



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Occupied Palestinian Territories – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 29 October 2010

Gaza: Human rights abuses by Hamas against former members of the Police Force of the deposed Palestinian National Authority.

Information on human rights abuses against former members of the Fatah police force was not found among sources available to the Refugee Documentation Centre.

A *Reuters* report refers to the situation for Fatah policemen following the Hamas takeover of Gaza in June 2007 as follows:

“Kamal al-Sheikh, the Abbas loyalist police chief, issued orders from his office in the West Bank town of Ramallah for policemen in Gaza to disobey Hamas and to stay indoors. But a Hamas-appointed Fatah police chief in Gaza ordered men to return to work. Khaled Abu Hilal, a spokesman for the Hamas-controlled ministry of interior, called on security personnel ‘either to attend to jobs or be dismissed’.” (Reuters (17 June 2007) *Palestinian divide poses dilemma for Gazans*)

A *Los Angeles Times* article states:

“The recent bloodshed that swept through the Gaza Strip left Tahar's political party, Fatah, defeated by Hamas, an Islamic militant group that now controls the battered territory and its 1.5 million inhabitants. Tahar was a Fatah military intelligence officer, and now he says he is a target, even though Hamas has invited him and other Fatah police and security officials to work for it. ‘How can I work with somebody from Hamas who one week ago was shooting at me? Who killed my colleagues?’ Tahar said last week as his mother hovered nearby, telling him not to say too much. ‘How can I live with somebody who still thinks I'm a collaborator with Israel and the Americans?’” (LA Times (4 July 2007) *Hiding in Gaza's shadows: The victory by Hamas in the Palestinian territory has sent Fatah members underground, where they quietly consider revenge or flight*)

In a section headed “Situation of Preventive Security in Gaza after Hamas takeover” an *Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada* response to a request for information states:

“Immediately following the Hamas takeover of Gaza, media sources report that some Preventive Security members fled to Egypt, escaped to the West Bank or went into ‘hiding’. According to an official of Hamas' Interior Ministry, as reported by the Jerusalem Post, the PA's Preventive Security service in Gaza was dismantled and replaced with Hamas' Internal Security Apparatus [also known as Internal Security Force]; former Preventive Security personnel were permitted to join the new force. However, HRW reports that Hamas' new Internal Security Apparatus was mainly staffed with members of

Hamas' Qassam Brigades. Amnesty International (AI) and HRW report that the PA forbade all former security force personnel in Gaza from working for Hamas and continued to pay them for not going to work. (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (2 July 2009) *PSE103185.E – Palestine: Overview of the Palestinian Preventive Security of Gaza; situation of Preventive Security members during and after Hamas takeover in June 2007*)

In a section headed “Internal security” an *International Crisis Group* report states:

“Hamas seized the opportunity of its single-handed rule to transform the internal security force. It replaced a paper payroll of some 50,000 personnel with a more disciplined force a quarter that size. Within three months of Fatah’s rout, Hamas had reorganised its Executive Force – a force set up after its 2006 electoral victory – into three main branches managing Gaza’s internal security: the Civil Police; the Internal Security Forces (ISF, an intelligence agency modelled on the former Preventative Security organisation); and the National Security Forces, a border guard which Hamas referred to as its army. All three, Hamas officials insist, are independent of the Qassam Brigades and operate supposedly as professional, non-partisan forces. PA forces who returned to work despite Ramallah’s orders were integrated into the new command structure and non-Hamas personnel appointed to head two of the three branches.” (International Crisis Group (19 March 2008) *Ruling Palestine I: Gaza Under Hamas*, p.9)

References:

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (2 July 2009) *PSE103185.E – Palestine: Overview of the Palestinian Preventive Security of Gaza; situation of Preventive Security members during and after Hamas takeover in June 2007*

http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca:8080/RIR_RDI/RIR_RDI.aspx?id=452437&l=e

(Accessed 29 October 2010)

International Crisis Group (19 March 2008) *Ruling Palestine I: Gaza Under Hamas*

http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/Israel%20Palestine/73_ruling_palestine_gaza_under_hamas.ashx

(Accessed 29 October 2010)

LA Times (4 July 2007) *Hiding in Gaza's shadows: The victory by Hamas in the Palestinian territory has sent Fatah members underground, where they quietly consider revenge or flight*

<http://www.lexisnexis.com>

(Accessed 29 October 2010)

This is a subscription database

Reuters (17 June 2007) *Palestinian divide poses dilemma for Gazans*

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKL1758186420070618>

(Accessed 29 October 2010)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted:

Amnesty International
BBC News
Electronic Immigration Network
European Country of Origin Information Network
Google
Human Rights Watch
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
International Crisis Group
Lexis Nexis
Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database
UK Home Office
UNHCR Refworld
World Organisation Against Torture