredited NGOs and hospitals. While American funds may still be misallocated, Washington has mitigated the problem significantly.

The government of Israel plays an important enforcement role in this process. It withholds an estimated 500 to 600 million shekels (\$130 to 160 million) annually in taxes and other funds that would normally flow to the PA coffers. This is the sum that the Israelis estimate is allocated annually by the PA to finance pay-for-slay. The Israelis are thus making the PA for this practice.³⁶

According to former and current Israeli officials, congressional pressure has ensured that the PA has not added new names to the pay-for-slay registry in recent years. And an uneasy but stable

³⁰ "Index Survey Research," Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, accessed September 22, 2023. (<https://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/105>)

³¹ "Chronic Kleptocracy: Corruption Within the Palestinian Political Establishment," *Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia*, July 10, 2012. (<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-112hhrg74960/html/CHRG-112hhrg74960.htm>)

³² Ryan Abbott, "Palestinian Leader's Son Claims Defamation," *Courthouse News Service*, September 24, 2012. (<https://www.courthousenews.com/palestinian-leaders-son-claims-defamation>)

³³ Louis Imbert, "Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas Criticized for New Anti-Semitic Remark," *Le Monde* (France), September 8, 2023. (https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2023/09/08/palestinian-president-mahmoud-abbas-criticized-for-new-anti-semitic-remark_6128715_4.html)

³⁴ Oren Liebermann, Steve Alamy, and Amir Tal, "American Fatally Stabbed in Israel Terror Attack that Wounds 10 Others," *CNN*, March 9, 2016. (<https://www.cnn.com/2016/03/08/middleeast/israel-violence/index.html>)

³⁵ "Congress Passes Taylor Force Act As Part of \$1.3 Trillion Budget Bill," *The Times of Israel* (Israel), March 23, 2018. (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/congress-passes-taylor-force-act-as-part-of-1-3-trillion-budget-bill>)

³⁶ Interview with former Israeli official, September 19, 2023.

status quo has prevailed, despite several reported attempts by Hady Amr, the State Department's Special Representative for Palestinian Affairs, to free up more American assistance.

The Israelis have, however, offered a proposal related to Taylor Force Act enforcement: the creation of a Palestinian social security system.³⁷ The Israelis have conveyed to Washington and Ramallah, first informally and now formally, that they will not stand in the way of such a system, even if it covers the families of convicted or slain terrorists, so long as all Palestinians below a certain income level obtain equal benefits. The program could lift the standard of living for all Palestinians. It could bolster confidence in the PA, too. The mechanism might even obviate the need for the corrupt United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which perpetuates the fiction of a refugee problem in the West Bank (and beyond) by identifying the descendants of the original refugees from the 1948 war as refugees themselves.³⁸ Providing aid or services to destitute Palestinians was never the problem. Sustaining a non-existent refugee crisis, however, has only compounded the woes of the Middle East.

Unfortunately, despite the benefits or perhaps because of them, Abbas and his lieutenants have rejected the proposal. Consistent with Palestinian decision-making over decades, Palestinian leaders prefer to keep their population in misery rather than govern responsibly.

Succession

Mahmoud Abbas has utterly mismanaged the PA. Many Palestinians look forward to the day he leaves the scene, thereby clearing the way for new leadership. However, chaos could very likely follow his departure. Abbas, as noted, has gutted the Palestinian political system, and he refuses to name a successor. According to Palestinian Basic Law, if the president dies or is unable to govern, the speaker of the Palestinian parliament would preside over the government until elections are held. That won't work because Abbas dissolved the parliament.³⁹ Moreover, the last speaker was a member of Hamas.⁴⁰ If he were tapped to lead the PA, even temporarily, it would spark a crisis with Israel, the United States, and perhaps other Western states.

Not long ago, there were many candidates willing to succeed Abbas.⁴¹ Mohammed Dahlan (Arafat's former Gaza security chief), Jibril Rajoub (Arafat's former West Bank security chief), Mohammed Shtayyeh (Abbas' prime minister), Majid Farraj (head of the Palestinian General Intelligence Service) and Hussein al-Sheikh (head of the PLO's executive committee) were on the list, among others. Israeli security officials suggest that most of them have now reconsidered

³⁷ Interview with former Israeli official and phone interview with Israeli official, September 19, 2023.

³⁸ Richard Goldberg and Jonathan Schanzer, "The UN Refugee Agency With Few Actual Refugees," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 3, 2021. (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-u-n-refugee-agency-with-few-actual-refugees-11612378415>)

³⁹ "Palestinian President Dissolves PLC," *Asharq al-Awsat* (UK), December 23, 2018. (<https://english.aawsat.com/home/article/1516536/palestinian-authority-president-dissolves-plc>)

⁴⁰ "Mapping Palestinian Politics: Aziz Duwaik," *European Council on Foreign Relations*, accessed September 22, 2023. (https://ecfr.eu/special/mapping_palestinian_politics/aziz_duwaik)

⁴¹ Grant Rumley, "The Race to Replace Mahmoud Abbas: Understanding and Shaping Palestinian Succession," *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, September 2015. (https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/defenddemocracy/uploads/publications/Rumley_Understanding_Palestinian_Succession.pdf)

their bid for leadership. Given the state of the West Bank, many fear they could be metaphorically stepping in as captain of the *Titanic*.

Hamas thus emerges as the only viable alternative right now. And the group continues to expand its foothold in the West Bank. The man responsible for much of this is Saleh Arouri.⁴² The West Bank military commander splits his time between Turkey, Qatar, and Lebanon. However, Iran is the key to the terrorist infrastructure he has created in the West Bank.

The longer Abbas remains president, and the more Arouri can expand his terrorist network in the West Bank, the worse the outlook gets. Arouri and Abbas, who to my knowledge are not in communication, have together set the stage for an acute crisis.

Enter the Saudis?

Interestingly, there could be an opportunity for the situation to improve. Reports suggest that Saudi Arabia is currently engaged in consultations with the United States about a normalization agreement with Israel. Should the Saudis move forward, they have indicated that they seek to improve the living conditions and governance of the Palestinians.⁴³

If talks progress, Israel would need to make certain concessions to the Saudis on the Palestinian front in terms of freedom of movement or uprooting Israeli communities in the West Bank. Riyadh may also wish to make a direct contribution to the Palestinians to reassure them that their cause is not forgotten. The Palestinian leadership has already engaged in consultations with the Saudis.⁴⁴ In short, the Saudis have significant leverage. They can push for new Palestinian leadership, or even a succession plan, as a condition for the funds the Palestinians seek. Riyadh could also demand an end to pay-for-slay as a condition for funding the social security program.

Discussions are still in an early phase. But should they progress, the Saudis have an opportunity, together with the United States and Israel, to inject new life into the Palestinian Authority. They may be one of the few actors that have the credibility, not to mention the resources, to do so.

Recommendations

Chairman Wilson, Ranking Member Phillips, and members of the subcommittee, I offer these recommendations to address some of the challenges noted in my testimony.

1. Continue rigorous enforcement of the Taylor Force Act to ensure, and clearly convey that no U.S. funding to the PA will resume so long as Pay-for Slay continues. This message should be unanimous, including from the special representative for Palestinian affairs.

⁴² Liran Tamari, "Netanyahu Threatens Hamas Leader Behind Uptick in Terror Attacks," *Ynet* (Israel), August 27, 2023. (<https://www.ynetnews.com/article/sj3efi00t2>)

⁴³ Felicia Schwartz, "Saudi Arabia Says Solving Palestinian Issue Crucial to Deal with Israel," *Financial Times* (UK), September 20, 2023. (<https://www.ft.com/content/29383ce8-4d62-4957-a0b5-cf1970d3ceee>)

⁴⁴ "Palestinian Delegation to Visit Saudi Arabia to Raise its Demands in Any Israel Deal," *The Times of Israel* (Israel), August 28, 2023. (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/palestinian-delegation-will-raise-demands-with-saudis-for-an-israel-deal-report>)

2. Encourage the Palestinians to establish a social security program to negate the need for their so-called “Martyrs’ Fund.” The White House should ask the Saudis to support Palestinian social security, regardless of whether the current normalization talks succeed.
3. Consider stronger language in the Taylor Force Act. This could include striking the word “directly” from the statute to cover anything that indirectly benefits the PA.
4. Cut all American support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. The agency is a driver of continued conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.
5. Issue direct and unequivocal statements to the Palestinian Authority about the need to establish new laws or mechanisms to facilitate an orderly succession.
6. Provide additional support to the U.S. Security Coordinator for Israel and the Palestinian Authority to strengthen the capabilities of the PSF and bolster coordination with the IDF.
7. Strengthen the military-to-military cooperation between Jordan and Israel, particularly along their joint border.
8. Enforce the rewards for justice bounty on Hamas leader Saleh Al-Arouri. He travels freely to allied states like Qatar and Turkey, and to Lebanon, which enjoys American financial assistance. Washington should demand his arrest.
9. Work to pass the Hamas International Financing Prevention Act (HIFPA/Hamas),⁴⁵ which would mandate sanctions on senior members of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad as well as individuals, companies, and foreign state actors supporting to them. The bill is modeled after the Hezbollah International Financing Prevention Act, which has made it more difficult for Hezbollah to utilize the international financial system.
10. Halt all sanctions relief and ransom payments to the Islamic Republic of Iran. The regime directly finances West Bank terrorist groups and their infrastructure. If Washington wants to sustain the Palestinian Authority and protect Israel, our Iran policy must change.

There are many issues that I did not address in this testimony. If I have missed anything you wish to discuss, I am happy to answer your questions. On behalf of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, thank you again for inviting me to testify.

⁴⁵ Hamas International Financing Prevention Act, H.R. 340, 118th Congress (2023). (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/340>)