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**An analysis of President Mahmoud Abbas's speeches held in the United Nations General  
Assembly in the light of the PLO charter**

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## Abstract

This thesis presents an analysis of President Mahmoud Abbas's speeches held in the United Nations General Assembly in the light of the PLO charter. The speeches analyzed are from the year of 2014 until the year of 2019. The research question of this thesis is; how does President Mahmoud Abbas's rhetoric reflect the Palestinian Authority's attitude towards peace with the state of Israel in the public discourse? Other questions which this research asks and tries to answer are; How does the Palestinian Authority with Mahmoud Abbas communicate who their "enemies" are? And how does Mahmoud Abbas portrait the Palestinian Revolution? To examine this, I used the theoretical framework of religion, heroes, and victims, dangerous speech among others.

Qualitative thematical content analysis is conducted in the research.

This thesis concludes that President Mahmoud Abbas's rhetoric reflects a duality in the Palestinian Authority's attitude towards peace with the state of Israel in the public discourse. It also shows that the Palestinian Authority with Mahmoud Abbas communicates who their "enemies" are to a great extent.

Mahmoud Abbas portraits the Palestinian revolution as a war of liberation. A revolution where those who are willing to sacrifice their lives or commit crimes against Israeli civilians are looked upon as a noble act, justified and financially rewarded by the PA, and saluted by Abbas domestically, but also in front of the United Nations General Assembly.



## Abbreviations

**Al-Mujamma' al-Islami** - An Islamic movement

**Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades** - The Islamist armed wing of the Fatah organization

**Caliph** - A body of Muslim scholars who are recognized as having specialist knowledge of Islamic sacred law and theology.

**Intifada** - The term Palestinians use to describe uprisings or campaigns of violence against Israel. Literally means “shaking off.”

**Islamic Waqf** - A religious endowment of Islam, denoting a building, property, or cash for Muslim religious for charitable purposes.

**Mujāhidin** - mujahidin, guerrilla fighters in Islamic countries, especially those who are fighting against non-Muslim forces.

**Ulama** - a body of Muslim scholars who are recognized as having specialist knowledge of Islamic sacred law and theology.

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# 1 Introduction

It's been 27 years since the signing of the Oslo Accord in 1993, in front of the White House, Washington, U.S. Participants of the Accord Yasir Arafat, Shimon Peres, and Yitzhak Rabin received the Nobel Peace Prize the year after, for their efforts of creating peace. The establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA) was one of the main products of the Oslo Accord. Under the PA the Palestinian citizens were set to enjoy self-rule with democratic institutions which were expected to respect human and civil rights. The newborn authorities signed the accords towards a permanent peace with the State of Israel. Yassir Arafat signed the treaty declaring he would stop the incitement of hatred and violence against the Israeli state (Gus, 2011. p.198). The United States together with the international community, contemplated the PA to improve the economic status and living standards for its citizens and ushered in economic and financial assistance. But not many years after Arafat returned from his diaspora, another intifada erupted and raged for years.

## 1.1 Background

According to the Palestinian Authorities; the Palestinian people are living under a constant threat from their neighbor, Israel. For many Palestinians, the Nakba (Arabic: "disaster" or "catastrophe"), was the loss of their homeland, territories which today are parts of the state of Israel. The origin of this saying started in the 1920s when colonial powers made the southern parts of Syria to Palestine under British rule, the French took control of Syria. This, and the fall of the Ottoman Empire led to massive migrations and population exchange.

In 2007 Mahmod Abbas, with Fatha, took the control of the West Bank after an intense and deadly internal political struggle with Hamas. Democratic elections were supposed to be followed up every fourth year. Mahmod Abbas has until this day been seated as president for the Palestinian people in the West Bank (al-Mughrabi & Sawafta, 2021), no elections have been held since 2005. Hamas is still ruling Gaza.

The PLO and PA have without cease blamed the state of Israel for occupation, unwillingness to work for peace, apartheid and ethnic cleansing. However, a rapport done by Human Rights Watch (HRW) in 2018 condemned “systematic arbitrary arrests and torture” (Younes, 2018) done by the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Hamas, against their civilians. Hani al-Masri, a Palestinian Ramallah-based political analyst, confirmed the rapport, and states that illegal arrest and human rights violations are common in the territories (Younes, 2018). Despite the heavy contribution of international aid and financial support for peace, the efficiency of the assistance is highly uncertain, due to the heavy corruption in the PA (Norad, 2017). The yearly international assistance to Palestine is around 2 billion dollars. Norway is a huge contributor and gave 881 million NOK to the PA in the year 2020 (Stortinget, 2021). The financial support for peace-building between the two parties has not proven to be beneficial for the Palestinian people, but rather for the individuals holding high positions in the Palestinian Authority (Norad, 2017). According to the Norwegian foreign minister Ine Eriksen Sørreide the financial support includes contribution to United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). However, incitement to violence towards Jews in Palestinian children's schoolbooks has been uncovered. Here, the subject of mathematics for children as young as in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade is taught to calculate and add the numbers of martyrs who died in each intifada. Dalal Mugrabi, a woman and member in a Fatah-led fraction of the PLO, participated in a massacre in 1978 in Israel, which is being referred to in Palestinian schoolbooks as a “crown of the nation” (Shalev, 2021). The massacre occurred on the Coastal Road, killed 38 Israelis, 13 of them were children. An attack that Time Magazine characterized as "the worst terrorist attack in Israel's history" (Time, 1978).

## ***1.2 Main research question***

This thesis will therefore look at the aspects of opportunities that the head of the Palestinian Authorities does express when engaging in the public discourse concerning bringing the Palestinian population towards a brighter future and stability with peace with the State of Israel. The PA has received international financial support for peace work in 27 years, including; Norway’s funding marked for peacebuilding.

The main research question of this thesis is;

- *How does President Mahmoud Abbas's rhetoric reflect the Palestinian Authority's attitude towards peace with the state of Israel in the public discourse?*

This thesis is an analysis of President Mahmoud Abbas's speeches held in the UN General Assembly in the light of the PLO charter. President Mahmoud Abbas is also the chairman of the PLO and the political leader of the Fatah, the ruling party in the West Bank, and has been the sitting president since 2007. In addition to this, Abbas is also a co-founder of Fatah, which was established in the year of 1958, and PLO in 1964.

Further questions I will try to answer are;

- *How does the Palestinian Authority with Mahmoud Abbas communicate who their "enemies" are?*
- *How does Mahmoud Abbas portrait the Palestinian Revolution?*

### **1.3 Methodology**

The methodology I have chosen to follow in this thesis is a qualitative thematic analysis.

I have chosen in this thesis to analyze the official speeches held by President Mahmoud Abbas in the United Nations General Assembly from the period from 2014 until 2019. The speeches will be analyzed in light of the PLO charter. More specifically, the research will specifically examine the Palestinian Authority's view on themselves and their political perspectives, how their ideology and Palestinian identity connects to their way of addressing the social situation in the West Bank, how this is portrayed in the PA's official statements. This including examination *if* dangerous speech is incorporated. This thesis will include perspectives of the statements through the lenses of Mahmoud Abbas and PLO's member organizations. For implying this I will show to their narratives and show direct quotes and the context thereof.

Mahmoud Abbas is president of the PA, the highest leader of the PLO, this thesis will have a high focus on him and in addition, I will show some of Fatah official's statements given through social media, TV, news interviews in the period from 2000 and until 2020. The

reason for tuning in to this specific period boils down to the fact that in 2014 the Operation Protective Edge occurred (ICT, 2014) at the same time massive escalations of violent attacks in Jerusalem and tensions occurring around the Temple Mount (BBC, 2014).

#### *1.4 Challenges and limitations of the thesis*

I do not speak Arabic and I am of Norwegian origin. My research can therefore be argued to be limited in some aspects since I am reliant on correct translations by other parties.

Though, in the sampling of the speeches, I have managed to collect most of the speeches which are officially approved by the PA themselves, by sampling the speeches from the Permanent Observer Mission to the State of Palestine to the United Nation website.

It is important to highlight the sensitivity and the complexity around the conflict and what it means to the population involved, especially to those who have a religious narrative. At the same time, I would like to express my sincere acknowledgment of the suffering of many on both sides of the conflict; the Palestinians, as well as the people of Israel.

This research does not engage in the questions of the rights to the land, territories, and areas, neither the topic of refugees or the right to return. It does not address Israel's politics concerning the areas in the West Bank such as Area A, B, and C, nor the policy of border crossing, neither the dispute from the Israel side concerning Jerusalem. This thesis focuses on the current leadership, especially President Mahmoud Abbas, the main leader of the Palestinian people in the West Bank, and his political rhetoric in public statements especially through speeches held in the United Nations (U.N.) General Assembly on topics related to peacebuilding with the state of Israel.

#### *1.5 Chapters and building of the thesis*

This thesis will begin with a presentation of the Palestinian Authority's history, creation, and status quo in chapter 2. In chapter 3 I will present the theoretical framework of this thesis, as well as present theories on selected topics, such as Palestinian identity and Martyrdom in the

Palestinian sphere. From here I will present the method in chapter 4 before I move on to chapter 5, where I will give a brief overview of the political situation of PA, PLO, and some of their institutions. It will subsequently be focusing on the official statements made by PA officials in the political dimension, domestically and internationally in the last decade. It also presents the Palestinian Authority Martyr's Fund, Palestinian children's safety, and Palestinian Prisoners Law No. 19. The findings of the study will be presented in chapter 6, and in chapter 7 discussion will be presented, before the conclusion is presented in chapter 8.

## 2 Background

In this chapter, I will present a brief part of the history of the Palestinian Authority, such as Fatah, PLO, and individuals of the Palestinian history. It will also give a brief introduction of the history and current update on the PLO and how it functions to such as Mahmoud Abbas, also known as Abu Mazen, and the previous leader Yassir Arafat.

This chapter is not intended to give a complete and comprehensive overview of the history of the region, or the parties involved. This chapter is rather an introduction to the context of the current situation and intends to provide a light overview of key historical events. While Fatah and the PLO are not the only groups that are partakers in the Palestinian history, as well as the political sphere, these groups are the most prominent in the West Bank, along with the Palestinian Authority, and which are the organization Mahmoud Abbas have been a partaker in their early beginnings, they are therefore the focus in this thesis.

### 2.1 Preface; *al-Qassam and al-Husaynī*

Sheikh 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam, has been seen as a father of Palestinian nationalism. After his death during a violent riot with the British mandate, his legacy was set as a hero, a man who fought and sacrificed his life in rebellion towards the domestic colonial powers (Sanagan, 2013). Though Palestinian scholars disagree on some points of al-Qassam's political ideology, it is a common agreement on his engagement in jihad against the West (Ibid).

Born and raised as a Sufi Muslim in Ottoman Syria, which later came under French control, al-Qassam engaged in preaching jihad against foreign threats. During the battle against the Italian invasion of Ottoman Africa in 1911, and the fall of the Hashemite Syria, he recruited men to armed battle and to join the *mujāhidin* against the French. After the fall of the great empire, he fled to Haifa, a city under British control. Haifa had become the largest community for Syrians in exile, many of them with death warrants from the French. The British noted that al-Qassam's preaching as an ulama in the area, was “calculated to stimulate a spirit of religious fanaticism” (Sanagan, 2013. p. 81). Al-Qassam was openly criticizing the British



authorities and the local leaders for not strongly fighting the colonial powers. He, with others, formed the Young Men's Muslim Association (Jam'iyyat al-Sbabäb al-Muslimin) which committed to a national movement and Islam. The organization trained youths and men in terror and jihadis cells started (Sanagan, 2013).

Historically, nationalist politics in Palestine started evolving in the 1900s and boosted in the aftermath of the Wailing Riots in 1929. Another well-known leader arose, al Häjj Amin al-Husayní, he caught the leadership in the city after the riots, as the Mufti of Jerusalem, and expanded his influence, power, friendship with the Mandate authorities (Sanagan, 2013). His strategy of Palestinian exceptionalism was to counter the claim that Palestine was a part of Greater Syria. By appeals towards Muslims globally, he stressed the importance of al-Haram al-Sharif to Islam, and the worldwide Muslim umma, and portrayed himself as a protector of the site (Ibid). It's been argued that the Mufti took advantage of the situation and used the fatal outcomes of the Wailing Wall riots to elevate his status in trying to get elected to the Islamic Congress in 1931 as a Caliph (Sanagan, 2013).

Al-Qassam grew his influence during the 1930s when he together with the Mufti's party, the President of the Palestine Arab Party, al Husayni, denounced the Balfour Declaration on its 8th anniversary, on a stage in Haifa. A proclamation was made towards Christians and Muslims across the world; the British inability to stop the Jewish immigration, which made a clear danger to Muslim and Christian holy sites (Ibid). Al-Qassam was later wanted for murdering a policeman on duty by the Brits. He died in the first violent clash between Arabs and British Mandate authorities. Many Arab leaders and most of the Arabic Press praised al-Qassam and his men, as martyrs and heroes who had sacrificed their lives for religion and the cause. Al Husayni, the Palestine Arab Party President, expressed in a High Commissioner meeting that he hoped that one day every Palestinian would become like the "Qassamites", the ones who got killed for religion and the cause (Sanagan, 2013. p. 36).

### **2.1.1 The Arab revolt in 1936-39**

The Arab Revolt from 1936-39 included boycotts, riots, demonstrations, and strikes, thousands left their jobs in protest. The Arab economy suffered immensely as a result of

businesses that shut down. The riots and violence in it led to hundreds of dead and thousands wounded (Schanzer, 2002). Hajj Amin al-Husayni, the mufti of Palestine, who also was the head of the Higher Arab Committee, was coordinating most of the riots. His most effective response to British rule and Jewish immigration, was violence writes Schanzer (2002). The moderate families and the traditional leadership which had ruled the areas for generations had a more moderate approach and sought a more diplomatic solution with partition. Due to the turmoil in the region, Robert Peel, head of the Palestine Royal Commission, tried to organize a feasible plan for the future in the British Mandate. A report by the commission proposed a partition of the territory where the Arabs would be given a dominant part of the land, and the Jews a smaller part of the land. Mifleget ha-‘Avoda ha-Yisra’elit (MAPAI, later Israel’s Labour Party<sup>1</sup>) led by Ben Gurion accepted the plan though with reservations, while the Arab leadership rejected it. The event led to a violent Arab revolt in 1937 (Cohen, 1977; Klieman, 1980; Morris, 2004). The Mufti Husayni and his followers launched a campaign of murder and intimidation against Arab mayors and leaders who opposed them. Those who sympathized with Jews, or were suspected of collaborating stood in fear of being assassinated (Schanzer, 2002).

## ***2.2 Palestinian Authorities***

According to the plan made in 1947 by the UN, Un Partition Plan<sup>2</sup>, most of the area of the West Bank was set for inclusion to a future Arab State. The Palestinians were offered land areas that are half of what is today's Israel. The plan and land offer made by the UN General Assembly were rejected by the Palestinian representatives, along with a wider spectrum of Arab leaders in the region. They did not accept a Jewish state. Israel accepted the offer and established the state of Israel in May 1948 (Abu-Zayyad, 2002; Maoz, 2002; Salem, 2002).

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<sup>1</sup> Mapai was formed in 1930 through the merger of two older labour parties, Ahdut ha-‘Avoda (“Unity of Workers”), founded in 1919, and ha-Po‘el ha-Tza‘ir (“Young Worker”), founded in 1905, led by David Ben-Gurion. Retrieved at <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Israel-Labour-Party>

<sup>2</sup> United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181, November 29, 1947. Retrieved at [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/res181.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/res181.asp)

The day after Israel declared its independence in 1948, neighboring countries invaded Israel and went on a full-armed attack on the new nation. The neighboring countries were Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. In that war, Israel expanded its territory by almost 20 %, including parts of Jerusalem. The kingdom of Jordan conquered the area of the West Bank and took control over East Jerusalem, 2 years later, Jordan annexed the West Bank (Younes, 2020). The annexation was recognized by Iraq, Pakistan, and Britain. Egypt took control of Gaza. During this war nearly 650 000 Palestinians fled into the West Bank and neighboring countries, at the same time over 800 000 Jews from neighboring countries such as Syria, Lebanon and Jordan sought refuge in the state of Israel after being expelled from their Arab homelands (Shiblaq, 2009). The Jewish refugees from the neighboring countries were quickly assimilated into the newborn state, but most of the Palestinians did not get assimilated in the same manner in the neighboring countries, resulting in refugee camps<sup>3</sup>. The Arab League advised its member nations in 1965, to not grant the refugees citizenship, only economic and social rights, to maintain their refugee status (Shiblaq, 2009).

### 2.2.1 Al-Nakba

The establishment of the state of Israel and the displacement of people was a milestone in Palestinian history and became known as the “Al-Nakba” (‘Nakba’), meaning the “catastrophe” for the Palestinian people (Strazzari & Tholens, 2010, p. 116-117). At the end of the 48’ war no Jews were able to stay in the West Bank under Jordanian rule, neither the areas in the East Jerusalem and the Jewish Quarter of the old city (Neuer & Rovner, 2019; Dershowitz, 2003). At the same time, Arabs which had stayed in the territories given to Israel

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<sup>3</sup>“(According to UN General Assembly’s Resolution 194, 1948, ‘refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date.’ The resolution explicitly sets condition on upon a willingness to live peacefully. The resolution is not binding as those made by the UN Security Council). Comparable estimates put the number of Jewish refugees expelled from neighbouring Arab countries during the post-1948 years at 850,000. UN General Assembly Resolution 194, paragraph 11”.

by the UN plan, and the areas that concurred during the independence war, were given Israeli citizenship and there on became a part of the Israeli state and society on the same levels as the Jewish population (Ibid). Not before the Six-Day War and Israel defeated Jordan, were Jews able to return to areas in Jerusalem.

Following the year of 1948, the Palestinians organized several and various political groups. The Palestinians who fled during the 48' war became symbols as well as part takers of the Palestinian movement. Several joined in different guerilla groups in the 1950 and 60s. These went from being ordinary farmers to guerilla soldiers and became a sort of an emblem of the revolution "Twarā" against the state of Israel (Schanzer, 2008). The militant or guerilla fighters got the name *fedayeen* which some scholars translate as "self-sacrificers" (Rea & Wright, 1997. p. 43), or "Palestinian terrorist groups" (Gilbert, 2005. p. 58).

### **2.2.2 The establishing of Fatah**

The Palestinian National Liberation Movement known as "Fatah"- فتح was founded in 1958 in Kuwait by eight Palestinian activists, Yasser Arafat and Mahmoud Abbas were among them. The word Fatah means "opening" and is the reversed acronym of "Harakat al-Tahrir al-Watani al-Filastini", which goes under the English name of the "Palestinian National Liberation Movement" (Schanzer, 2008, p. 17).

Fatha became the most prominent group during the decay, many of the groups held Islamic teachings as the core, while the Fatah movement focused mainly on being a nationalistic organization with the set goal of establishing a secular Palestinian state (Ibid), many of their members were though highly influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood. In 1964, their constitution was written and published, where they specified that the Palestinian state would be established after the demolishing of the Zionist state by "armed public revolution" ("The Fatah Constitution (1964)", n.d.; "The Fateh Constitution", n.d., Article 17).

### 2.2.3 PLO

In 1964 the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was established. The organization was set to be an umbrella organization for the different Palestinian national movements and to keep the different activist movements under control. It was established formally by the Arab League in their summit conference in Jerusalem in 1964 (Hamid, 1975. p. 11), the Egyptian President at the time Gamal Abdel Nasser was the sponsor of the formation of the PLO. Fatah, with Yassir Arafat as the leader, became a member and soon turned out to take a leading role within the organization among the different guerrilla groups (Strazzari & Tholens, 2010, p. 117). From before, the Council of the Arab League had passed a resolution on its thirty-four session in 1959, “to provide for the creation of a Palestinian army in the Arab countries” (Hamid, 1975. p. 10). Though, it is argued that the PLO was established “with the purpose of the liberation of Palestine through armed struggle” (Tawil, 2020; Hamid, 1975). Several resolutions were adopted during the 64’ session, these included fields such as financial, political, administrative, and military. The National Council was set to meet regularly and became the ultimate sovereign body within PLO, and represented Palestine in further Arab Summit Conferences (Hamid, 1975).

In 1967, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) was established by George Habash. The group became famous for aircraft hijackings in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The group stood and stands strongly opposed to the existence of the state of Israel (Tawil, 2020). It states according to its website, that they are a "political, militant party that works to educate, organize and lead the Palestinian masses toward restoring their national rights... on the road to liberating the entire Palestinian land." This is done by "practices all forms of political, intellectual, peaceful, economic and violent struggle, including the armed struggle" (Tawil, 2020).

After the war, in 1968, the Popular Liberation Forces was created by the PLO and was set as their guerrilla unit. Further, an agreement was set between PLO, Fateh, and the PFLP organizing the seats in the National Councils (Hamid, 1975. p. 11).

#### **2.2.4 The Six-day war**

In 1967, another war broke out, the Six-day war (Gus, 2011. p. 58). The war came as a result of an Egyptian marine blockade of the Straits of Tiran that hindered Israelis ships passing into the bay of Eilat, Israeli territory. At the same time, several Arab nations had placed their armies along the Israeli borders. The PLO's leader at that time, Ahmed Shukeiry, stated in the days before the attack on Israel: "whoever (Israelis) survives will stay in Palestine. I reckon none of them will survive" (Sachar, 2007, p. 631). The days before the war is described as the most perilous time in Israel's existence (ibid. p 631). Israel stood in a defense-war against neighboring countries, this time Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. The outcome was that Israel acquired from Jordan the control over East Jerusalem and the West Bank, as well as gaining control of the Sinai Peninsula (Egypt), the Golan Heights (Syria), and Gaza.

The same day as the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) took control over Jerusalem with the Temple Mount where the al-Aqsa mosque is residing and the Dome of the Rock, Israel gave the control of the Temple Mount back to Jordan. Jewish religious leaders had warned against entering the place, which led to the return of the area (Inbari, 2007). This to prevented further religious escalations, and the state of Israel has left the control of the site to the Islamic Waqf since 1967 (Ramon, 2002; Reiter, 2002).

#### **2.2.5 Palestine National Council**

In early 1969, Palestine National Council (PNC) held its next session, in which Yasser Arafat, the leader of Fateh, was elected Chairman of the new Executive Committee. The function of the Executive Committee was distributed to four major areas as follows;

It represents the Palestinian people officially; it supervises the various bodies of the PLO; it issues directives, draws up programs, and takes decisions on the organization of the PLO, provided these do not contradict the National Charter; finally, it executes the financial policy of the PLO and prepares its budget. Generally speaking, it conducts all the PLO responsibilities in accordance with the general plans and resolutions passed by the National Council. (Hamid, 1975. p.16)

Furthermore:

The Palestine National Fund receives all revenues of and finances the PLO according to an annual budget prepared by the Executive Committee and approved by the National Council; it develops the Fund's revenues; and it supervises the expenditures of the PLO and its organs (Hamid, 1975. p.16).

At the beginning of January 1970, Fatah established the Association of Workshops for the Children of Palestinian Martyrs. PLO assumes responsibility for the welfare of the children where their father's aka commandos, had been killed in battle (Schanzer, 2002).

### *2.3 PLO and Yasser Arafat*

Yasser Arafat (1929- 2004) (aka Abu Ammar) was among the men who established the Fatah movement and party. Arafat was according to his birth certificate born and raised in Egypt (Gus, 2011. p. 57). He, himself maintained throughout his life that he was born in Jerusalem (Ibid. p. 58). By the year of 1957, Arafat had started an underground movement in Egypt which became the first movement of the Fatah. The group founded a magazine that called for the eradication of Israel, called; Our Palestine: The Call to Life (Ibid. p. 58). 12 years later, he was elected to be the Chairman of PLO in 1969 (Gus, 2011. p. 58). Fatah was at that time a militant organization engaged in armed struggle against Israel, the result was terrorist attacks against civilians and not armed struggle against the IDF (Addicott, 2014). In the year of 1969, Fatah had carried out over 2,432 guerrilla attacks on Israel (BBC, 2009).

Fatah criticized the PLO for not being stronger against Israel (Hamid, 1975). During his time of leadership in Fatah and the PLO, Arafat with the other cooperative groups, engaged in hundreds of attacks and kidnappings in 26 countries, many of them described as pure evil and bloody terrorist attacks. (Laffin, 1982. p. 18).

The PLO under Yasser Arafat leadership established themselves in Jordan in the '70s and took control over areas inside the kingdom, escalating in murders, robberies, and rapes of Jordan's civilians done by the members of the PLO (Katz, 1993 p. 34) At the same time, the PLO carried out several terrorist attacks on Israel which led Israel on counter-attacks, the Jordan

army also joined the Israeli side against the PLO (ibid, p.18) King Hussein of Jordan grew tired of the massive terrorism done by the PLO in his kingdom and established an army of Bedouins and went for a bloody war against the PLO in 1970, the war is now known as the Black September, both sides ended up in treating their enemies in horrific ways (Katz, 1993. p. 37; Gus, 2011. p. 58, 491). After weeks of a cruel war that affected the civilians massively, Hussein's troops manage to push the PLO out of Jordan. From there, the PLO established itself in Lebanon (Katz, 1993 p. 34).

### **2.3.1 PLO in Lebanon**

PLO had from the beginnings of the 60's fractions in Lebanon, but after the expelling from Jordan, their main base became Lebanon. Here the PLO expanded its organization and continued its armed struggle against Israel. Though it was a significant time for PLO due to international recognition and political gain, the outcome was a large quantity of violence and displacement of people (Becker,1984). PLO achieved almost a mini-state within the country, and during time gained control over a huge part of the land by the hands of PLO's police force and military, it became a very complex situation (Cobban, 1984). In 1972, the Munich Olympic games Israeli athletes were murdered by Palestinian terrorists (Gus, 2011, p. 461; Rosenberg, 2020).

In 1974, another group evolved, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) which quickly became a member of the PLO. The most violent attack performed by this group, was the massacre of 27 schoolchildren and teachers, additionally wounding 134 people, in 1974. The mass shooting was later known as the Ma'alot massacre (BBC, 2004). Civil war broke out in Lebanon, and PLO abruptly got forced out of the country when Israel invaded the southern parts of Lebanon, from there, PLO moved its base to Tunisia (Khalidi, 2007).

### **2.3.2 Hamas**

In the year of 1987, the group Muslim Brotherhood established "Hamas"- حماس the Islamic Resistance Movement. In August 1988, the Covenant of the group was published. Hamas refused (and refuses) any political negotiations or agreements with Israel and claimed they



were "... the legitimate and sole representative of the Palestinian people" (Hasson, 2010, p. 397) Fatah had slowly changed from its revolutionary actions, and Hamas came as a response to this evolvement. Hamas also embraced Islamic values to a higher degree than Fatah, such as family, education, and morality, which PLO sought to lack (Schanzer, 2008, p. 31) Hamas and Islamic Jihad had a striking more religious influence and approach to the liberation and did not become members of PLO, they stood opposed to the secular mandate of the PLO<sup>4</sup>. The Covenant of Hamas, clearly states its direct conflict with the state of Israel, in which its goal was and is to eliminate it (Schanzer, 2008, p. 27). The covenant of Hamas can be said to be revolutionary which glorifies violence. It also used a religious language and rhetoric unlike Fatah, in which it "declares that "Allah is its target, the Prophet is its model" (Schanzer, 2008, p. 6). Furthermore, Hamas declares that; "Jihad is its path and death for the sake of Allah is the loftiest of its wishes." (Ibid, p.7) The radicalized ideology of Hamas prompted Islamists to violence against secular Palestinians Israeli civilian and military targets (Schanzer, 2002). Collaborations with Fatah have never been realized due to the ideological divide between the two groups. It became more evident when Arafat took a more diplomatic stand, and participated in Madrid Conference for Peace in 1991, before he went into direct talks with Israel in 1993, in the Oslo Process.

## *2.4 The first intifada*

The first intifada, "shaking off" broke suddenly out in 1987 in Gaza after an IDF truck crashed with a car with civilians, killing four Palestinians. The riots came as a response to the stagnation in the Palestinian society and economy (Schanzer, 2002). Jordan had for a decade invested millions of dollars to boost the economy of the West Bank, as well as funds for schools, clinics, religious foundations, and other social services, but unlike Israel, the territories still struggled. Many turned to the ideology of fundamentalist Islam to mobilize against Israel since the Islamists refused to negotiate (Schanzer, 2002). Factions of Palestinian political groups in the West Bank formed Unified National Leadership of the Uprising

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<sup>4</sup> "PLO consists of a variety of organizations, and the members today are Fatah, PFLP, Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), Palestinian People's Party, Palestinian Liberation Front, Arab Liberation Front, As-Sa'iqa, Palestinian Democratic Union and Palestinian Popular Struggle Front" (Tawil, 2020).

(UNLU) to promote organized violence against Israel (Schanzer, 2008). The leaders of PLO in Tunis were taken off guard, but soon took control over the UNLU and leading the faction in the struggle for Palestine. A significant group of the intifada was Force 17. The group was designated as the personal security force of the PLO's leadership, though, was involved in and carried out attacks against Israelis as well as anti-PLO Palestinians (Pina, 2006. p. 4). This group was most active in carrying attacks in the '80s and was not reluctant to engage in violence towards civilians. Hamas rose in influence and power in the territories and did not join the PLO (Schanzer, 2008).

During the escalations of the riots and violent demonstrations, the anti-Jordan sentiment rose among the Palestinians residing in the Jordan-controlled area. In 1988, Jordan's King Husayn retaliated Jordan's claim to the West Bank. For 40 years, the residing population in the territory had been able to vote in Jordanian elections and had been considered as Jordanian citizens, with Jordanian passports (Schanzer, 2002). Those rights were withdrawn as a result.

During the intifada, the use of children as soldiers emerged among the Palestinian organizations. They were called the "Children of the stones" (Schanzer, 2002). Children were divided into age groups, and given tasks accordingly, to the front lines to fight the Israeli soldiers (Ibid). The Palestinian secular society, as well as the Christian Arabs, suffered during the rise of the popularity of Islamism in the territories and during the intifada. Many Christian and secular Palestinians sought refuge in the U.S, others joined the intifada in fear of the vandalization done by the fundamentalist organizations (Schanzer, 2002).

## ***2.5 The Oslo Accord, September 13, 1993.***

After years of violence, riots, and disputes between the different factions of the Palestinian groups, the PLO took a new turn. Arafat accepted Resolution 181, of the UN General Assembly, which included the outline for an establishment of an Israeli and a Palestinian state. Arafat renounced the so long guerilla tactics of the organization and called for a peace conference aiming to discuss the UN Security Council resolution 242 (Schanzer, 2008). He stated that he accepted Israel, but wanted Israel to return to the 1948 borders. It was the same UN partition plan the PLO previously had rejected, but Arafat declared Palestinian independence in November 1988 (Lesch, 2006, p. 37; Schanzer, 2008). The same year, 1988,

the state of Jordan renounced the claims over the area of the West Bank. Until 1994 Israel had administrative control of the West Bank and Gaza. In 1993, September, Israel and Palestinian representatives agreed on a Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements named Oslo I<sup>5</sup>. It was a historic turning point for the relationship between the Arabs and Israelis. Here Israel agreed to recognize Yasser Arafat as a partner in the peace talks and recognized the PLO as the representative for the Palestinian people (Gus, 2011. p.463.). The parties came to agreements on the Gaza Strip as well as the area of Jericho in 1994, the Gaza-Jericho Agreement. This agreement established and transferred power to an elected Palestinian Authority. In return the Palestinians recognized Israel's right to exist, renouncing all use of terrorism and its calling for Israel's destruction (Gus, 2011. p.198).

The accord laid the grounds for a 5-year plan. It envisioned several step-by-step acts to compel the agreements, as well as build trust and partnership between the two parties. The Palestinians would amend the sections of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) charter that called for Israel's destruction, cooperate with Israel to fight against terrorism, and enforce police in their controlled territories. In stages Israel would withdraw its presence in Gaza and parts of the West Bank, the Palestinians would govern the areas Israel withdrew from with an elected authority (PBS Frontline, 2002). When the five-year term ended, further negotiations would be discussed concerning vital issues as the border, Jerusalem, settlements, and the Palestinian refugee's claims (Ben-Meir, 2008; Gal, 2008).

In 1994, Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, won the Nobel Peace Prize for their roles in the Oslo accord. Yassir Arafat returned from Tunis to the West Bank in 1994.

### **2.5.1 Oslo II**

The Oslo II came into action in 1995. This agreement established the new Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority known as the Palestinian Authority, the PA, with an elected President and an elected Council, the Palestine Legislative Council, PLC. These replaced the authorities made by the Gaza-Jericho Agreement. It was the second major step in the Oslo process, Israel withdrew its security forces from the largest cities in the West Bank. (Gus, 2011).

The PLC held its first election in January of 1996, where Fatah won the majority and became the leading party of the Palestinian Government with several members in governmental positions (al-Omari, 2020).

### 2.5.2 Violations of agreements

But the implementation of the Oslo Accord caused several severe crises which emerged during the period. Heavy waves of terror and violence were carried out. The accords had no resolution or preparedness for these crises and resulted in many setbacks in the process. Arafat did not uphold the treaty and was accused of inciting uproar. In a speech held to the security forces in Gaza it was recorded Arafat had stated;

They will fight for Allah, and they will kill and be killed, and this is a solemn oath...Our blood is cheap compared with the cause which has brought us together and which at moments separated us, but shortly we will meet again in heaven...Palestine is our land and Jerusalem is our capital (Ma'ariv, 1996)

Later, in a speech held in the Arab League in Cairo, 1997, Arafat called for the redemption of Jerusalem saying;

I now see the walls of Jerusalem, the mosques of Jerusalem, the churches of Jerusalem. My brothers! With blood and with spirit we will redeem you, Palestine! Yes, with blood and with spirit we will redeem you, Palestine!' (New York Times, 1997).

The same year Arafat held a speech in the town of Tulkarm, in the West Bank, to the Palestinian people;

We know only one word: jihad, jihad, jihad. When we stopped the intifada, we did not stop the jihad for the establishment of a Palestinian state whose capital is Jerusalem. And we are now entering the phase of the great jihad prior to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state whose capital is Jerusalem (New York Times, 1997).

Arafat had shifted in his rhetoric towards the peace process and his path with cooperation with the state of Israel.

### **2.5.3 Camp David & the Second Intifada (2000-2005)**

With the return of Yassir Arafat to the West Bank in 1994, the territories experienced several terrorist attacks. With more than seven years of attempts of peace talks between the PA and Israel, Yassir Arafat had turned his back on the Oslo Process. But, the US with President Clinton brokered negotiations at Camp David with the two parties in 2000. Israel with the prime Minister Barak, offered to “hand over” approximately 96 % of the areas of the disputed land in the West Bank and whole of Gaza, as well as absorbing tens of thousands of refugees into the state of Israel. Yassir Arafat rejected the offer (Hassner, 2009; Tovy, 2003). Shortly after, the PA launched the al-Aqsa Intifada or the Second Intifada, a campaign of terror, lasting more than four years and cost thousands of civilians' lives. The historic mission of Clinton, Barak, and Arafat had failed (Addicott, 2014; Pressman, 2003; Ross, 2004).

The Intifada lasted into the year 2005. One of the member organizations in the PLO, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, was one of the main actors of the Second Intifada and carried out violent attacks against civilians with horrific outcomes. (Pina, 2006. p. 4; Gus, 2011. p.199). Over 5000 Palestinians and 1000 Israelis died before the intifada ended, and some stability was restored (Gus, 2011. p.463). It's estimated that more than 250 children in the average age of ten years old, died as a result of the uprising (Schanzer, 2002). According to Schanzer (2002) most of the children who engaged in the activities were placed in the frontlines, often encouraged by their families and relatives. The PA had trained children and youth on how to use weapons, such as automatic rifles. The PA did also offer incentives to the families if a child was hurt (\$1,000) or killed (\$2,000) (Schanzer, 2002).

The goal of the attacks was to force Israel to withdraw and submit to the Palestinian demand. The U.S. administration condemned the waves of Palestinian suicide bombings and the ongoing support and coordination of terror by Yasir Arafat and other members of the Palestinian leadership in a resolution made in 2002. The resolution passed by a vote of 352-21, stated:

Demands that the Palestinian Authority fulfill its commitment to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure in the Palestinian areas”, as well as “Expresses: (1) solidarity with Israel as it takes necessary steps to provide security to its people by dismantling the terrorist infrastructure in the Palestinian areas; and (2) commitment to Israel's right to self-defense and support for additional U.S. assistance<sup>5</sup> (U.S 107<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2002).

Arafat on his turn, repeatedly stated that he had no control over the factions of the PLO carrying out attacks against civilians. A commander of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade later openly admitted that the brigade was a part of the Fatah and that Yasser Arafat had control over the brigade (Kalman, 2002). It was argued by Forbes magazine that Arafat with the PLO had a fortune that was estimated to be \$300 million in hidden offshore accounts alone. The Forbes further stated that;

\$5.5 billion in international aid that has flowed into the PA since 1994. Arafat “appears to have overseen virtually all disbursements, from \$600 payments to alleged terrorists and \$1,500 in ‘tuition’ for security officers, to \$10 million, reportedly paid by a company controlled by friends of Arafat, for a 50-ton shipment of weapons from Iran (Vardi, 2003)

The recipients of the money were the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, among others. An investigation done by BBC reported, that Fatah had two sections, one military, and one political wing. The al-Aqsa group was under the control of Arafat and was designated as the military wing of Fatah. Despite Arafat's claims of renouncing terrorism, the source said Arafat was encouraging it and financing it (BBC, 2003). The Palestinian organizations were responsible for the suicide attacks against Israeli civilians and soldiers. The al-Aqsa Martyrs

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<sup>5</sup> United States House of Representatives in Resolution 392 of the 107th Congress (May 2, 2002) 129 (passed by a vote of 352-21),130 made specific findings and conclusions: Passed House amended (05/02/2002) Expresses: (1) solidarity with Israel as it takes necessary steps to provide security to its people by dismantling the terrorist infrastructure in the Palestinian areas; and (2) commitment to Israel's right to self-defense and support for additional U.S. assistance. Condemns the recent wave of Palestinian suicide bombings and the ongoing support and coordination of terror by Yasir Arafat and other members of the Palestinian leadership. Demands that the Palestinian Authority fulfill its commitment to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure in the Palestinian areas. Expresses concern that Arafat's actions are not those of a viable partner for peace. Urges all Arab states to declare their unqualified opposition to all forms of terrorism, particularly suicide bombing, and all parties in the region to pursue peace in the Middle East. Commends the President for his leadership in addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Encourages the international community to take action to alleviate the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people. Retrieved at; <https://www.congress.gov/bill/107th-congress/house-resolution/392>

Brigades has been designated as a terrorist organization by the US. Together with the Abu Ali Mustapha Brigades, the armed wing of the PFLP, it “has claimed responsibility for several suicide attacks against Israel since September 2000” (Tawil, 2020).

In November 2004, Yassir Arafat died.

## *2.6 The governing by Mahmoud Abbas*

Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) undertook the position of the head of the Palestinian Authority in 2005, after Arafat deceased. Abbas was born in Safed and raised in Damascus after the 1948 war. He studied law in Damascus and as previously mentioned, was a partaker in the establishment of both Fatah and the PLO, and an active member and leader ever since. He later completed a Ph.D. degree in Moscow with a dissertation on the "secret relationship between Zionism and Nazism." (Litvak & Webman, 2003). A book was published based on his doctoral dissertation in 1984, sponsored by the PLO, whereas Holocaust is described as a Zionist invention (Litvak & Webman, 2003).

Abbas was appointed as secretary-general in the PLO in 1996, in 2003 he became prime minister. Shortly after the announcement of Arafat's death, PLO's executive committee held a meeting and Abbas was endorsed as the new leader of PLO (al-Omari, 2020. p. 3).

Israel withdrew civilians and military presence from Gaza in 2005 handing over the control to the PA. PLC held an election in 2006, where Hamas won the majority and formed a government with the leader of Hamas (Schanzer, 2008). Ismail Haniyeh was installed as the Prime Minister of the PA. A fragile agreement was made between Fatah and Hamas. The two parties shortly ended up in violent clashes between them, resulting in Hamas taking full control over Gaza in 2007 (Schanzer, 2008.; al-Omari, 2020). More than 600 Palestinians were killed in the clashes between Hamas and Fatah (Reuters, 2007). Abbas dissolved the formed unity government between the two parties and organized a new emergency administration in the territories of the West Bank (Schanzer, 2008). Hamas protested to this as they had been the winners of the majority in the election, but the international community has ever since treated the government formed by Abbas after the 2006 election, as a legitimate government.

### 2.6.1 New peace proposals

The previous prime minister of Israel, Ehud Olmert, offered a deal Abbas in 2008, a proposal of peace, which included that Israel would withdraw from around 94 % of the area Israel controlled in the West Bank and Israel, to make a way/ passage between Gaza and the West Bank. The deal consisted of an equal land swap. Olmert also proposed to divide Jerusalem and integrate several thousand Palestinians(refugees) into the state of Israel (Federman, 2015.; Lavie, 2015). Abbas withdrew from the ongoing peace talks in 2008 and later refused the offer, turned the offer down. The year after in 2009, the official Presidential term was over, though Abbas extended his term. Benjamin Netanyahu (Prime minister Israel in 2009) offered to resume to peace talks with Abbas in 2009, Abbas rejected Israel's offer. In a speech held in 2010 in an Arab League meeting, Abbas stated he was in favor if the nations wanted to go to war with Israel, saying; "If you want war, and will fight Israel [with us], we are in favor." (Marcus & Zilberdik, 2010; Arutz Sheva, 2010).

Further, in the following year, the Obama administration, with U.S special envoy Gorge Mitchell, tried to engage the PA with Abbas into talks with Israel, Abbas refused to sit down in the same room as Israel. The following year Fatah declared war on "normalizations" with Israel saying they guarded peace talks with Israel as useless. Instead, Fatah sought reconciliation with Hamas for the first time since 2007 (Schanzer, 2008). The same year President Abbas requested the U.N to recognize the independence of a unilaterally declared Palestinian state. Several world leaders spoke out against this, among them President Barack Obama, saying it was a counterproductive act of the Palestinians without recognition of Israel and the peacebuilding.

For the Palestinians, efforts to delegitimize Israel will end in failure. Symbolic actions to isolate Israel at the United Nations in September won't create an independent state. Palestinian leaders will not achieve peace or prosperity if Hamas insists on a path of terror and rejection. And Palestinians will never realize their independence by denying the right of Israel to exist (Obama, 2011).

The PLC has not since been in session. Negotiations between Hamas and Fatah have been initiated to achieve reconciliation, and agreements to form a unity government especially in the years 2014 and 2017, but failed. Neither of them recognizes each other's rule over these



territories. As an outcome of this dispute, President Abbas has restricted and continues to restrict supplies of goods and various services, and tax funds to the administration of Hamas in Gaza. Abbas was re-elected as the President of Fatah in 2016. The party had then not held a conference since 2009. Abbas's term ended in 2009, but his term was extended by the PLO's Central Council (al-Omari, 2020.p. 4).

### **2.6.2 Current situation**

The Palestinian Authority is a semi-autonomous entity that controls most of the Palestinian population in the West Bank. In formality the PA does control the Gaza Strip, but just as a formality since Hamas has taken control.

As a result of one of the interim agreements made through the Oslo Accord, security cooperation between the Palestinian Authority Security Forces, PASF, and the Israel Defense Force, IDF was set. This agreement still stands today despite unrest and instability during the decades, it provides stability for both sides and their citizens. However, the IDF carries out incursions on a daily basis into the territories of the PA, in order to prevent terror attempts, and arrests individuals who have committed terror attacks who hide inside the PA-controlled areas (Kuperwasser & Gerber, 2020).

In Palestinian nationalism, Yassir Arafat has been seen as a messianic figure. However, internationally his way of ruling and leading, especially during the time PLO resided in Lebanon, is very much disputed. He has also been seen as a very corrupt leader, by stealing money (international aid) from his people. From years of 1995 to 2000, there were found signs of extreme accumulation of private wealth in Arafat's household. Over 300 million dollars had been diverted from the PA's economy, mostly upheld by international foreign aid, into "an undisclosed Swiss bank account" which "can no longer be traced" (Gilmore, 2003). It was also said that he "handed out \$20 million a month to his security forces in cash" (Gilmore, 2003). Investigations estimated that Arafat had accumulated 10 billion dollars over the years of 1993-2000, where 6 billion had derived as aid from the U.S, Japan, and European countries (Dan, 2002).

The overtake of Abbas and the death of Arafat have led to a current improvement. Under the territories it controls, the PA operates with some coordination with Israel with security, to maintain internal order and the prevention of terrorist attacks. But still, the PA supports the popular resistance which will be presented to a higher degree through this thesis. The PA has received recognition as a political entity by many countries, though many of them do not recognize the PA as a sovereign state. There are formalized diplomatic relations with the Palestinian Authority. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), has had observer status in the General Assembly since 1974, which implies a seat and allowed to speak in the meetings, though not a voter status. By the year 1988, the delegation of PLO became designated formally to “Palestine” under the terms of General Assembly Resolution 43/177 (Phillips, 2011. p. 28). This “acknowledged the Palestinian declaration of statehood in November 2008” (Ibid), which also gave the delegation the possibility to have “its communications issued and circulated as official U.N. documents” (Ibid).

Countless attempts have been done by the international community to negotiate and create plans for the settlements and to meet the demand raised by the Palestinians to create a homeland. However, the plans and negotiations have been rejected by the Palestinian Authority. There are until this day no Jews or Jewish community in the Palestinian-controlled territories, however, there are several hundreds of Arabs in the Israeli Defense Force, and prominent Arab persons as politicians, political parties, judges, etc. in Israel (Neuer & Rovner, 2019).

The PA is currently suffering within its own society, losing legitimacy among the population. Recent polls show that a majority of Palestinians see the PA as corrupt, and half of the population regards the PA as a liability for the people. Half of the people have a mistrust of the efficacy of PA’s judiciary (al-Omari, 2020. p.4).

## *2.7 Summary*

I have in this chapter given a brief introduction to the history of the Palestinian Authority, the main political factions such as Fatah, PLO, and some of the main partakers of the Palestinian history. It has also given a brief update on the current situation of the PLO and how it

functions to such as Mahmoud Abbas, also known as Abu Mazen, the current president of the PA.

### 3 Theoretical framework

In this chapter, I will present the different theories selected according to the findings of the research. The theories I have chosen are identity and religion, the identity of heroes and victims, martyrs; al-shahid before I will end with the theory of dangerous speech. After each theory, I will present research done by others related to the topic. These are Palestinian identity, Palestinian historical portrait of heroes and victims, martyrdom in the Palestinian sphere and to the end, I will present incitement to violence during the British mandate.

#### 3.1 *Identity and religion*

Literature defines identity both as a general and specific topic. Elbedour et al. (1997) argue that identity can be said to be "...the vehicle through which individuals understand and act upon their environments" (Elbedour et al. 1997 p.218), describing identity not as a set notion, but as an active process. The authors define identity as a "cognitive scheme", or a process of knowledge acquisition (Ibid. p.219). Cooley argues that the pursuit of meaning is a significant part of the concept of identity. By this meaning that identity is a 'function' that serves to give "... us adjustment to, and power over, the conditions under which we live" (Cooley, 1926. p.59) Identity gives us an internal and external history of who we are, where we come from, as well as where we belong. Furthermore, Elbedour explains identity construction as a competitive process between two or more groups, where one group actively tries to distinguish itself from the other group and groups (Elbedour et al. p. 20). A group often understands itself in the relation to another group.

While the Western world has gone through a secularization process aca modernization of the national state and its relation towards religion, other parts of the world have not in the same manner. In the western world, religion has taken a more privatized role than the previous collective and public one. In more traditional cultures "religion is experienced in the collective sphere" (Weinberg & Pedahzur, 2004. p. 14). Here religion is still part of both the national identity as well in all levels of society and can be seen as a collective identity tied to the nation and society in much deeper levels than the Western contemporary world. Weinberg & Pedahzur argues that the concept of choosing religion "and preference in religious matters" is rather "a modern phenomenon". Though "in most traditional societies, religion is not a

matter of choice, but of birth, leading to automatic acceptance” (Ibid. p.14). Children born in contemporary Norway by ethnic Norwegian parents, will not automatically be viewed as Christian as it could be 50 years ago, since the identity of the Norwegian state is arguable no longer a Christian nation per se, whilst children born in other regions of the world and cultures, would more often be defined as Hindu, Muslim, or Orthodox Christian according to their parents, due to the identity is linked to religion. Geertz presents religion as a system of symbols that provide meaning for people; "a world view capable of providing answers to human problems and an ethos telling people how they should act” (Geertz, 1973. p. 90). Religion can also be understood and used as an ideological factor, or element, and be a part of a greater social understanding, according to Kiernan (Kiernan, 2014. p. 26). Religion, holy sites, and history to land are often strongly linked to identity and unity, but they also can bring division. Kiernan addresses issues related to topics such as “race/religion, expansion and idealization /idolizations” which are all ideological factors that can be used as a tool to lead to violence (Kiernan, 2014. p. 26). For example, the Saami people in the Northern parts of Scandinavia and Russia, though different religions, the traditions, and feeling of belonging to the land, gives a strong unity to the Saami population identity across the different national borders and the difference in the Saami language. Though between the Turks and the Armenians at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, both religion and ethnicity brought division, while both parts had a strong sense of belonging to the land and the identity to it. The feeling of belonging to a land, and territorial decline is and has been, a cause for wars in centuries past. As Kiernan describes it; “have lost territories they have historically rights to claim” (Kiernan, 2014, p. 32). But human history has also been filled with religious violence. In the past recent century, there has been a decline in religious conflicts, but religious violence does still exist, and a rise in terrorism has occurred globally (Weinberg et al, 2004). Juergensmeyer address in the book *Terror in the Mind of God: The global rise of religious violence*, the issues connecting religion and violence. Although in his reasoning, religious violence and terror do occur more often combined with other reasons, such as social environmental and political factors (Juergensmeyer, 2017. p. 5). He argues that religion in itself cannot be seen as a cause in the direct link to violence, but rather a factor that can be used as a tool to intensify other elements in or to, a conflict. He states that “religion may not be the cause of the anger that leads to violence in most places around the world, but it can vastly complicate the way that anger is expressed” (Ibid). Acts of violence are often justified

through past religious events with violence, and stories from religious writings (Juergensmeyer, 2017. p. 6). In this way, the history of the religion affects its legacy and how conflicts may develop accordingly. Juergensmeyer continues and says that violence occurs within groups that perceive to be violated or under threat, as a reply to this, violence becomes an answer (Juergensmeyer, 2017. p. 11). Though this threat is seen to be legitimate to the insiders of the group, or the ones who sympathize with those who perceive to be under a threat or violation, it might not be real, argues Juergensmeyer, it might be more imaginary than real. He explains this thoroughly by calling it a cosmic war in religions. Political riots and social unjust can be intensified through spiritual eyes and viewpoints in which intertwined the conflict into somewhat of a cosmic dimension.

I call such images “cosmic” because they are larger than life. They evoke great battles of the legendary past, and they relate to metaphysical conflicts between good and evil. Notions of cosmic war are intimately personal but can also be translated to the social plane. Ultimately, though, they transcend human experience. What makes religious violence particularly savage and relentless is that its perpetrators have placed such religious images of divine struggle -cosmic war- in the service of worldly political battles. For this reason, acts of religious terror serve not only as tactics in a political strategy but also as evocations of a much larger spiritual confrontation (Juergensmeyer, 2017. p. 184).

Juergensmeyer defines here, the cosmic war as an “imagined battle between metaphysical forces- good and evil, right and wrong, order and chaos” (Juergensmeyer, 2017. p. 184). The cosmic war gives the picture of a spiritual war as much as a symbolic war. The enemies in the cosmic wars are often a state, a secular state, national groups, or other religious groups which need to be opposed, resisted, and combated. Most often through riots, struggles, revolutions, and violent attacks. By having the metaphysical dimension in the struggle, the fighters and resistance become like the soldiers on earth who fight against the forces of right and wrong. Hence, those violent attacks or terror attacks become therefore a moral act of deed. Though Juergensmeyer is blunt on the aspects of these battles are nothing less but imaginary (Juergensmeyer, 2017).

### 3.1.1 Palestinian identity

The establishment of the State of Israel and a Palestinian exodus is viewed as a crucial marker for Palestinian nationalism and identity. The ongoing conflict with Israel is a huge binding force that unites Palestinians. Khalidi Rashid says it predominately supersedes the opposing loyalties and potential identity conflicts between different socioeconomic classes, families, clans, religious groups, ideologies, and cultural traditions (Khalidi, 2010. p. 194). The ceaseless resistance and battle against the Zionists have brought clarity to the identity among Palestinian, as well as being influenced by pan-Arabism. However, who is and who is not a Palestinian, and the topic on specifically where the territory of Palestine is, has overall been clear since the establishment of the state of Israel (Khalidi, 2010.p. 194). Hamid (1975) views it that Palestinian activism seemed to be linked to the political trend which existed in the surrounding countries, such as the Ba'th movement, the Nasser-ism in Egypt, and the Arab Nationalists Movement. In the belief that these movements were solemnly committed to the Palestinian cause, most Palestinians saw the redemption of the Arab power through an Arab unity (Hamid, 1975). According to Seif (2009), the land of Palestine is viewed as sacred Islamic land, with the religious sites in Jerusalem and Hebron, seen as an integral part of the Muslim world.

### 3.2 *The identity of heroes and victims*

As Khalili discusses in the 2007 paper *Heroes and Martyrs of Palestine: The Politics of National Commemoration*, that all nationalist commemoration is associated with iconic images, objects, and persons (Khalili, 2007). Icons become a part of broader narrative of the nation, and nations are often portrayed as having an identity, a national character as Khalili describes it. The stories of nations are celebrated and commemorated in many different ways all over the world, from one generation to another, along with its history. The narrative of heroes or heroic alleges on;

interpreting all past events teleologically as the epic progress of revolutionary courage and envisions nationalist history hurtling towards an inevitable victory, the establishment of the nation-state in the statist narrative, or the liberation of society in the liberationist one (Khalili, 2007. p. 93).

Terhoeven discusses in his writings *Victimhood and Acknowledgement: The Other Side of Terrorism*, where he links heroism and victimhood. In societies where terrorism has grown or occurred, he explains the concept of “Troubles”, which is often used as a tool to justify the use of violence by the ones who feel they are victims:

The “Troubles” may be a special case – but even in cases with less clear-cut dividing lines rival narratives of victimhood is typical of terrorism since the use of violence is usually dressed up as a response to previous or ongoing violence by the opposite side, thereby reversing the roles of perpetrator and victim (Terhoeven, 2018. p.10).

Terhoeven is here saying that in occasions where less clarity of narrative between groups, violence can occur from one group to another, as a response to the narrative the group has. He continues his argument with;

The strategy of active self-victimization is equally typical for terrorist groups which hope to confer a higher status on their actions by putting their own lives on the line against the Leviathan of the state. This is not just true for suicide attacks, by now the almost “normal” form of attack. “Martyrs” are made in confrontation with the police, in hunger strikes, and in attempted assassinations, and they are usually remembered as heroes in sympathetic milieus and invoked to help close the ranks within the terrorist group itself (Terhoeven, 2018. p.10).

By this, he is arguing that individuals (hence, most typical for terrorist groups) who can be said to sacrifice something, or by placing their lives on the line against something greater than themselves, like a Leviathan state, becomes martyrs due to the narrative that they were victims from the beginning. By sacrificing or confronting the other, even through attempted assassinations as Terhoeven states, they will be remembered as heroes in the group they belonged to. While citing Karl-Heinz Höhn, who argues that the concept of victimhood is essential for delegitimizing violence and aggression. Höhn’s warning is “Wherever the concept is renounced, the phenomenon itself will soon be ignored. Cultural amnesia abounds and exculpatory arrangements will be in high demand.” (Terhoeven, 2018. p.13).

Terhoeven argues that victimhood “carries the intrinsic weight of religious traditions, themes, and motives” (Ibid), though factors such as economic and politics do have their impact, religion does according to Terhoeven, a huge part. As referred to Feldman, it is commonly for political conflicts that “violence and the traumatized body serve as the



vehicles by which history, ethnicity, and power become visualized and dramatized for ... political mobilization.” (Terhoeven, 2018. p.21).

This can be said to be in line with Juergensmeyer’s perspectives on the matter. He says;

This notion of a heroic, transforming death is a common motif in the communiqués of activists groups involved in terrorist acts around the world. Though the message was projected in cyberspace by the global jihadi community that supports ISIS, it is replicated by other movements in other formats. Hamas, for example, revered its suicide bombers on posters plastered on walls in Gaza and West Bank cities (Juergensmeyer, 2017. p.207).

Juergensmeyer pinpoints the issue of how death inside groups which includes terrorist activities, is being transformed and remembered as something more heroic and memorable. Implying that it is used as a tool in communication towards others to remember the sacrifice as a heroic act.

### **3.2.1 Palestinian historical portrait of heroes and victims**

The Palestinian Declaration of Independence do, according to Khalili (2007. p.91), reallege the accumulated rebellions and riots among the Palestinians as a part of the interminable national movement: “For what has been the unbroken chain of our people’s rebellions but the heroic embodiment of our will for national independence?” (Palestinian National Council 1988) (Khalili, 2007. p.91).

Khalili describes that everyone is becoming an audience for the nationalist movement, international as well as domestic, the audience is to be persuaded that the incessant history of revolt and riots “legitimizes the nationalist claims of the political factions and underscores their revolutionary commitment” (Ibid). The continuous commemoration can be seen as a performance of “self-assertion” in which it streamlines a raucous and consequential history that is tied together in a nationalistic narrative. When claimed a legacy of revolt and riots, the political organizations commemorate and also celebrate, all revolts and wars against the common enemy of the nation as historic occurrences “in which the existence and resilience of the nation are affirmed” (Khalili, 2007. p. 93).

As she writes;

By producing continuity between these distinct historical events, an essentialist identity of “us” and “them” is created, reinforcing the boundaries of the nation,

while the nationalist ideology obscures class differences, gender disparities and potential religious discords within the nation (Khalili, 2007. p.93).

Khalili explains that refugee camps (cities) have become militant and military bases instead of miserable places in the heroic Palestinian narrative. The camps, which today are cities, or part of cities in the West Bank, functions as forceful nationalistic symbols. The refugees are often imagined and viewed as armed and “fully mobilized”, become enhanced “archetypal Palestinian national” (Khalili, 2007. p. 94).

The narrative of the hero has armed resistance as the central topic in the Palestinian context. The primary symbol is the *fedayeen* guerrilla fighter with his Kalashnikov has set military resistance as a virtue;

Complex past events are disassembled into their constitutive elements, and those events that may speak of suffering or quotidian lives are pushed to the background, while heroism in battle is foregrounded. (Khalili, 2007. p. 95).

In this complex heroic narrative, the final victory is the main goal, in which all the losses and defeats are reinterpreted to victories. “Battles and massacres are the iconic events at the very center of Palestinian nationalist commemoration” (Khalili, 2007, p. 150).

Khalili explains that in the beginnings of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNWRA) production of schoolbooks, textbooks in history were perceived “to be deficient in depicting popular resistance to the British occupation and to Zionism”, in which led the PLO to produce extra material to the schools. So, history became the story of armed struggle (ibid).

Khalili describes her study that the Palestinian narrative of pain seemed to have succumbed the whole society into all levels of everyday life, whether it be the health or political, or historical, the embodied pain was as a symbolic manifestation of their tragedy. This narrative of tragedy and suffering being repeated and commemorated by NGOs on to the audience of the world for support and sympathy. As she writes;

Tragic narratives obscure small victories or moments of individual and collective resistance and eclipse the survival – much less achievements – of the community despite their suffering. The refugees’ commemoration takes on a tragic cast when considering the post-Oslo era (Khalili, 2007. p. 104).

Arguably, this implies in the discussions of Khalili, that tragedy is a very central theme of the national past, but also an indivisible part of the Palestinian identity (Khalili, 2007. p. 103). This is in line with what the historian writer Benny Morris, who has been critical of both Zionism and Israel, description of the Palestinian national movement;

One of the characteristics of the Palestinian national movement has been the Palestinians' view of themselves as perpetual victims of others—Ottoman Turks, British officials, Zionists, Americans—and never to appreciate that they are, at least in large part, victims of their own mistakes and iniquities. In the Palestinian Weltanschauung, they never set a foot wrong; their misfortunes are always the fault of others (Morris, 2003).

Sayigh also substantiates this explaining that explicit markers of the Palestinian identity are that they are in exile and that suffering is inflicted upon them because of the unresolved conflict with Israel, a peaceful solution is not the main goal of the suffering (Sayigh, 1997. p. 10, 46).

A fundamental part of the Palestinian identity is linked and relies on the remembered disasters. Both the memory and the memorialization, the idiom and the practices are dominant to sustaining their identity, argues Allen (2006). The Nakba is still crystallized in politics as a continual collective trauma;

In tracing the process whereby, through memorialization, individual trauma becomes collective, the outlines of a critical dimension of the Palestinian nation appear: shared suffering—suffering that is shared ceremonially, conceptually, practically, emotionally—is an affectively charged historical thread that ties people together, linking memories of the past to the experiences of the present (Allen, 2006.).

This memory-making and remembering of the past, instead of healing and peacebuilding, can therefore be said to be vital for the political and religious leaders, to sustaining their national struggle.

### ***3.3. Martyrs; al-shahid***

In all religions consists concepts of sacredness. What is sacred and the gradation of sacrality depends on the religion, culture, and traditions of the religion. For some, objects and rituals

are more sacred than a day of commemoration or a command, but for others, it can be clothes or acts such as charity that are the ultimate sacredness. Weinberg et al, says that

What unites all religions in practical terms is the creation of sacred space on earth. We all know sacred space in the form of rites of passage, where important life-cycle transitions are sacralized. (Weinberg et al, 2004. p.11).

Life is in itself, is sacred for all the monotheistic religions. Furthermore, all religions and all cultures admire the concept of sacrifice, in Judaism sacrifice, was given in the Temple but is now more viewed as something you give up for others. As much as cultures admire self-sacrifice, such as the individuals who climb mountaintops, and other challenges who control desires and weaknesses. But mostly, all cultures admire;

those whose feats benefit the whole family, community or nation. Altruism is a universal ideal, and it makes sense from an evolutionary point of view because self-sacrificial altruism is adaptive when it preserves the genetic interests of a population of genetically similar individual's patriotic self-sacrifice makes sense and is idealized but most patriots do not want to die in war and most believers do not want to be martyrs (Weinberg et al, 2004. p. 24).

As presented life is sacred in the majority of religions, and great sacrifices are admired. Another aspect that is central for the three monotheistic religions is the belief in the afterlife and immortality. Though it is for many, kept in its margins most of their lives. Epidemics, conflicts, disasters, illness, age, time and infirmity, make death hit closer to home and closes in on us with reflections and thoughts on our finality on earth. Hence, there are other circumstances and occasions argue Weinberg et al, and that is, “when psychological forces within the individual or the power of circumstances may lead to suicide or, in the case of martyrs and patriots, to suicidal idealism” (Ibid, p. 24). The writers further highlight that there has been a turn to martyrdom “as an ideal and as a motive” and argue that now “martyrdom has come back as an active factor in politics and history” (Ibid, p. 11-12). As previously mentioned, in most religions and also in the monotheistic ones, sacrifice is an element of value and contains some willingness to act upon it in some aspects. There are holy wars concepts among Buddhists, Hindus, Christianity, and Jewish, hence there is only in Islam “that there is such an explicit doctrine of fighting for the faith and a doctrine too that is so deeply ingrained in the popular mind” (Ibid) argues Weinberg et al. It is an extremely

complicated doctrine according to the writers. Juergensmeyer explains that martyrdom “has a long history within various religious traditions” (Juergensmeyer, 2017. p. 209). In Christianity, Christ was the first martyr, and the Shi’i Muslim tradition, the founder Husain, was a martyr. The word derives from Greek and is translated to witness, which meant that the person was a witness to one’s belief (Juergensmeyer, 2017. p. 209). As Weinberg et.al., Juergensmeyer also links martyrdom to a religious act as a sacrifice, as he writes;

In most cases martyrdom is regarded not only as a testimony to the degree of one’s commitment, but also as a performance of a religious act, specifically an act of self-sacrifice (Juergensmeyer, 2017. p. 209).

He is saying that martyrdom is viewed as a testimony of one’s belief and commitment to one’s religion as much as a religious act. The English word of sacrifice comes from the Latin word *sacrificium*, “to make holy” (Ibid). Furthermore, he highlights another aspect of martyrdom and sacrifice;

What makes sacrifice so riveting is not just that it involves killing, but also that it is, in an ironic way, ennobling. The destruction is performed within a religious context that transforms the killing into something positive (Juergensmeyer, 2017. p. 209).

Meaning that the destruction act becomes something positive and noble when viewed from a religious aspect. The Islamic beliefs and commandments, it has a greater sense of immediacy, than others, according to Weinberg et al (2004. p. 76). In both Shi’ite and Sunni Islam martyrdom is significant. Islamic teaching highlights the theme of martyrdom. Martyrs are those who die in battle for Islam. As Allen puts it;

The Qur’an, words of the prophet (hadith), and subsequent commentary and jurisprudence have dictated rules of dealing with the dead and created a number of basic shared conceptions about martyrs in particular (Allen, 2006).

Islamic teaching teaches that martyrs have a special place in the eyes of god and they will be receiving unique treatment in the afterlife. The belief is that god has chosen the martyr to die in this special way as Allen describes it. Martyrs are given a direct way to heaven according to Islamic teaching and the dead martyrs are spared interrogations and potential torture in the grave (Sura 3:169–70). As Allen describes it, these beliefs have given martyrs a distinguish respect; “the term expresses all these sedimented meanings of honor, reverence, and

distinction accrued from Islamic and nationalist teaching” (Allen, 2006). Weinberg et al, argue that since it is in the faith, a direct and immediate reward for entering the afterlife as a martyr, “such deaths not something to be avoided, but rather something to be embraced” (Weinberg et al, 2006. p. 76). There are different teachings on the meaning of martyrdom among scholars, in some sects, the element of martyrdom is bigger, Weinberg et al. argue “the very existence of this phenomenon is almost unique” (ibid). The writers pinpoint the argument with discussion around deterrence in these cases, I refer to:

deterrence is ultimately making the adversary pay a higher price than justified by any possible gain. The ultimate penalty or price is considered, within the framework of deterrence, to make the adversary lose his very life. But when such a cost is not considered intolerable, and when some are willing to pay it joyfully, the entire calculus of deterrence is undermined to the point of collapse (Weinberg et al, 2006. p. 76).

However, there are cases where deterrence and glory in death are vital in Islam. There are no constitutions among the Arabs states which has a clear separation between the state and religion. Weinberg et al. say there is “no other major religion is there such an intimate interrelationship between religion and state”, though it has been tried, results have varied (Weinber et al, 2004. p. 78).

It is important to highlight that this way of thinking concerning martyrdom does not resemble the majority of Muslims globally, “but the phenomenon does exist in the Islamic community as an important fact of life, and this is not the case in other religions today” (ibid, p. 76). It is noteworthy to have in mind when examining the charter of the PLO.

### **3.2.2 Martyrdom in the Palestinian sphere**

Allen addresses the term of martyrs in Palestinian society which mainly consists of Sunni Muslims. The term martyr is used when referred to all who have succumbed as a result of which are seen to the Israelis control in the territories (Allen, 2006). Suicide bombers are considered martyrs as well as others who yield a terrorist attack on Israelis whether it be with knife at the checkpoint, or car-ramming inside Israel, who succumbs in the attack. Some NGOs keeps statistics of the martyrs and include the suicide bombers (Allen, 2006).

An important aspect of martyrs is; sacrifice. It's believed the martyr has offered their lives as a sacrifice, often for a great cause, and in the Palestinian society, the sacrifice from the martyrs

is believed to be for the collective goal; national independence, which can be seen as a sign of the person's faith in god. Allen describes that the Palestinian society as its whole has been given the moral responsibility to express pride in the sacrifice offered by the martyrs. While the inhabitants have different views on the matter, some view it as a political act. Others see it as a religious commitment, which gives a deep respect for the relatives of the martyr but also means of support to the family (Allen, 2006).

For example, all of the posters of the martyrs in the Palestinian territories bear the same message writes Allen, the message of a victim of the occupation of Israel. A person who is now to be remembered and revered by the nation for which the person had sacrificed themselves.

The Qur'anic verse usually printed on such posters also testifies to the martyr's eternal life, instructing: "Do not regard those who have died for the sake of God as being deceased, for they live on and will receive their reward from God" (Allen, 2006. p.118).

There is an intertwining of victimhood and heroes in the memorialization and commemoration of martyrs in Palestinian society. Martyrs become national heroes, portrayed almost like icons and pop stars. Families are given honor, sponsorships, and payment from the authorities, and political factions show the martyr's commitment to resistance (to Israel), which can increase the popularity of the factions, as well as sustaining the struggle. Martyrs become as fertile to the resistance, somebody's death can spark motivation for riots and reactions in the population. "A common comment during the height of the second uprising was that, for every activist killed, ten more would become involved as a result" continues Allen (Allen, 2006. p.118).

Funerals become a ritual where the martyr is hailed as national heroes as well as a religious marking. Images and posters of the martyrs are being spread throughout the territories by the different political factions, claiming the martyr to be theirs. Not all Palestinians support this way of politicizing memorialization. But from rooftops and on every corner, ceased Palestinians are hailed as nationalist subjects. Nationalism has become hegemonic which is structuring the whole texture of social life. The core ideology is the guidance in forming the subject and political identity. As Allen continues;

Through funerals and other social activities and commemorative images, memorialization saturates social space, historical narrative and political discourse. The

process of remembering martyrs is performed, created, and preserved in numerous venues, expressed in material culture, practice and geography. Institutions and organizations, from hospitals to soccer teams, were named after individual martyrs. Sometimes groups with as widely divergent missions and activities as a children's summer camp or a faction's military wing were named in honor of "the Al-Aqsa Martyrs," in reference to those killed during this uprising, which is sometimes referred to as the Al-Aqsa intifada (Allen, 2006. p.119).

All over the city's posters can be found of the martyrs, whether it be the hospital, bus station, barber, restaurants, and public places. Songs, poems, stories, and news broadcasts are filled with honoring the martyrs. A constant memorialization of the struggle of the nation, and the sacrifice of individuals strong in their faith who gave their lives for "the nation". Allen explains the higher number of posters around a home inclines the higher status of the family. Allen's analysis is in line with Yaari EHUD's (2017) writings, he explains through a study done in the year of 2015/16 after a sudden rise of attacks in Israel by Palestinians. The analysis showed that a large part of the people who did commit terrorist attacks against Israelis came from the "fringes of the West Bank society" (Yaari, 2017). Highlighting that this was a lot of young people who found themselves in struggle and hardships, such as social marginalization, financial hardship, or insurmountable personal problems. The accumulated picture of the assailants was "identified most as frustrated individuals who felt that their lives had reached a dead end, to the point that many sought salvation through martyrdom" (Yaari, 2017). Many were triggered by the false allegation that Israel was to change the status quo on the Temple Mount where the al-Aqsa Mosque is, surprisingly few were dedicated Muslims. Religion was not the main causing factor; patriotic sentiment was the strongest driving force. Investigation showed a high percentage of the attackers, were women, trying to escape family situations such as arranged marriages, domestic violence, pregnancies outside of marriage, and other family hardships. According to the investigators, the women sought death or arrest as an escape from their situation, making them willing to become martyrs (Ibid). Those being captured told the investigators "...that they believed that death for the sake of jihad would reward them with the recognition they failed to obtain in life" (Yaari, 2017). Many of the young people had changed their profile picture on their social media accounts in the time ahead of the attack as a preparation for it to be displayed as a martyr. Furthermore,



many would-be assailants wrote about a wish to sacrifice their life in poem posts, Quranic verses, and tributes to martyrs (Shahidi's). Though many of them were not merely devoted Muslims, religion and the belief in the religion was an element in what they found as the solution of ending their problems (Yaari, 2017).

### 3.3 *The power of dangerous speech*

Conflicts affect whole societies. The environment, the economy as well as social trust in societies. Longstanding conflict drains a society on all levels and politicians have a major impact on the social scene the society is finding itself in. Political exclusion and corruption may fuel instability and conflict (Muller and Tobias, 2016). Political institutions may as well be a factor for conflict in societies, but also be the preventer of conflict and diversity. However, there is massive evidence of links between political institutions and conflicts (ibid). It's not a new phenomenon that different kinds of rhetoric can turn people against people ending violent clashes. Throughout history, leaders have demonized and denigrated people or groups of people, whether it has been a minority in society, or people from another nation, religion, etc. Members of the group viewed as *the other*, have at the time, been depicted so cruel and pictured as a threat so seriously that violence or attack against them, became acceptable or even “necessary” to solve a problem. This happened in 1994 in Rwanda when the Hutus portrayed the Tutsis as cockroaches and in Nazi-Germany, who called Jews vermins, which later escalated to the Holocaust. Anthony Oberschall calls this propaganda and he defines it as

A technique of persuasion that is based on [...] creating a sense of threat against people, who then become anxious and filled with fear, and who then demand that this threat be removed (Oberschall, 2013. p. 181)

Groups and members of a group have often in history, been framed and used as a “scapegoat” for different reasons. It can be an economic failure, illness, or just an enemy to a society, or the world. This form of communication has been termed as “dangerous speech” by several scholars (Benesch, 2018). Susan Benesch, a Senior Fellow at the World Policy Institute, formulated a guideline for evaluating if a speech is “dangerous”, this meaning if “the capacity

to catalyze violence by one group against another” (Benesch, 2018). The definition of dangerous speech is;

Any form of expression (e.g. speech, text, or images) that can increase the risk that its audience will condone or commit violence against members of another group (Benesch, 2018).

Benesch has outlined five variables that affect the dangerousness of a speech that can act in time and place and due to circumstances. The dangerousness she expresses is group violence and riots, speeches held by certain people can have fatal outcomes. The five variables explained by her are; the speaker, the audience, the speech act itself, social and historical context, and the means of dissemination (Benesch, 2013). Furthermore, it is being described as ...when all of the variables are maximized. Meaning a highly influenced and powerful speaker holds speeches to an audience that has grievances and or fear the speaker can cultivate, combined with words that call to violence. Also in addition, when the historical or social context is propitious for violence, such as longstanding competition between resources, which can be land, previous episodes of violence, or lack of efforts to solve grievances (Benesch, 2013).

Livingstone Smith examines in the paper *Less than Human Why We Demean, Enslave and Exterminate Others* (2011), links between dehumanization and acts of atrocities. Smith links hate propaganda and dehumanization quoting Stanton; “Dehumanisation overcomes the normal human revulsion against murder. At this stage, hate propaganda ... is used to vilify the victim group” (Smith, 2011. p. 142).

Livingstone Smith defines dehumanization as “the belief that some beings only appear human, but beneath the surface, where it really counts, they aren’t human at all” (Smith, 2011. p. 4 & 5). He continues by explaining that it is a way of thinking, and in the long run, how it can manifest itself in which it empowers people to perform acts that would under other circumstances, be unthinkable. "When people dehumanize others, they actually conceive of them as subhuman creatures," (Smith, 2011. p. 11).

A thorough analysis done by David Yanigizawa-Drott, published in 2014, showed considerable impact between the broadcasts done by the radio media in Rwanda during the year 1994, and the levels of violence done by the Hutu group upon the Tutsi’s, following their airplay (Yanagizawa-Drott, 2014. p. 4). The radio stations allowed intense hate speech and incitement to violence be broadcasted, the speakers dehumanized one group of its

populations, making the Tutsis a scapegoat for all of their problems, the only solution was to eliminate the problem. This way of portraying one group against another gave horrifying outcomes and was an outcome of both dangerous and hate speech, which dehumanized one group as an enemy.

This is in line with the academics and experts such as the work of the Dangerous Speech Project have contended, that there are distinguishable factors that can denote when hate speech or dangerous speech goes beyond pure speech and catalyzes into incitement to violence.

### **3.3.1 Incitement to violence during the British mandate**

During World War II, the Nazi collaborator Amin al-Husseini, among others, was broadcasted on the German radio with vitriolic anti-Semitic speeches in the Arab region (Jeffrey, 2014. p. 16). This has had an unquestionable ramification.

As Jeffrey Herf outlines in *Haj Amin al-Husseini, the Nazis and the Holocaust: The Origins, Nature and Aftereffects of Collaboration*, how the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini, played a significant role in the pan Arabism as well as the spread of hatred of the Jews in the Middle East and the Arab societies, he had a tremendous impact on the Palestinian politics until his death in Lebanon in 1974. As Jeffrey writes;

he engaged in lethal incitement against the Jews, and this is now recognized under international law as a crime because it is an essential step in the process leading to genocide” (Jeffrey, 2014. p. 14).

Haj Amin al-Husseini was the leader of the Palestinian national movement from 1921 and leader of the Palestinians in the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948. During revolts in the British region, he was a wanted man, he sought refuge in Hitler's Germany. “In Hitler and the Nazis, he recognized ideological soulmates who shared his profound hatred of the Jews, Judaism and Zionism” (Jeffrey 2014. p.15). From there he collaborated with the Nazis, and left a heritage of antisemitism and anti-Zionism that remains an enduring element of Palestinian and Arab politics, argues Jeffrey (Jeffrey, 2014. p. 14). Al-Husseini was never put to trial, even though the U.S., the Brits, and Yugoslavia could have indicted him, his active role in incitement against Jews in speeches. According to Jeffrey (2014) the incitements;

would have justified indictment in Nuremburg either as a crime against humanity or under the terms of the incitement clause of the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide (Jeffrey, 2014. p. 17).

In the aftermath of WW II, al-Husseini was received as a hero in Egypt and Palestine. Arab leaders found him inspiring, and in 1945 he was elected leader in the Palestine People's Party. Even after the 1948 defeat, he sustained as a revered figure across Palestinian and Arab societies. By collaboration with the Nazis, "he created his most important and longest-lasting legacy" writes Jeffrey;

It was both by creating some of the canonical texts of the Islamist tradition and in combining elements of European and Islamist Jew-hatred. He thus founded a tradition of absolute and uncompromising rejection of Zionism and later, of the State of Israel. The impact of Husseini the ideologue is as important and as destructive as Husseini the political figure. His own texts before and during the crucial years of exile in Nazi Berlin reveal the real Husseini, the unifier of an extremist but influential interpretation of Islam and its founding texts with the modern secular language of anti-imperialism and anti-Zionism. His target, first and foremost, was the Jews of North Africa and the Middle East, and subsequently, the State of Israel. They were the objects of his greatest hatred and of his considerable political energy. Husseini played a vital role in spreading the falsehood that a Jewish state would be determined somehow to threaten the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem (Jeffrey, 2014. p. 18).

Al-Husseini was a decision-maker in wartime in the post-war Middle East. He was a man of wealth and had been given military equipment from the Nazis. His charisma and ability to incite followers to violence and riots made huge footprints in politics in the following decades among the Palestinian leadership. He ensured that no two-state solution or partition of the land would happen, or be considered. He was determinate that the Jews had to be expelled out of the area, and the call for the continuous war against the Zionists, a policy only to be realized through war against the establishment and state of Israel, and he used a dangerous rhetoric in his speeches to incite his followers to violence according to scholars such as Jefferey (Jeffrey, 2014).

### 3.4

#### *Summary*

I have in this chapter given an overview of the theories of identity and religion, the identity of heroes and victims, martyrs; al-shahid before I ended with the theory of dangerous speech. After each theory, I have present research done by others related to the topic. Those are Palestinian identity, Palestinian historical portrait of heroes and victims, martyrdom in the Palestinian sphere and to the end, I presented incitement to violence during the British mandate.

There are complicated and sensitive matters to reflect upon when discussing theory and presenting religious sacred texts and doctrines. This thesis is too small and narrow to give an ultimate and overall presentative understanding of all the elements in the topics here presented. Though I have tried to give a background on how some of these topics are understood in societies, and more specifically, in the Palestinian society.

## 4 Method

In this chapter, I will show the different aspects of a researcher's role. I will start to present the choice of method, from there I will go through the design, the sampling criteria, and the selection of data. I will show my reflections on my positionality, as well as the ethics and the reliability of my research. Further on I will present the challenges of this research and to the end present the analysis and the conduct of coding.

### 4.1 *Choosing the method*

When conducting a research project, it can be challenging to find or chose the (right) method which can illuminate the research questions asked and provide answers to them. Like in every research and method, there are and can be weaknesses, perspectives, or other missing links which are not included, which can influence both validity and reliability (Johannessen et al, 2008). By using a combination of several research methods can be helpful to get a more in-depth answer to the questions, as well as a broader perspective and wider angle. I have chosen a qualitative design to do a thematic content analysis.

I have chosen the qualitative design with thematic analysis as a method since it is suitable for doing a textual analysis as well as analyzing speeches. Since I have a smaller number of texts it's the qualitative design that is most adaptable for the research. And thematic content analysis offers an accessible and theoretically flexible approach to the analyzing of qualitative data (Braun, & Clarke, 2006).

When doing content analysis can mean any text such as commercial, blogs, poems, speeches, reports, etc., however, the text has to be illuminated, or viewed through its original purpose, or where it derives from. I have therefore chosen to analyze the speeches of Mahmoud Abbas in the light of the charter of PLO. It is one of the organizations the president has been a partaker of establishing, and since PLO is legislated as the sole representative of the Palestinian people, I found it natural to read his speeches through the lens of the charter. Since I am analyzing Mahmoud Abbas's speeches, I am using text sampled mainly from the primary sources, a first-hand source (Bratberg, 2007). The method is in itself is the tool to gather and

sample the information on or about a phenomenon, subject, or theme a researcher wants to study (Silverman, 2014). There are several ways of doing a study and providing the answers, but the goal of it should always be new knowledge (Ibid), which I have tried to in this research.

## ***4.2 Design, sampling criteria, and selection***

Research design is separated into two groups: quantitative and qualitative strategies, these strategies help to conduct and construct a study. Qualitative research is less based on tables and numbers and is more descriptive in a textual format. It has fewer participants and units in the base of research. The goal of qualitative research is to gather and provide information on why or how something is like it is (Silverman, 2014. P. 5). This way of conducting the research was therefore a natural choice of election for my thesis since I do not have any participants, neither any tables nor statistics.

During the year ahead of writing, I have collected different resources I came across during the year. I started gathering information and research through the acknowledged websites and news sites such as Al-Jazeera, Google Scholar, and our school's databases. I started the search by searching for Mahmoud Abbas and speeches. My first wish was to solely collect speeches and statements held in Arabic in the domestic sphere in the West Bank, either through social media, Tv programs, and other online platforms. When researching I found several articles referring to Abbas's speeches held in Arabic, in several cases there were video links in the different articles, though when I followed the link in the video had been removed. The reasons for why were not displayed. I contacted several institutions to see if I could get some help with finding speeches that had been held in Arabic. Neither of the efforts I did gave me any results even though I tried to reconnect with selected ones several times. During the process of sampling, and conversations with my mentor, I decided to look at speeches held in English when the results of the sampling were rather difficult due to the limitation of time.

The criteria I set for the sampling became then Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) and other officials in the PA's government statements and speeches held in either Arabic or English. This led me to choose the speeches held by President Mahmoud Abbas in the U.N General Assembly. The reason I did this was that I wanted the translation to be validated by the

Palestinian side, making sure the translation had not been tampered with or mistranslated. This was an important criterion for this analysis. It was also in the UN General Assembly on November 29, 1947, that Resolution 181, Partition Plan was made.

I have chosen the speeches held by Mahmoud Abbas before the United Nations General Assembly from the year 2014 until 2019, as the ground of this analysis. The speeches are mainly written as a whole, though the speech from the year of 2017, only a shorted version is available the Permanent Observer Mission to the State of Palestine to the United Nation website. This is the only version where the whole speech is not shown too. The speech from 2014 is not available in English on the Permanent Observer Mission to the State of Palestine to the United Nation website. I chose to use a translated version from the Israeli news site; Times of Israel. I cross-checked the translation of the speech to translated oral versions from the U.N. which I found on different websites which have the recorded video of the speech. Further on, in 2016 Abbas did not hold a speech, therefor the analysis is based on 5 speeches, and 1 charter, in whole this sums up to 6 different documents.

The reason for adding the charter in the analysis is the complexity of the ongoing dispute between the PA and the state of Israel. The state of Israel is democratic and legal, a state based on justice and integrity, though it is a rule of law state, it is important to highlight that like all nations, Israel has its flaws. Though the internal conflicts inside the PA, and the history of PLO and Fatah, do not simplify the complex situation. President Mahmoud Abbas has been a co-founder of both, and a leader of the biggest party in the PLO, Fatah. It was also a challenge to decide on including the charter since the document is disputed. The charter was supposed to be revised in 1998, but no trace of the amended version is to be found, it has never been published by Palestinian National Authority or the PLO (Kedar, 2018.; Passia, 2014.; ICC, 2020; Neuer & Rovner, 2019.; Michael & Fishman, 2012). After several rounds of thoughts and reflections, I have chosen to analyze the speeches in the light of the 1968 charter, though several of the key articles which were supposed to be amended, or revised, has not been included in my research.



### *4.3 Validity and reliability*

Validity and reliability are necessary to conduct and publish research work. Research work has to be trustworthy. For others to test the findings of my research, I have used valid sources, I have chosen to sample the collection of findings at the primary sources, which is the website of the Permanent Observer Mission to the State of Palestine to the United Nation. Here it is clear who the sender is of the message provided in the text, and it is clear whom the message is for. Validity is described by Hammersley as; «The extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers» (Silverman, 2014, P. 90).

To bring a broader perspective of the meanings behind the text analyzed in this thesis, I found it important to highlight the historical viewpoints on the political rhetoric which has been taken place domestically and internationally surrounding the PA's leadership and Mahmoud Abbas. I have also used this as a base together with perspectives of the theory presented in chapter 3.

### *4.4 Positionality*

In 2016, I worked daily with Palestinians from the West Bank, who daily crossed checkpoints to get to the workplace we had in a suburb Mevasseret Zion, outside Jerusalem. Our workplace was a multi-culture daycare center for elderly people, where both Palestinians from the West Bank worked together with Jews and Arab-Israelis, taking care of the elderly in the local neighborhood.

When I resided in Bethlehem in 2019, I got to know locals living in this area. Both Muslims and Christians, visiting them in their homes, and enjoyed time and good conversations. Some had lived in the States for a while with their relatives but chose to come back and live in the West Bank. “Our life is here, I want to raise my children and build my company”, a Christian woman told me working holding a beauty salon in her home. A Muslim woman worked as a cleaner and her husband worked in the military of the PA, one day at their home during coffee, her husband said; “you know, our problem is not with Israelis or the Israeli state, we have peace with them and we enjoy that. Our problem is here at home, and our own government. This is why we have troubles”.

This statement of a Muslim man who works in the military state department of the PA was a reason for triggering my interest in this research. Though these contacts and conversations did not give me any access to the field of data, neither the sampling nor the collecting. But it places me to believe that I am daring to view the PA in a bit more critical way, knowing that many Palestinians themselves are critical to their government and some less to the state of Israel. So overall, my background and past knowledge of the area, people, and work situation I have had influences my analysis. Carlings et al. describes it like this;

Positionality in qualitative research refers to the fact that a researcher's characteristics affect both substantive and practical aspects of the research process—from the nature of questions that are asked, through data collection, analysis and writing, to how findings are received (Carling et al, 2014. P.37).

By this meaning, it has influenced my research question and how I have analyzed the empirical data that I have collected. Who I am and my connection to the area, the conflict, and the people I know have influenced me throughout all stages of this research since I cannot put it aside, but I have strived to have a thorough clarity and solely fact-based foundation in my writing. I believe I have achieved this by solely using the official statements, speeches, and constitution of the PA themselves. I have not gathered information through interviews based on people's experiences with emotions attached to their experiences. The data collection can then not be discussed if it is based on people's emotions surrounding an event, but is a factual picture of the political rhetoric of the PA's authority. The data collection is arguable reliable since I have strived for using direct quotes which can be easily found and checked.

It is also important to highlight that in this research and my project, I am a full outsider. Carlings with others, explains the concept of the insider-outsider as this, in the article *Beyond the insider-outsider divide in migration research*;

factors produce a research landscape with two dominant positions: (1) 'outsider' researchers who belong to the majority population and do research on specific immigrant groups; and (2) 'insider' researchers who are migrants or descendants of migrants and do research on their own immigrant group (Carling et al, 2014. p 38.).

I am a student and a non-native. I am a non-participant of the religion the PA holds, and it is discussable how this has affected my analysis and how I understand the religious language and rhetoric in the data collection. I am a woman, brought up in the Western culture, and do

not behold the underlying perspectives the different cultures in the Middle East holds. This means I may have missed out on points and sayings that have different meanings according to the culture and language when being an outsider. While all my empirical data have been translated by the senders themselves, or written in English from the beginning, still there might be points that I as an outsider do not manage to interpret in the same manner as an individual born and raised in the culture would. But at the same time, that individual would not have the same eyes as mine in this research which makes this research an addition to the discussion/research of this topic. Arguably, my experiences as a student, my worldview, and my view on rhetoric and democracy as an outsider give a small attribution to the research. Though it is highly possible that 5 years on from now I would see things from a different perspective based on the experiences I will do in the coming years as a graduate and not a student anymore. I have also reflected if my research would be offensive to others who have another look at the Palestinian authorities, and has a personal connection to the area. At times I have been less optimistic about how the topic would be welcomed by others, my sympathy stands strong with the Palestinian people in their situation, and how they are treated by their government and this has not changed throughout this research.

#### **4.5 Ethics**

After presenting what implies reliability and validity in research work, it is important to highlight that following ethical guidelines and norms is crucial too. Several aspects are essential to the ethics of research work. One is the treatment of the participants while conducting the study, as well as the treatment of the findings in the aftermath. While doing a thematical analysis does not imply the same ethical standards of treatment as an interview does, it still has to be conducted and analyzed with balance (Bratberg, 2017). As mentioned above, I have strived for a balanced analysis and based it solely on the statements and the speeches by Abbas and the charter of the PLO. These are all public statements and documents for everyone to read, the findings are therefore not something I need to evaluate as vulnerable in the same manner as an interview would, though the analysis in its self I have strived for to make it balanced. It can be argued that I have not implied a bigger part of this thesis on the wrong-doings of the state of Israel, or the fractions of Jewish extremists conducting horrible acts towards Palestinians and their properties, that it makes the analysis less balanced, I find it

important to highlight that the research I have chosen is based on the leader of the PA and the PLO, and their perspectives. Implying more about the Israeli side would change my research and the main question of this thesis.

#### ***4.6 Challenges***

Like all other master students, I have met a lot of challenges, some expected, others not. The one most fore coming was to limit the thesis. It was a continuous battle against my urge to explain everything and to build a thorough foundation for the analysis. With huge respect for history, it was hard to narrow it down. It was also a challenge to specify my thesis and my research field. It was easy to get caught up in all the interesting elements I found during the sampling, and with the pre-knowledge I have, it did not make it easier to narrow down. It was also a challenge to not address more of the state of Israel in this thesis, as well as the extremely difficult discussion of the territories. It was challenging to avoid this topic, as much as the arguments of taxes, right of return, and water resources. When conducting the analysis I had to stop myself from addressing several claims made by Mahmoud Abbas such as ethnic cleansing and apartheid. Though apartheid is swiftly mentioned in my writings, I have not gone further into theory on these concepts. There were several topics Abbas addressed or stated in his speeches, which I wanted to look further into, but found it necessary to narrow it down.

It was also a challenge to choose the different theories for my research, and I have strived for a broad specter of theories to enrich my analysis and discussion from a broad perspective.

#### ***4.7 Analysis***

As previously noted, I chose to use qualitative thematic content analysis in my research. There are many ways to communicate and how to build trust, manage a conflict, evoke emotions, or calm emotions and give hope. Theories with linguistic approaches are focused on the use and rules of the used language.

Thematic analysis is a method used for identifying, analyzing, and depicting patterns or themes in the data material (Braun, & Clarke, 2006. p.79.). Braun and Clarke highlight

thematic analysis as the first method of analysis that qualitative researchers should learn. They justify this with the fact that the method offers basic skills which are useful for further qualitative research. They also highlight that the method is useful for inexperienced researchers, as it is simple to learn as well as to implement. I, therefore, found the method suitable since I am a student, and have little experience in doing research. I also found this method as a suitable method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns of data and thus allows crystallization of topics across the speeches held which was in line with my research question (Braun, & Clarke, 2006). There are several levels the sources can be analyzed on, and the theory is a well-known tool when it comes to analyzing texts and conversations, but as well as government documents, books, marketing material, social media comments with more. Since the texts I have chosen are political and institutional, I found the method a suitable tool to provide answers to my research questions.

Braun and Clarke (2006) have outlined a step-by-step model in six stages in the analysis of the topics: Phase 1; get acquainted with the data. Phase 2; generate introductory codes. Phase 3; search for topics. Phase 4; evaluate topics. Phase 5: define topics and Phase 6; produce the written work. These steps have guided me throughout my research.

#### **4.7.1 The conduct of coding**

According to the SDI model, the coding should be conducted into groups with different themes. Tjora explains in the book; *Kvalitative forskningsmetoder i praksis*,(2020) how these themes might overlap each other, though it can provide a good conduct for the analysis. This is almost in line with Braun and Clarke's six-step model. I started off reading the speeches of President Mahmoud Abbas, as well as the charter of PLO. I had to read the documents thoroughly several times, trying to get to know the messenger and in order to get in-depth of the message. After reading it a couple of times, I started to notice some similarities in the speeches and the charters. I then started the coding. At the beginning of my first rounds of coding, I had 35 different codes. After several recoding and further investigation, I decided to narrow the codes down to 8 different thematic groups, these were:

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| (1) Abbas attitude towards peace | (2) Palestinian liberation through revolution |
| (3) The victims                  | (4) Religion and Holy sites                   |

(5) Sacrifice

(6) Martyrs

(7) PLO

(8) Revolution/revolutionary

I then chose to sort these groups into three main category groups since some of them do overlap. These three groups are:

1. Identity of the Palestinian state (4), (7), (8)
2. Abbas sacrifices, heroes and victims of the Palestinian people (3), (5), (6)
3. Abba's portrait of peace (1), (2)

These groups will make the foundation of the analysis. I chose to limit the 8 groups to 3 since they together sum up the main groups of the findings, as well as they are all relevant for the main research questions. Through these themes, I wanted to know how the president of the PA views the identity of the PA's attitude towards peace according to the official charter of the PLO, as well as how he portrays the other/or the enemy. I then went on to look for theories that can further explain these topics and I added the theory on dangerous speech.

#### **4.8 Summary**

I have through this chapter shown how I have conducted the research. I started by explaining the choice of method. I have shown my design and the criteria and reasoning for my sampling and selection of documents. Further, I reflected on the positionality, ethics, and the reliability of my research. I have shown the vulnerable sides of the research as well as the contributing factors this research can have, as well as shown the challenges of doing this research. To the end, I presented the analysis and my conduct of coding.

## 5 A history of incitement

To later address the findings, it is necessary to lay the groundwork for what previous world leaders have addressed towards the leadership of PA. Both the acknowledgment of Israel as a Jewish state, as well as incitement have been the main issues, as for more recent days; the glorification of jihad in Palestinian schoolbooks and syllabus. President Mahmoud Abbas has been criticized for his views on Holocaust. He has claimed that the Nazis did not kill several million Jews, but “only a few hundred thousand Jews” (Independent, 2018). In April 2018, he stated in a speech that the Holocaust was caused because of the “social behavior” of the Jews in the society in Europe at the time, including money-lending. He concluded that it was not a cause of anti-Semitism (Ibid) Abbas has previously been called out on statements like this, which he then expressed that the Holocaust was “a terrible, unforgivable crime against the Jewish nation, a crime against humanity that cannot be accepted by humankind” (Independent, 2018).

This chapter will therefore present excerpts from the discourse and happenings mainly from 2014 until 2020, international as well as domestic. In order to understand the meaning behind some of the aspects of the findings, it is necessary to look at what has happened in the past, as well as take into account the statements done by the PA in public.

### *5.1 World leaders calling on the PA to end incitement*

As to this day, the Palestinian Authority has not recognized Israel as a Jewish state. However, the PA addresses that the Palestinians are Arab, by accepting Israel as a Jewish state.

International leaders as former President Barack Obama did repeatedly express the necessity for the PA to do so in order for the Palestinian Authority to establish a state (The Guardian, 2013).

The PA official, Jibril Rajoub stated to a Lebanese TV program in 2013, that if the PA would have nuclear weapons, they would have used them against Israel the same morning. According to the host of the program, Rajoub continuing saying;

If [Arab] mobilization would begin for the liberation of Jerusalem; if money [would be spent] and swords drawn in the face of the Zionist enemy, that would be great... If you ask me as a Palestinian, I say — our battle is with the Israeli occupation. Our main enemy, not [just] as Palestinians but as Arabs and Muslims, is Israel and the Israeli occupation (Schwartz, 2013).

After a terrorist attack in 2014 in a synagogue in Jerusalem, where four rabbis were killed by gunshot and a meat cleaver, several international leaders condemned the attack while they addressed the issue of incitement in the PA leadership public rhetoric, demanding the leaders to take action. The then US Secretary of State John Kerry said when addressing the PA's need to condemn the act;

pure result of incitement of calls for days of rage... They must begin to take serious steps to restrain any kind of incitement that comes from their language, from other people's language, and exhibit the kind of leadership that is necessary to put this region on a different path. (Ahren, 2014).

Another US representative, US Senator Rand Paul, stated:

This is a horrific act of violence that should be universally condemned. We must demand that Palestinian leaders stop the incitement, which they have committed in word and in deed. (ibid).

Both the EU leaders and the Canadian foreign minister urged the need to refrain from incitement and actions which could lead to an escalation, and like John Baird declared;

any statements of incitement are completely irresponsible. Those leaders who regularly issue them cannot plead ignorance or look the other way when terrorist attacks like today's occur. (ibid).

A PLO member, the Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades proclaimed the responsibility to have carried out the attack (BBC, 2014).



## 5.2 The Temple Mount

Further escalating tensions in September of 2015 on The Temple Mount in Jerusalem, where the Al Aqsa Mosque stand, spread riots to the West Bank as well as terrorist attacks all over Israel. A narrative spread among the Palestinian population was that Israel was planning to destroy the mosque. Mahmoud Abbas, the President of the PA was interviewed due to the violent riots on the Temple Mounts and stated on the PA's national news that;

We bless you; we bless the Mourabitoun and the Mourabitat<sup>6</sup>. We welcome every drop of blood spilled in Jerusalem. This is pure blood, clean blood, blood on its way to Allah. With the help of Allah, every shaheed (martyr) will be in heaven, and every wounded will get his reward.... All of their steps, we will not allow them. All these divisions, Al-Aqsa is ours, and the (Church of the) Holy Sepulcher is ours, everything is ours, all ours. They [the Jews] have no right to desecrate them with their filthy feet and we won't allow them to (Danon, 2018).

“They” in this setting, was the Jews. Mahmoud Abbas was directly accusing Jews by saying they have filthy feet, rhetoric proclaiming the others are of a lower status and dirty, not worthy of walking on *their* holy places. Mahmoud Abbas also blessed the blood of the people who had bled for Jerusalem, implying to the Palestinians; if you get in a physical fight and bleed in the fight, meaning the persons getting hurt, is an honoring act to do. He was also implying that the blood of a Palestinian getting hurt in a fight against the others, in this case, the filthy Jews, have pure and clean blood, portraying it as a holy act for Jerusalem.

Over hundreds of attacks were reported in Israel during the times of the “days of rage”. Shootings, car-rammings, rock attacks, firebombs, and stabbings escalated. The attacks were done by Palestinians towards Israelis. It is important to keep in mind that 20 % of the population of Israel are Arabs, another 5 % are of other minorities. The attacks affected the whole nation, not only one ethnic group. During these months (September 2015 – March

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<sup>6</sup> “Al-Mourabitoun. The Independent Nasserite Movement (INM) (Harakat *al-Nasiriyin al-Mustaqillin*) or simply Al-Murabitoun (lit. *The Steadfast*), also termed variously Mouvement des Nasséristes Indépendants (MNI) in French, Independent Nasserite Organization (INO), or Movement of Independent Nasserists (MIN), is a predominantly Sunni Muslim Nasserist political party in Lebanon that is closely allied with Shia organization Hezbollah” Retrieved at <https://findwords.info/term/al-mourabitoun>

2016) 34 people got killed and 411 injured, 211 of them were knife stabbings (MFA, 2018). According to Bassam Eid, director of Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group, the response given to the media in the beginnings of the attacks, a member of the Central Committee of Fatah, Jibril Rajoub stated on the official Palestinian TV channel in October of 2015: “These are individual acts of heroism, and I am proud of them and congratulate all those who carried them out”. Jibril also commented on a person who had killed Israelis in Jerusalem that: “His Facebook post is worthy of being taught in schools” (Eid, 2016. p.17, 18).

A few days later the advisor of President Abbas, Sultan Abu el-Einein posted on his Facebook account as a response to an attack in the central bus station in the city of Beersheba saying that; “O Muhannad, we love you for giving life for every Palestinian...Muhannad receives the Medal of Honor as a martyr, his name engraved on the chest of every Palestinian” (Eid, 2016. P.17, 18). Both are men in high positions in the PA’s government.

The previously mentioned Palestinian Muslim scholar, Bassam Eid argues in his report *Confronting Human Rights Abuses in the Palestinian Authority: An Essential Step for Progress in the Region* that the PA’s role did encourage violence and that it was unguarded and openly to display. He highlights in his report that every Palestinian faction incites the Palestinian people to act in violence and that social media was used as a catalyst for terrorism. A road in Ramallah was named after the men who carried a knife attack which resulted in killing two Israelis (Eid, 2016. P.17, 18).

The US Secretary of State John Kerry under the Obama administration went out public and stressed the need of stopping incitement and inflammatory rhetoric by President Mahmoud Abbas, stating;

No amount of frustration is appropriate to license any violence anywhere at any time. No violence should occur. And the Palestinians need to understand... President Abbas has been committed to non-violence. He needs to be condemning this, loudly and clearly... And he needs to not engage in some of the incitement that his voice has sometimes been heard to encourage. So that has to stop (Times of Israel, 2015).

John Kerry also said that the Palestinians need to recognize Israel as a Jewish state and that the US administration denounced terrorism and supported Israel's rights to defend itself:

We strongly condemn the terrorist attacks against innocent civilians...There is simply no justification for these reprehensible attacks and we will continue to support Israel's right to defend its existence. (Times of Israel, 2015).

Former President Barack Obama stated in a speech held in the United Nations General Assembly in 2016 that; "Israelis and Palestinians will be better off if Palestinians reject incitement and recognize the legitimacy of Israel." (Feith & Gerber, 2017). The UN Security Council later the same year, implicitly criticized Palestinian leaders for "incitement and inflammatory rhetoric" in the 2334 resolution (Ibid). President Mahmoud Abbas later admitted that they do incite against Israel in a speech in the annual Arab League conference held in Cairo, 2016, saying that: "Yes, we incite [against Israel] in the media and in educational institutions, but so does Israel" (Times of Israel, 2016).

### ***5.3 UN's Committee for Elimination of Racial Discrimination***

It is important to also lay the foundation of the PA's work in the Palestinian society according to the road to peace. After the signing of the Oslo accords the PA agreed on several deals, responsibilities as well as commitments towards peace and peacebuilding. This among other things to establish a recognized state, with democratic elections, etc.

In 2019 the Palestinian authorities got criticism from the UN's Committee for Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) on incitement to violence against Israelis. The report addressed among other things the hate speech in media, social media, and public officials, and demanded that the "State of Palestine" had to act against racist hate speech and hate crimes. I refer;

About the existence of hate speech in certain media outlets, especially those controlled by Hamas, social media, public officials' statements, and school curricula and textbooks, which fuels hatred and may incite violence, particularly hate speech against Israelis. (CERD, 2019. p. 4)

In December 2020, the Palestinian Authority organized a military funeral for the leader of PFLP, Abbas did in his public speech, present the leader as a role model, a hero, and a martyr, which the people should follow. Shortly after, the PFLP, called on the people to escalate resistance, meaning “they are referring to actions such as throwing rocks and firebombs at soldiers and settlers, as well as stabbings, shootings and car-ramming attacks” (Tawil, 2020).

### 5.3.1 Schoolbooks and syllabus

As mentioned in the introduction of this paper the European Parliament passed legislation back in 2018, to prevent hateful content in the schoolbooks in the Palestinian territories. 6 months later the budgetary committee of the parliament advised to freeze the aid on \$17 million to the Palestinian Authority due content of the textbooks. The books were filled with incitement towards Israel and Israelis. Simon Wiesenthal Center presented a study of 150 Palestinian textbooks that promoted violent struggle as the path to liberation and then deleting the state Israel from the map (Neuer & Rovner, 2019). A further thorough investigation was set on the agenda and the Institute of Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education (IMPACT-se) got the job. Federica Mogherini, the EU’s foreign policy chief statement was confirmed on the EU’s website stating;

Terms of Reference for the study are currently being prepared with a view to identifying possible incitement to hatred and violence and any possible lack of compliance with UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) standards of peace and tolerance in education. The study shall provide for a comprehensive analysis of the current Palestinian textbooks. (EU, 2019).

Criticism of the PA schoolbooks has been done before. Leaving out parts of history has been an element. The chairman of the Education Committee of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), Musa al-Zu'but, would not implement the history of the Holocaust in the Palestinian curriculum. He stated in early 2000 that;

The Holocaust has been exaggerated in order to present the Jews as victims of a great crime... If the purpose is to express sympathy, this is useless for us since we are the ones who suffered as a result (Litvak et al, 2003. p. 136).

In addition, another Fatah and PLC member expressed related to the teaching of Holocaust:

a great danger to the developing Palestinian mentality. The Jews, should learn first about the Palestinian disaster, which is still alive, whereas "the so-called Holocaust" has already been moved into the museum of history. If such a decision [about teaching the Holocaust] is made, it will undoubtedly ruin the Palestinian dream and aspirations. It will entirely obliterate the past, present and future of the Palestinians (Ibid).

In January 2021, IMPACT-se released the report. The findings through investigation of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) are reliable and to many, shocking. UNRWA educates over half a million Palestinian children yearly in 3 countries, including the West Bank and Jerusalem. During 2019 they educated an estimated number of 320,000 children in 370 schools in Gaza, the PA areas, and Jerusalem. The teaching material is mainly provided by the host country and it is the syllabus provided together with the Palestinian Authority and in this region, the report was done.

Our extensive research of PA school textbooks has consistently shown a systematic insertion of violence, martyrdom and jihad across all grades and subjects, with the proliferation of extreme nationalism and Islamist ideologies throughout the curriculum, including science and math textbooks; rejection of the possibility of peace with Israel; and complete omission of any historical Jewish presence in the modern-day territories of Israel and the PA (Shalev, 2021. p.3).

The report also showed a high level of conspiracy theories about Jews and Israel, for example; that Israel deliberately poisoned areas in the West Bank (p.10) to provoke hate and demonize Israel according to the report. In geographical maps, the entire nation of Israel was erased and non-existing which "perpetuates the denial of Israel as a legitimate state, invalidating Israel's status and rights as a sovereign nation while actively nurturing an attitude of disrespect and hatred for Israel and Israelis." (Ibid. p.11.) Also, terms as jihad, martyrdom, and violence were frequently used in the material, as the report states;

UNRWA-produced material frequently references, and sometimes directly reproduces, texts and phrases from the PA textbooks that glorify violence and sacrificing one's life and blood to defend the "motherland." Such examples include

Arabic grammar exercises that use the language of jihad and sacrifice and passages that celebrate known terrorists such as Dalal Mughrabi. (Ibid. p.9)

The PA provided material did not mention peace at any degree in the schoolbooks either, not as an ideal, or goal, or possibility, neither did peacemaking or treatment of peace. This, leaving no room for reflections on peacebuilding and coexistence with Jews or Israelis to the Palestinian children. But rather portraying sacrificing your blood for your motherland, leads one to think that it means; go and fight, do an honorable thing for the case, and if you die doing it, we will honor you as we do with Dalal Mughrabi. As the Norwegian newspaper Aftenposten wrote; “In the new schoolbooks in Palestine, the land of Israel does not exist. References to the peace processes are deleted. Instead, pupils are taught that martyrdom is “the most important in life” (Rønneberg, 2019).

#### ***5.4 Martyrs and the freedom fight***

To throw a stone is to be “one of the guys”; to hit an Israeli car is to become a hero; and to be arrested and not confess to having done anything is to be a man (Kuttab, 1988).

But what lies in the meaning of words like martyrs and fighters in the Palestinian discourse? And do children have a role and meaning in the ongoing political situation? In order to understand and analyze the later findings, I will later present and discuss, I find it necessary to bring this topic into further clearness on what history has shown.

The director of the Palestinian Ministry of Education, Naela Fahmawi Oudeh, participated in a radio program at a high school for girls. The program was held on the day of the Palestinian Keffiyeh<sup>7</sup> the director spoke about how the;

Palestinian keffiyeh has been colored with the purest blood, the blood of the Martyrs (Shahids) of Palestine during their resistance to the occupation, and the keffiyeh has

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<sup>7</sup> The keffiyeh is a traditional headdress worn by Palestinian men. The keffiyeh remains a symbol of rank, worn by Palestinian men to assert their positions of authority

become the shroud of the Palestinian fighter who has sacrificed his soul for the homeland (Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, 2017).

The director here exclusively praised the blood and souls which had been sacrificed for the cause of liberation of the land.

#### **5.4.1 Safety of the Palestinian children**

The use of children in the military strategy is not a new phenomenon, as previously shown in chapter 2. in the PA. They are called “Children of the Stones”.

The queen of Sweden, Silvia, was according to Steinberg (2002), one of the first public figures who raised awareness and dared the question concerning who is responsible for the safety of the Palestinian children. Israel had addressed the issues before, that; Palestinian children were used as “soldiers”, placed in zones of battles, throwing rocks by the Palestinian fractions, used as human shields, but it got little attention from the international community. In a U.N. held a meeting for the World Child Foundation, queen Silvia “strongly criticized Palestinian parents for abusing their children in this way”, writes Steinberg in Jerusalem Post in 2000. In her speech, queen Silvia said;

"As a mother, I'm very worried about this. I'd like to tell them to quit. This is very dangerous. The children should not take part... The Palestinian leaders are exploiting them and risking their lives in a political fight." (Steinberg, 2000).

Condoleezza Rice did also address the issue of using children as propaganda and portray martyrdom in a press meeting done back in 2000, where she said;

What does that picture of a baby dressed as a suicide bomber say about the hopes of Palestinians for life with the Israeli people as good neighbors? You know, we've all, in our lives, had experiences with hatred... If you're going to send your babies and your teenagers to kill other teenagers, something has broken down in this concept of humanity (HonestReporting, 2002).

In 2002 President Mahmoud Abbas was the advisor of Arafat, during the time Abbas gave an interview with a Kuwaiti newspaper admitting the use of children in violent uproars and criticizing it;

“I am against little children going out to die. It is a terrible thing. At least 40 children in Rafah [in the Gaza Strip] lost their arm from the throwing of Bangalore torpedoes [a form of pipe bomb]. They received 5 shekels [approximately \$1] in order to throw them.” (Honest Reporting, Alzamin, 2002).

Amnesty International reported on the happenings of children being used as suicide bombers among the Palestinian factions (Amnesty, 2004). But evidently, there is little that has been done by President Mahmoud Abbas to end the abusive use of children in uproars in the West Bank under his presidency. The Norwegian newspaper *Verdens Gang* (VG) reported in 2017 how children in the age of 10 participated in throwing rocks at Israeli security soldiers among other grown men attacking (Amundsen, 2017). It’s questionable if the kids were well aware of the risk they are taking. A report done by the NGO UN Watch told that Mahmoud Abbas had two occasions posted pictures of himself with 2 boys, one had attempted to stab Israeli civilians with a knife at a bus stop, the other one throwing rocks. Abbas had praised the boys for the peaceful resistance (Neuer & Rovner, 2019).

#### **5.4.2 Palestinian Authority’s Martyr's Fund**

Payments and salaries to people committing attacks on Israelis, whether the Israelis are infants, children, soldiers, or elderly, are given to the person who conducts the crime, or their families, by the PA. The payment program is called the Palestinian Authority Martyr's Fund. It originated in 1964 by Fatah and was set up as an assistance program to support the families of the Palestinian *fedayeen* as mentioned in chapter 2. Over the years the program and the payments have increased. As Hassan Abd Rabbo, an official spokesman for Palestine Liberation Organization’s Commission of Prisoners and Released Prisoners’ Affairs expressed;

...it is the right of all of the prisoners and martyrs who have struggled and sacrificed for Palestine to receive their full salaries from the PA (Rosenbaum, 2017).

Also, Rami Hamdallah, the previous prime minister, stated that inmates in Israeli prisons are “prisoners of war...their cause is the cause of all of us.” (Rosenbaum, 2017)



A translation of the Palestinian authority's national budget of the year 2016 was done by the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) and was given to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs in Washington D.C. in 2016. The translated version of the budget shows the Palestinian Authorities Institute for Care for the Families of Martyrs, is "responsible for ensuring a dignified life to the families of all those martyred and wounded as a result of being participants or bystanders in the revolution." This including individuals killed in the Israeli offensive, as well as individuals being killed while attacking Israel, or its civilians (House of Government, 2016<sup>8</sup>). When giving the report, the President of MEMRI stated that:

..the financial and other support given by the Palestinian Authority (PA) to those who have continued their terrorist activities after the Oslo Accords, in which Yasser Arafat made a commitment, on behalf of the Palestinian people, to stop all terrorist activity. By providing this support, the PA is encouraging terrorism in violation of its Oslo commitment. Furthermore, the PA has been using money granted by donor countries for this purpose, and by doing so, has made them complicit in encouraging terrorism as well (Ibid, p.1).

By this, it is arguable if the PA is not only violating the Oslo commitments but also infringes the 1999 U.N. Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terror and the 2001 U.N. Security Council Resolution to combat international terror in the aftermath of 9/11 (Rosenbaum, 2017).

In the year 2018, Australia decided to stop its whole funding to the Palestinian Authority. Julie Bishop, the Australian Foreign Minister said the decision was based on the payments done by the Palestinian Authority to convicted terrorists jailed in Israel (JTA. & Staff, 2018).

A Norwegian Defense Research Establishment analyst, Brynjar Lia, addressed in his book *A Police Force without a State*, that the Palestinian leadership gave preference in police recruitment to individuals who had served prison terms in Israeli jails for terror-related offenses (Lia, 2006. P. 137). He argued that it made it possible for terrorists to mold the police force "as a vehicle for achieving national independence [rather] than as a non-political

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<sup>8</sup> For more, see: <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA00/20160706/105161/HHRG-114-FA00-Wstate-CarmonY-20160706.pdf>

law and order agency” (Ibid, p. 429-31). He further noted that the Fatah paramilitaries “made themselves indispensable as popular forces in anti-Israeli riots and clashes” (Ibid, p. 432).

At a ceremony to honor Palestinian martyrs and prisoners, held in the West Bank in 2018, Abbas arguably stated that he would set aside the rest of the working people, to pay the martyrs;

If we had one single penny left, we would spend it on the families of the martyrs and the prisoners. and only then on the rest of the people. We value and respect this group of people. The way we see it, they are paving the path for the liberation of Palestine for the sake of future generations...We consider the martyrs and the prisoners to be stars in the sky of the Palestinian people and struggle. They have top priority in everything (Toameh, 2018; Memri, 2018).

Abbas confirmed in the same ceremony the origins of this fund, and how valuable the mujahideen and martyrs are to the PA by saying;

..in 1965, only a few days after the Palestinian revolution was launched, the first mission to be carried out by the martyr Yasser Arafat was to establish the institution for the welfare of the families of Palestinian mujahideen and martyrs. These are the pioneers, ... We will look after them and protect them and their families (Memri, 2018).

Abbas is here saying the fund will continue to reward and protect the families of the martyrs, referring to them as pioneers.

### **5.4.3 Palestinian Prisoners Law No. 19**

But to understand the effects the program has on Palestinian society it's necessary to explain the program in further depth. Critical voices have been calling out the program for a Pay for Slay system incorporated in the bureaucracies of the PA, arguing that it makes terrorist attacks on Israelis a lucrative career since the monthly payments exceed the normal income several times in the PA territories. (Feith & Gerber, 2017).

President Mahmoud Abbas has several times public stated he is opposed to widespread violence in which occurred during the Intifadas (1987-1993 and 2000-2005), and there is cooperation with his security forces and Israel, preventing a new intifada (Yaari, 2017). Not forgetting that at the same time the PA is honoring small scale terrorism attackers among the population, for example, the incident where a 28-year-old American veteran died after a Palestinian went into a crowd stabbing random persons with a knife, the Fatah, party of President Abbas “praised the attacker as a heroic martyr” and the broadcasting the funeral at the official PA TV station (Rosenbaum, 2017).

Feith and Sanders highlight in the article *The Department of Pay for Slay* that “Non-democratic societies lack rule of law, but they generally don’t lack laws. Their laws tell us a lot about them”, and shows to the legislation in the PA’s “Amended Palestinian Prisoners Law No. 19 (2004).” (Feith & Gerber, 2017). The law here provides economical security and benefits for the individuals who by any chance are caught by Israel for either; knifing (stabbing, yielding with a knife) shooting, running over (car-ramming), or bombing individuals and civilians in Israel. Furthermore, some articles of the law exempt and guarantee released prisoners serving more than a year in Israel, from tuition fees in universities and government schools and free health insurance. Others convicted in the same law may get pension covered by the PA among other benefits. Feith and Sanders put it like this:

The law guarantees a “salaried position in a state institution” to any male ex-prisoner incarcerated for 10 or more years, and any female who served five years. The positions for such prisoners are high-ranking and highly paid... These benefits now apply also “to members of PLO factions arrested outside of Palestine for participating in the struggle for the independence and liberation of Palestine.” Bonuses are paid if the terrorists are Israeli Arabs or Arab residents of Jerusalem (Feith & Gerber, 2017).

This saying the Palestinian law guarantees a high position and highly paid jobs for prisoners committing highly questionable crimes in Israel, in the Palestinian institutions. Meaning individuals performing terrorist attacks, and get 10 years in prison, is guaranteed a safe job with benefits after being released according to Palestinian law. The gross national product per capita is proximately 258 U.S Dollars per month in the PA society, the national annual budget of the PA is \$4.4. billion (Feith & Gerber, 2017). Meanwhile, individuals imprisoned in

Israel for terrorist attacks are given a salary start of \$400 per month. If the individual is convicted of a crime given more than 3 years, the salary is \$570 per month, with a further rise in salary per month with the longer sentence (Ibid). In addition to the monthly payments, a one-time grant is given from the PA when the prisoner is being released, starting on 1,500 dollars for serving up to three years, and then \$ 6,000 and \$ 25,000 for longer served terms (Feith & Gerber, 2017).

To provide for families that have lost a family member, due to his or her's terrorist attacks, succumbing to the attack, the PA built the Institution of Care for the Families of the Martyrs. In the year 2016, the allotment alone was \$ 175 million. As Feith and Sanders argue due to these high payments, and protection by the Palestinian law that;

All of these payments increase according to the length of incarceration, which roughly correlates to the number of people that the terrorist killed or harmed. So, the more victims in Israel, the more money the PA pays to the terrorist (Ibid)

Skeptics are not entirely trusting the words of the PA and say the PA has avoided attention on the matter by providing the money through the PLO. The US Congress decided in 2017, through the aid appropriation act, an order for “dollar-for-dollar reduction for all pro-terrorism payments made by either the PA or the PLO”, giving less for every dollar that is given out through this fund (Feith & Gerber, 2017). The New York Post addressed this issue the same year, saying that the PA uses half of its received money from foreign aid to reward terrorism.

The PA sends a salary to each Palestinian imprisoned for an attack on Israelis, hitting over \$3,000 a month after 30 years. Other stipends go to families of “martyrs” killed in the act. That's \$344 million for 2017 that's not going to build roads or hospitals. Knowing that you or your family will be taken care of is a clear incentive to kill (New York Post, 2017).

Furthermore, in 2019, after foreign countries had withheld some of the financial aid, Abbas prompted Arab foreign ministers for support. When addressing the financial support to terrorists, Abbas stated;

We've been paying them since 1965 because they died or were imprisoned or wounded for the sake of a national interest and not for personal reasons. It's our duty to care for the families (Tawil, 2019).

Abbas here saying the PA has been paying individuals and their families, who have committed crimes, saying they have done it for the sake of national interest.

Also, the newly elected Biden administration of the U.S has revealed that the PA has and continues to use international financial aid to pay convicted individuals and their families (Kredo, 2021). According to the administration, the PA used up to \$151 million in 2019 on this program. Furthermore, indications showed that nearly \$191 million had been used the same year on "deceased Palestinians referred to as 'martyrs.'" (Ibid). Due to criticism of this topic, the leader of the PA's Prisoners and Ex-Prisoners Authority, Qadri Abu Bakr stated this year that; "The issue of the prisoners and the families of the martyrs is a sacred one for us." (Tawil, 2021). The PA administration leaving no doubt that the program is of value for the ruling authorities in the West Bank.

## *5.5 Summary*

I have in this chapter shown some examples of how international leaders have called out the incitement done by President Mahmoud Abbas during his presidency. Further on have I given an outline of the content of the PA-provided schoolbooks, as well as an overview of the Palestinian Authority Martyr's Fund and Palestinian Prisoners Law No. 19. Most of the foreign aid to the Palestinians is given in support to the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, to strengthen and reform the Palestinian Authority, which it was established. This implies, the aid is given to improve the living standards of the Palestinians, to demonstrate the benefits of peace and coexistence with Israel, in which the agreement was settled.

## 6 Presentation of the findings

This chapter will present the findings of this research. I will start with the identity of the Palestinian state, then the sacrifices, the heroes and the victims, before I will present Abba's portrait of peace with Israel. Six documents have been examined as research data. The charter of PLO is being referred to as P1. The speeches of Mahmoud Abbas held in the U.N. General Assembly have been numbered according to the year they were held, from 2014-2019. The speech from 2014 is referred to as S14, the speech from 2015 is referred to as S15, and so on until the speech in 2019, as S19. To further notice, in the year 2016 President Mahmoud Abbas did hold any speech in the General assembly, this year is therefore not included.

To further research the grounds of perspectives Mahmoud Abbas's speeches in the General Assembly derive from, I will start with present a review of the remaining articles in the charter. I will also show selected articles from the PLO Charter before each topic in my findings.

### *6.1 A review of the PLO Charter*

As shown in chapter 4, in 1998, the Palestine National Council (PNC) gathered in Gaza in consideration of revising the 1968 PLO charter. This was a part of the peace deal with Israel and Yassir Arafat had promised before signing the Oslo Accord in 1993. The PNC met together with former President Clinton, to amend the articles of the Palestine National Charter which was in offense to the state of Israel. However, a revised version of the charter has not come to light. There has not been a new version of the charter that has officially been adopted by the PLO, neither have any revised versions been published by the Palestinian National Authority. It is also unavailable on any of the official websites (Kedar, 2018.; Passia, 2014.; ICC, 2020; Neuer & Rovner, 2019.; Michael & Fishman, 2012).

However, the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs has published a list showing the key articles which were supposed to be amended in the 1968 charter. In my attachment, the amended articles are marked and I have not included them in my review or analysis. The articles which

are not included in my analysis are; Article 8, 9, 10, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23. The rest of the 33 articles are presented.

### **6.1.1 Charter of the PLO**

In the charter, Palestine is described as the homeland of the Arab Palestinian people, and Palestine is defined according to the borders during the British Mandate, which includes the whole State of today's Israel (Article 1 & 2). The Palestinian identity is being transmitted from parents to children, neither the Zionist occupation nor the disaster or dispersal which has occurred, makes the Palestinians lose their Palestinian Arab identity (Article 4 & 5). Rejection of national rights to Jews in Palestine, Jews who resided before the “beginning of the Zionist invasion will be considered Palestinians” (Article 5 & 6). The national duty is to educate the Palestinian individuals in an Arab revolutionary manner, by every means of information and education possible, both spiritual and material. All Palestinians must be prepared for armed struggle and must be willing to sacrifice their life or health in the liberation of the territories (Article 7) from the occupying state (Israel). Liberation is a part of the three main mottoes (Article 11). Arab unity is highlighted, though the Palestinian identity must be safeguarded, and not changed (Article 12). This is further explained by stating that Arab unity is intertwined with Palestinian liberation; “Arab unity leads to the liberation of Palestine, the liberation of Palestine leads to Arab unity” (Article 13). In which the Palestinian people have a unique role to “vanguard in the realization of this sacred (qawmi) goal” (Article 14). The spiritual aspect is highlighted and of high importance, Palestine is referred to as the Holy land, and the people will look for support in all spiritual forces globally (Article 16). The liberation of Palestine is highlighted, and the Palestinian people are friends with all people who are peace-loving and freedom-loving (Article 17 & 18). Justice and freedom, sovereignty is important, and the PLO will partake in the liberation of Palestine accordingly (Article 24 & 25). The PLO is responsible to retrieve its homeland through struggle “-in all military, political, and financial fields and also for whatever may be required by the Palestine case on the inter-Arab and international levels” (Article 26). Cooperation with other Arab states is important and will be done accordingly to the policy among them, and it will not be interrupted by the war of liberation of Palestine (Article 27). Furthermore, the national revolution will reject all forms of intervention and will fulfil the aim (Article 28 & 29). The

popular army, the fighters, and the carriers of arms in the war of liberation will also be a protective force for the Palestinian Arab people (Article 30).

The charter of PLO does have a degree of religious language. It has a nationalistic and patriotic perspective, and the state of Palestine is set to cover most of today's Israel. It is a revolution where all Palestinians are obliged to fight. Article 7 clearly states that every Palestinian must be willing to sacrifice his life for the eradication of the state of Israel since its goal is the liberation of the Palestinian homeland.

The PLO is clear that no discrimination will occur, and guarantees freedom of worship, though currently Jews are not allowed to worship on the Temple Mount by the Muslim clerics, neither by the PA or the people (Article 16). They describe themselves as peace-loving and freedom-loving, and but they are not friends with the only democratic state in the Middle East according to Articles 17 &18.

They are prepared to use different tactics to retrieve their homeland and it will reject any Jews residing in the territories who were not there before the Zionist invasion. They are not setting any date, but since Zionism in the area started in the 1920s, it's unlikely any Jews can be allowed to stay in the territories according to this charter.

The PLO is responsible to retrieve its homeland through struggle," - in all military, political, and financial fields and also for whatever may be required by the Palestine case on the inter-Arab and international levels" (Article 26). Article 27 clearly states it is a war of liberation, PLO is using a language that implies it is a war, not only a conflict over territories.

## ***6.2 Identity of the Palestinian state***

Articles from P1 related to the topic;

**Article 1:** Palestine is the homeland of the Arab Palestinian people; it is an indivisible part of the Arab homeland, and the Palestinian people are an integral part of the Arab nation.



**Article 2:** Palestine, with the boundaries it had during the British Mandate, is an indivisible territorial unit.

**Article 4:** The Palestinian identity is a genuine, essential, and inherent characteristic; it is transmitted from parents to children. The Zionist occupation and the dispersal of the Palestinian Arab people, through the disasters which befell them, do not make them lose their Palestinian identity and their membership in the Palestinian community, nor do they negate them.

**Article 7:** That there is a Palestinian community and that it has material, spiritual, and historical connection with Palestine are indisputable facts. It is a national duty to bring up individual Palestinians in an Arab revolutionary manner. All means of information and education must be adopted in order to acquaint the Palestinian with his country in the most profound manner, both spiritual and material, that is possible. He must be prepared for the armed struggle and ready to sacrifice his wealth and his life in order to win back his homeland and bring about its liberation.

**Article 12:** The Palestinian people believe in Arab unity. In order to contribute their share toward the attainment of that objective, however, they must, at the present stage of their struggle, safeguard their Palestinian identity and develop their consciousness of that identity, and oppose any plan that may dissolve or impair it.

**Article 16:** The liberation of Palestine, from a spiritual point of view, will provide the Holy Land with an atmosphere of safety and tranquility, which in turn will safeguard the country's religious sanctuaries and guarantee freedom of worship and of visit to all, without discrimination of race, color, language, or religion. Accordingly, the people of Palestine look to all spiritual forces in the world for support.

P1 states that the identity is Arab, and it is likely to understand that the identity is linked to the land since it is saying that nor the Zionist occupation, or dispersal, will not make them lose their identity. At the same time, they are highlighting that the identity is transmitted from parents to children, which can be understood that though children are not born in the territories it is important for the PLO that Palestinian parents raise their children in the understanding that their Palestinian identity is linked to the land. From this standpoint, it can be viewed that the PLO makes it a necessity for Palestinians abroad to be involved in the

cause of the land. Article 7 explains this by saying that the national duty is to educate the Palestinian individuals in an Arab revolutionary manner, by every means of information and education possible, both spiritual and material. And also, all Palestinians must be prepared for armed struggle and must be willing to sacrifice his life or health in the liberation of the territories (Article 7). PLO is here saying they are expecting individuals to get involved in armed struggle for the land, it is accordingly a national duty to get involved, participate and educate others in the cause of liberation, also in a spiritual way. Article 16 refers to the land as a Holy land, and the liberation of the land (from the Jews) will give safeguard the country's religious sanctuaries and guarantee freedom of worship without discrimination of race and religion. All spiritual forces who would support, are welcomed by the Palestinian people. P1 draws a spiritual picture and links the land and the identity of the Palestinian state with religion and religious practice.

The P1 shows to an importance of an Arab unity, which can be understood as they do seek and want support from the Arab nations in the region.

Mahmoud Abbas starts most of his speeches with a greeting with religious terms, by giving a salute to the god in his religion.

S15; In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful. H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykkesøft, President of the General Assembly, H.E Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, Excellencies, Heads of Delegations

S18: In the name of God, the most merciful and beneficent. Excellency, Ms. Maria Fernanda Espinosa, President of the United Nations General Assembly, Excellency, Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

S19; In the name of God, the most Merciful and Beneficent. Excellency, Mr. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, President of the United Nations General Assembly, Excellency, Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ladies and Gentlemen, Heads and Members of Distinguished Delegations. Peace, Mercy and Blessings of God be upon you.

Though the UN General Assembly is not specifically a religious audience, several of the members have religious states presenting. He is hereby stating to the audience his and the

PA's religious stand by using religious terms. Why he is doing this in a non-religious gathering, can be argued that he desires to show that he is religious, and wants to give honor to his faith, and at the same time, showing honor to the Muslim states. By using the religious language in the beginning, he sets a stage for common interest and common values, which can bring a sense of unity and brotherhood among believers, which is mentioned in the P1. Since he also is the leader of the PLO, he is hereby giving a salute to the different member organization which has a more religious aspect than Fatah and PLO have.

Abbas addresses the religious sites and links it to the Palestinian identity when he addressed the General Assembly in 2014, 2015, 2017, saying;

S14: The occupation's campaign specifically targeted the City of Jerusalem and its inhabitants, attempting to artificially alter the spirit, identity and character of the Holy City, focusing on Al-Aqsa Mosque, threatening grave consequences.

S15: Palestine is a country of holiness and peace. It is the birthplace of Christ, the messenger of love and peace, and the Isra' and Mi'raj (ascension to heaven and night journey) of Mohammed, peace be upon him, who was sent as a mercy unto the world.

S17: Jerusalem, the capital of the State of Palestine, is bigger and more ancient for its Arabic identity to be altered with a measure or a decision. The identity of Jerusalem and its history will not be forged.

Abbas is here mentioning two of the main monotheistic religions, he is referring to Christianity and Islam. What he does not mention is the religion which both of these two religions historically derive from; Judaism (Ancient Israelite belief). As ancient scriptures refer to Jesus from Nazareth as a Jewish man living under a Jewish kingship which upheld Judaic laws in the name of the land of the time; Judeah and Samaria. He is also clear that he views Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine, and that the city's identity is linked to the Arabic identity.

Abbas is mentioning Moses in S17 (S17 below) which according to ancient texts were a leader of the Jewish people during the exodus of Egypt, but also the person who received the Torah, the Laws of the Jewish religion. It can be argued if Abbas here is referring to the Jewish religion, Judaism, but more likely he is referring to the Moses described in the Koran.

If he was referring to Judaism, he would then be accepting or admitting the “religious co-rights” religious Jews have to the area, which Abbas has not done previously, neither has the parties of Fatah and PLO. Therefore, it's arguable likely that Abbas is appealing to Christians and Muslims in these statements. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher is the church that is believed to be the birthplace as well as the place of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ in Christianity. Abbas is clarifying this in his speech in S17;

S17: This is the holy land of Prophet Muhammad, the cradle of Jesus Christ and the burial site of Moses. We say that Jerusalem is the city of peace, the city of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the first of the two Qibla, the second mosque and the third of the two Holy Mosques, and the city of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

US President Trump's decision tonight will not change the reality of the city of Jerusalem, nor will it give any legitimacy to Israel in this regard, because it is an Arab Christian and Muslim city, the capital of the eternal state of Palestine.

Abbs is saying that Jerusalem is an Arab Christian and Muslim city. He is here referring directly to Christian Arabs which is a minority in the current Arab nations. It can therefore be a proper argument that he is not referring to a unity between the three monotheistic religions, which includes Judaism, but rather a unification of belonging to Jerusalem between the two others.

Furthermore, Abbas said in his speech in 2015 that he did not accept the worship of Jews on the Temple Mount,

S15: I call on the Israeli Government, before it is too late, to cease its use of brutal force to impose its plans to undermine the Islamic and Christian sanctities in Jerusalem, particularly its actions at Al-Aqsa Mosque, for such actions will convert the conflict from a political to religious one, creating an explosive in Jerusalem and in the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

S15: The Israeli government is acting to implement this program in violation of the situation before and since 1967, and it is therefore committing a major error because we will not agree to this, and our Palestinian people will not accept the implementation of this plan, which inflames the feelings of the Palestinians and the

Muslims everywhere.... It will transform the conflict from a political conflict to a religious one and wreak havoc in Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian land.

Abbas here stated that both Palestinians and Muslims everywhere, meaning, globally, would be inflamed, as well as the Palestinian people would not tolerate nor agree to Jewish religious activity on the Temple Mount. This can be viewed as that Abbas rely on support from other Muslims globally. It can be argued that he is placing the religious site as a trembling stone in the conflict which links the identity of Palestine according to Abbas, to religion and religious sites. He also addressed his views on the dangers of recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in 2017;

S17; He said in a speech in response to Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, "These measures are a reward to Israel's violations of international resolutions and an encouragement for Israel to continue its policy of occupation, settlements, apartheid and ethnic cleansing."

Abbas added, "These measures also serve extremist groups attempting to turn the conflict in our region into a religious war that is dragging the region, which is living critical situations in the midst of international conflicts and endless wars. This is what we have always warned of and we have rejected and fought."

Abbas is using rather harsh rhetoric on describing the state of Israel when using words like apartheid and ethnic cleansing. His discourse can be viewed as less diplomatic.

S19: In East Jerusalem, the occupying Power is waging a reckless, racist war against everything Palestinian, from the confiscation and demolition of homes, to assaults on clergy, to the eviction of our citizens from their homes, to attempts to violate the sanctity of the holy Al-Aqsa Mosque and Church of the Holy Sepulchre, to the legislation of racist laws, to the denial of access by worshippers to the holy places.

Abbas addresses in this quote, the sanctity of the religious sites done by a racist and reckless occupying Power which is the state of Israel. He is arguably using harsh rhetoric in how he portrays the Israeli state.

Abbas addresses that PLO is the sole representative of the Palestinian people in his speech in 2018;

S18: This year the Palestinian National Council, the parliament of the State of Palestine, convened and renewed the legitimacy of our national institutions through the election of a new leadership for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people...And, the US Congress continues to insist on considering the Palestine Liberation Organization – which is recognized as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people by the overwhelming majority of countries of the world, including Israel – as a terrorist organization, at a time when the State of Palestine cooperates with the majority of countries of the world, including the United States, to combat terrorism.

For years, we have affirmed our readiness to the US administration to establish a Palestinian-American committee to examine the political and legal status of the PLO as a means of proving to them that the PLO is committed to achieving peace and combating terrorism, as well as to also demonstrate that Congress' legislation regarding the PLO is arbitrary, unlawful and unjustified and deliberately ignores the official agreement with the US Government to combat terrorism, an agreement we have also concluded with 83 other countries.

Abbas is stating that the PLO is committed to achieve peace and combating terrorism. However, Abbas does not clear on who the PLO wants to achieve peace with, and how the PLO is combatting terrorism domestically and internationally in his speeches.

### ***6.3 The sacrifices, the heroes, and the victims***

Excerpts from P1;

**Article 7:** ... All means of information and education must be adopted in order to acquaint the Palestinian with his country in the most profound manner, both spiritual and material, that is possible. He must be prepared for the armed struggle and ready to sacrifice his wealth and his life in order to win back his homeland and bring about its liberation.

**Article 14:** The destiny of the Arab nation, and indeed Arab existence itself, depend upon the destiny of the Palestine cause. From this interdependence springs the Arab nation's pursuit of, and striving for, the liberation of Palestine. The people of Palestine play the role of the vanguard in the realization of this sacred (qawmi) goal.

The P1 shows that sacrifice is viewed as an important and a necessity in order to bring the liberation of the land. Though it has not a clear religious tone, it is written in a manner that mentions struggle, liberation, and sacrifice and uses religious terms. It is referring to the struggle the people have to endure and shows to the sacrifice the people have to be obliged to give in this struggle of the liberation of the nation. P1 is clear in Article 7 that the people have to be ready to give up their wealth and their lives in this matter of liberation of Palestine in which is viewed as a sacred goal.

It can be argued that PLO is hereby encouraging the Palestinian people to be ready to give up both their wealth, which can incline money, pleasure, and prosperity on material things, like nice homes and businesses. Furthermore, both are inclining that the Palestinian people should be prepared, and or be willing to sacrifice their own lives to the greater cause, the liberation of territories, which is today's state of Israel. President Mahmoud Abbas presents sacrifice in his speech in 2015;

S15; It is unreasonable and painful – in light of all the enormous sacrifices we have made, our patience over all of these years of exile and suffering, and our acceptance to make peace according to the two-State solution based on international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative, and the Quartet Roadmap – that the question of Palestine unjustly remains unresolved.

Abbas is here saying that “we” have all made enormous sacrifices. He is here placing himself as a part of the people who also suffer in years of exile, this can be viewed as they are in exile when residing in the West Bank since they have not been given all of the lands the PA views as occupied. However, he is not clarifying what sacrifices they all have made.

S14; Israel has confirmed during the negotiations that it rejects making peace with its victims, the Palestinian people... At this moment in which we are still suffering from the horrors of war, we face a formidable challenge to reconstruct what has been destroyed by the occupation.

S18: I salute our resilient and brave people in Palestine, in the refugee camps and in the diaspora with deepest respect and admiration for their heroic stances and their great sacrifices in defense of our people's inalienable rights in their homeland and their rights to self-determination and an independent State, with East Jerusalem as its eternal capital.

Abbas is in this statement saying that the Palestinian people are the victims of the state of Israel, which according to Abbas, is rejecting peace. He is also referring to brave people in Palestine, as well as international, which he highly respects, which have taken a heroic stance and great sacrifices for the right of the territories. He is saluting people who make sacrifices but is not clarifying what kind of sacrifices he is referring to more than they stand for their defense in right of their homeland, therefore it can be argued he is referring to the sacrifices P1 shows to. He is not addressing that he as a leader has the power to declare the Palestinian Authority with its territories with the current borders as an independent state. He is, however, saying that East Jerusalem is the Palestinian eternal capital, which could be implied as an unwillingness to have a Palestinian state without Jerusalem. Which can be viewed as a prolonging of the Palestinian people's suffering.

S19: I had hoped to come to you this year to proclaim together the end of this occupation, the Israeli occupation of my homeland, Palestine. But, regrettably, I stand before you today bearing the same miseries and pain that has been endured for so long by my people, who, despite all that they have suffered of injustice, oppression and occupation – still hold on to the hope of achieving their freedom and independence, as all other nations of the world.

Abbas here addresses that his people are suffering injustice, oppression, and occupation, and depicting miseries the Palestinians endures due to the lost territories. He is saying that despite the suffering, he says “they” still have hopes of achieving their independence and freedom. According to P1, the Palestinian people play the vanguard, the forefront, of the sacred goal of liberation of Palestine.

Abbas refers to the martyrs among the sufferings of Palestinian people in his speeches



S14: The difference today is that the scale of this genocidal crime is larger, and that the list of martyrs, especially children, is longer, as well as lists of the wounded and disabled, and that dozens of families have been completely decimated.

Abbas is highlighting that especially many children have become martyrs due to the genocidal crime done by the other part. However, the same year Abbas was called out on by international leaders that he did incite violence, something he later admitted. Further in both 2018 and in 2019, Abbas gives tribute to the martyrs as honorable;

S18: I pay tribute to our honorable martyrs and courageous prisoners and say to all Palestinians that we are soon approaching our day of freedom and independence and that the darkness of occupation will soon vanish.

S19: We salute our honorable martyrs, courageous prisoners and wounded heroes, and salute their resilient families who we will not give up on their rights. We salute to those remaining steadfast in our beloved homeland. The date of our freedom and the independence of State with its eternal capital Al-Quds is soon approaching.

When Abbas is clearly giving praise to martyrs in his speeches, he is addressing them not only as suffering martyrs but is addressing them as honorable, worthy of giving praise. He is giving individuals of which many have committed crimes such as murders, predominantly Israeli civilians. He is also thanking the heroes, it is questionable if he is giving a salute to the people and individuals who have conduct terrorist actions against Israeli civilians. Abbas is presenting the individuals who have conducted acts like this, as a role models to others, and can be viewed as he is legitimizing such acts of terror.

Abbas stated in his speech in 2014 and 2015;

S14: As usual, the Israeli government once again failed the test of peace. It breached an agreement with the American administration regarding the release of a group of Palestinian prisoners in the occupation's jails — and we continue to insist on releasing all of them.

S15: Has the time not come for thousands of Palestinian prisoners in Israel to see the light of freedom and live with their families?

Abbas is here referring to thousands of individuals imprisoned in Israel who he would like to be released into freedom and returned to their families. As all rules of law states individuals are convicted by the proof of evidence against them. By stating that he wants thousands of convicted persons out of jail before time, is a way of undermining the other state and portraying the convicted individuals as victims of the other. Abbas is also using words as “the light of freedom” and “live with their families”, in S15, which can be viewed as a way of awaking sympathy and empathy with his listeners.

#### ***6.4 Abbas's portrait of peace with Israel***

P1 states:

**Article 25:** For the realization of the goals of this Charter and its principles, the Palestine Liberation Organization will perform its role in the liberation of Palestine in accordance with the Constitution of this Organization.

**Article 26:** The Palestine Liberation Organization, representative of the Palestinian revolutionary forces, is responsible for the Palestinian Arab people's movement in its struggle - to retrieve its homeland, liberate and return to it and exercise the right to self-determination in it - in all military, political, and financial fields and also for whatever may be required by the Palestine case on the inter-Arab and international levels.

**Article 27:** The Palestine Liberation Organization shall cooperate with all Arab states, each according to its potentialities; and will adopt a neutral policy among them in the light of the requirements of the war of liberation; and on this basis it shall not interfere in the internal affairs of any Arab state.

**Article 28:** The Palestinian Arab people assert the genuineness and independence of their national (wataniyya) revolution and reject all forms of intervention, trusteeship, and subordination.

**Article 29:** The Palestinian people possess the fundamental and genuine legal right to liberate and retrieve their homeland. The Palestinian people determine their attitude toward all states and forces on the basis of the stands they adopt vis-a-vis to the Palestinian revolution to fulfill the aims of the Palestinian people.

**Article 30:** Fighters and carriers of arms in the war of liberation are the nucleus of the popular army which will be the protective force for the gains of the Palestinian Arab people.

In the speech of 2014, Abbas shows to the prospects how the PA views its role in history and in the conflict;

S14;..the Palestinian enlightened traditions of tolerance, coexistence and non-exclusion; that strengthens the culture of peace; that promotes the role of women; that establishes effective administration committed to the standards of good governance; and that cares for the needs and interests of its people.

He is here saying that the Palestinian traditions are of tolerance, coexistence, and non-exclusion. Abbas is here using rhetoric that can be viewed as flattering of his own government. He is not addressing the internal conflicts in his own community, such as the ongoing violent disagreement between Hamas and Fatah, the corruption in his own government, and the lack of democratic elections, nor the incitement, but states that their traditions strengthen the culture of peace. His statements from this quote can be said to be a tribute to himself and his own governing skills. In 2015, he elaborates this further;

S15; We do not respond to the Israeli occupation's hatred and brutality with the same. Instead, we are working on spreading the culture of peace and coexistence between our people and in our region.

Abbas is here implying that the PA is spreading the culture of peace and coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians, and to the region in the Middle East. He is here framing the PA as peacemaker as opposed to Israel which is from his perspective viewed as filled with hatred and brutality through the occupation. According to P1, the PLO shows a clear stand on the battle against the strong enemy, in which it is needed to fight. Israel is portrayed as the enemy

since it is the Zionist state according to P1. However, Abbas stated in 2014 that the PA will always maintain the traditions of the national struggle which were established by the Palestinian fedayeen;

S14; At the same time, I affirm that our grief, trauma and anger will not for one moment make us abandon our humanity, our values and our ethics; we will always maintain our respect and commitment to international law, international humanitarian law and the international consensus, and we will maintain the traditions of our national struggle established by the Palestinian fedayeen and to which we committed ourselves since the onset of the Palestinian revolution in early 1965.

Abbas is in this quote implying that even through the trauma and anger the PA remain their values and ethics, but will also continue the Palestinian revolution as both the Fatah and PLO onset to do in the beginnings of 1965, before the Six-Day war in 1967 and before Israel's occupation of certain territories. The fedayeen have a very disputed history of violence and terror, and many of them later joined the PLO.

Furthermore, he states in 2015, that Palestine is looking for peace and harmony and good neighborliness with all people and countries of the region;

S15: Palestine is a country of holiness and peace... This is Palestine that is still looking for peace, and its people want to live in their homeland in safety, security, harmony, stability and good neighborliness with all peoples and countries of the region.

Abbas is again referring to his own governing, as a peaceful administration and a holy land. He is saying that the PA is looking for peace. While he is not mentioning Israel, he does state that the PA wants peace with all peoples and countries of the region, which Israel is a part of. Abbas is here implying that Palestine desires stability and safety in their homeland, however, while saying homeland, it could be argued that he is meaning all of the homeland he says is taken from them, which the Palestinian revolution needs to liberate.

His rhetoric on the portrait of Israel can be viewed as rather harsh;

S14: This culture of racism, incitement and hatred was glaringly manifested in the despicable, appalling crime committed months ago by fascist settlers, who abducted the young Jerusalemite boy Mohammed Abu Khdeir, burnt him alive and killed him.

Abbas is here saying that Israel has a culture of racism. He is taking an incident done by Israeli individuals, which is a criminal act, portraying it as the culture of the whole state.

S14: I affirm in front of you that the Palestinian people hold steadfast to their legitimate right to defend themselves against the Israeli war machine and to their legitimate right to resist this colonial, racist Israeli occupation.

Both Abbas and Arafat rejected the offering of land as a peace deal by two different Prime Ministers, Ehud Barak, and Ehud Olmert as shown in chapter 2. The deal was based on the 1967 borders and would result in a two-state solution. It is therefore highly reasonable to question these statements by Mahmoud Abbas, he is also calling on Israel as an apartheid regime, apartheid was a government-ruled hierarchical system based on skin color, the PA has control over their territories, and can freely pray and worship on their holy place. Jews are restricted and not allowed to pray on the Temple Mount. It's questionable if this can be a legitimate claim while there are over 2 million Arabs, mostly descendants from the population before 1948, and other minorities such as Druze and Bedouins which have active roles in politics and the military in the State of Israel. While in the PA-controlled territories there are no Jews left, and Jews are risking their lives if they trespass accidentally.

S14: Israel refuses to end its occupation of the State of Palestine since 1967, but rather seeks its continuation and entrenchment, and rejects the Palestinian state and refuses to find a just solution to the plight of the Palestine refugees.

S15; As for the internal Palestinian situation, we are determined to preserve the unity of our land and our people. We will not accept temporary solutions or a fragmented State.

S18; We have always fully and positively engaged with the various initiatives of the international community that have aimed at achieving a peaceful solution between us and the Israelis, including the Arab Peace Initiative, which was recognized by the Security Council in its resolution 1515 (2003) ... Here, I must reiterate that we are not

against negotiations and have never rejected negotiations, and that we continue to extend our hands for peace.... Peace in our region cannot be realized without an independent Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and not some place in East Jerusalem as its capital, and with all of its holy sites. There is no peace otherwise. There is no peace with a state of temporary borders.

Abbas is here saying that peace is impossible without an independent state of Palestine, based on the 1967 borders, and with East Jerusalem as its capital. However, the international community with Barack Obama, said recognition of Israel as a Jewish nation should be addressed by the PA before so happens back in 2013 as shown in chapter 2. He is also saying the PA has aimed at achieving a peaceful solution on the matter with Israel, though by his statements of PLO being the sole representative of the Palestinian people, the charter of PLO says clear in Article 1 and 2 that Palestine is the homeland the Arab Palestinian people, and Palestine is defined according to the borders during the British Mandate, which includes the whole State of Israel (Article 1 & 2). Article 7 describes that all Palestinians must be prepared for armed struggle, and must be willing to sacrifice his life or health in the liberation of the territories from the occupying state (Israel). According to Abbas and the P1, the PA can be viewed as not interested in sharing the land.

S19: Yet, the Palestinian people will not surrender to the Israeli occupation regardless of the circumstances, and no matter the pain, and will remain steadfast on their land, resisting occupation by all available means, foremost peaceful popular resistance. This is our legitimate right and our national and moral obligation. Let everyone know that occupation cannot bring peace or security or stability for anyone.

Abbas is here implying that the Palestinian people will not give up the revolution and the goal of liberation of the territories no matter the pain the Palestinian people must endure. As shown to, Abbas is clear that East Jerusalem is their capital, hence, it is therefore likely to believe he means there will not be peace from the PA's perspective unless the occupation is ended in all of the areas that the PA implies Israel has. He is saying that no matter the pain the Palestinian people will remain steadfast on their land. They will continue to resist occupation by all available means, hence, foremost peaceful popular resistance. Abbas can be said to be holding the argument in both of his hands. By saying they will resist all occupation by all available

means, foremost peaceful, but he is not excluding the possibility for violent resistance. And he portrays it as the moral and national obligation to do so.

## 7 Discussion

In this chapter I will discuss the research question of this thesis; how does President Mahmoud Abbas's rhetoric reflect the Palestinian Authority's attitude/prospects towards peace with the state of Israel in the public discourse. The layout of the discussion is based on the three main categories I chose through the analysis. The first one is the Identity of the Palestinian state according to Abbas, there on sacrifices, hero's and victims of the Palestinian people, and to the end Abba's portrait of peace with Israel. I will here discuss the categories according to the theories presented in chapter 3.

### 7.1 *Identity of the Palestinian state*

The feeling of belonging to a land, and territorial decline is and have been, a cause for wars in centuries past. As shown in Kiernan's (2014) description of when territories are lost. Abbas does describe the loss of land in his speeches, so does both in the P1. Though this thesis does not argue on who has the right to the land, Yassir Arafat signed the Oslo Accord which was a step towards peace between the two parties, and recognition of the other part and their rights to part of the land. As shown in chapter 3. Weinberg et.al. argues that in traditional cultures religion is experienced in the collective sphere, which means that religion is a part of the nation's identity and plays a role in all levels of society (Weinberg & Pedahzur, 2004. P. 14). Kiernan also addressed that religion can also be understood and used as an ideological factor, or element, and be a part of a greater social understanding (Kiernan, 2014, s. 26). And that religion, holy sites, and history to land are often strongly linked to identity. Abbas uses religious rhetoric when he starts every speech in this research by giving thanks to his god. Most of the citizens in the West Bank are Sunni Muslims or Christian Arabs, and most of the society is viewed as traditional and patriarchal. Kiernan also highlighted the issue that religion as much as race, expansion, and idealization/ idolization are all ideological factors that can be used as a tool to lead to violence (Kiernan, 2014, s. 26). As shown in chapter 3, Juergensmeyer highlights the fact in the book *Terror in the mind of God: The global rise of religious violence*, that religion in itself cannot be seen as a cause in a direct link to violence, but a factor which can be used as a tool to intensify other elements in or to, a conflict.



Juergensmeyer's theory says that religion is not the main cause of anger which can lead to violence, however, it can complicate its expressions.

Abbas is however referring to the sites in Jerusalem which are viewed as holy places among Muslims and Christianity. He specifically mentioned both the prophet of Muhammad and Jesus as shown in S15 and S17. Abbas does hold the perception or viewpoint that these holy places were under threat to be violated by the other, the Zionists, which is something he states as I have shown to. In the S19, Abbas says; “the occupying Power is waging a reckless, racist war against everything Palestinian”, and referring to the holy places. There is no destruction of the holy places in Jerusalem done by the Zionist or the state of Israel. Though there are some days Jews are allowed by Israeli security forces to visit restricted parts of the Temple Mount for a restricted amount of the time of the day, they are not allowed to pray. This has been the status of the Temple Mount since 1967 as previously noted; Israel returned the control of the area to Waqf under Jordanian custodianship, in order to avoid further escalations and conflict. The Jewish clergy does not allow religious Jew to pray or trespass this. It can therefore be argued that the threat Abbas uses is more of it might be more imaginary than real. As Juergensmeyer argues that even though threats are viewed to be legitimate to the insiders of the group, or the ones who sympathize with those who perceive to be under a threat or violation, it might not be real. As Juergensmeyer says that violence occurs within groups that perceive to be violated or under threat, as a reply to this, violence becomes an answer (Juergensmeyer, 2017). But it does not contradict the complex situation of the area, Abbas states that the Palestinian people feel violated. Juergensmeyer has a point when referring to that political riots and social unjust can be intensified through spiritual eyes and viewpoints in which intertwined the conflict into somewhat of a cosmic dimension. And this can be argued if Abbas does through his speeches when referring to the holy sites and using religious viewpoints and rhetoric.

It can be said that Abbas does relate to metaphysical conflict between good and evil when referring to the holy sites and Israel. The worldly political battle is served a religious image by Abbas, and a reason for resisting peace with the other, which he describes as a racist occupier who rages war against the holy places of Islam and Christianity. While Abbas does not mention that the Temple Mount is a holy place for Judaism as well. Juergensmeyer argued that the cosmic war gives the picture of a spiritual war as much as a symbolic war. The enemies in the cosmic wars are often a state, a secular state, national groups, or other religious groups which needs to be opposed, resisted, and combated. Most often through riots, struggle,

revolutions, and violent attacks (Juergensmeyer, 2017). The establishment of Israel in 1948, and the Palestinian exodus which occurred due to the launched attack from Israel's neighboring countries, have become a crucial marker in Palestinian nationalism and identity. As Khalidi explains (shown in chapter 3) that the ongoing conflict has become a huge binding force that unites Palestinians.

The unity force is so strong that it predominately supersedes the opposing loyalties and potential identity conflicts between different socioeconomic classes, families, clans, religious groups, ideologies, and cultural traditions (Khalidi, 2010). And as Seif (2009) argued that the land of Palestine is viewed as sacred Islamic land, with the religious sites in Jerusalem and Hebron, seen as an integral part of the Muslim world.

It can be argued that Juergensmeyer's argument on cosmic war is hereby adaptable for the PA's attitude Abbas shows concerning peacebuilding with Israel. Israel must be resisted, the struggle must go on until territories are liberated, and therefore it is needed for the continuation of the revolution, which is a part of the Palestinian identity as P1 states in Article 16, that the liberation of Palestine, from a spiritual perspective, will give the Holy land an atmosphere of safety and tranquility, as much as the Palestinian people are looking for all spiritual forces in the world for the support of their cause. Based on this it can be argued that Abbas has the metaphysical dimension in his rhetoric when mentioning the struggle, the fighters are the Palestinian people, especially the martyr and the prisoners. Resistance in his rhetoric seems like the soldiers on earth who fight against the forces of right and wrong. Hence, violent attacks or terror attacks can therefore be viewed as a moral act of deed according to the martyr's founts of the PA and the honoring by Abbas in his speeches internationally. Though Abbas stated as shown to in S15 his seriousness concerning religious sites when changes on the Temple Mount would inflame feelings among Palestinians and Muslims everywhere, noting that conflict from the viewpoint of Abbas and the PA would be changed from a political conflict to a religious one. Abbas was here placing the holy site as a core of the issue, making religious sites and the allowance of Jewish presence as tremble stone, and which according to his claims turn in the conflict from a political one to a religious one. It could be noted that religion after all has a crucial role in the PA and the Palestinian identity when Abbas is using rhetoric with words such as "inflaming feelings among

Muslims” and “great havoc in Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian land”. It's questionable if Abbas was referring to that violent outbreaks could occur.

However, this thesis does not show to direct violent outbreaks after President Mahmoud Abbas's speeches at the U.N. General assembly, there are indications when Abbas is honoring martyrs and prisoners for their great sacrifices for the cause of liberation, which cannot be overlooked. When Palestinian schoolbooks are honoring martyrs, a term which is influenced by religious terms and which I will further address later, religion is used as a tool to justify the acts of violence done by individuals against the members of the other group. As noted, the newly conducted reports from the Palestinian schoolbooks show the honoring of individuals who had committed violent attacks on civilians, including children. And the confirming of Abbas himself back in 2014, that the PA incites against Israel in the educational systems, it is likely prohibiting not only the current society but also the future generation which does not learn about the possibilities of peace with Israel. The Palestinian children is educated about how much the Palestinian identity is linked to an armed revolution due to the Palestinian narrative that they are victims of the occupying state. And the struggle and victimization of the Palestinian people will continue until the liberation of the territories, which according to the P1, includes all of the territories of the state of Israel. The “troubles” as Terhoeven discusses, exist in societies where terrorism has grown or occurred, he explains that the concept of terrorism is often used as a tool to justify the use of violence by the ones who feel they are victims. This can be viewed as transferrable to the PLO, which is by Abbas's words the sole representative of the Palestinian people and is committed to achieving peace. However, Abbas does not say exclusively that the PLO is committed to peace with Israel but rather stating that it is committed to achieving peace in general, not specifying with who they would make peace with.

## ***7.2 Abbas's portrait of the sacrifices and heroes***

Khalili describes, as shown in chapter 3, that icons become a part of broader narrative of the nation, and nations are often portrayed as having an identity, a national character. The stories of nations are celebrated and commemorated in many different ways all over the world, from one generation to another, along with its history (Khalili, 2007).

The Nakba is the memory of the victimization of the Palestinian people, as Abbas presented the enormous sacrifices the people have made during the years in exile due to the Israeli occupation of his homeland Palestine. He also said that they would maintain the traditions of their national struggle which was established by the Palestinian fedayeen (self-sacrificers), and are committed to the Palestinian revolution from 1965. It can be viewed that the rhetoric of Abbas in which he portrays the fedayeen as victorious heroes. This can be viewed as adaptable to Khalili's description, which Abbas is interpreting past events of the fedayeen as an epic progress of revolutionary courage which he and the PA will continue, as his rhetoric seems to envision the nationalist history of Palestine towards an inevitable victory (Khalili, 2007. P. 93). The fedayeen were as shown in chapter 3, doing violent attacks on Israeli civilians. Terhoeven argued that individuals (hence, most typical for terrorist groups) who can be said to sacrifice something, or by placing their lives on the line against something greater than themselves, like a Leviathan state, becomes martyrs due to the narrative that they were victims from the beginning. As Terhoeven described that "this is not just true for suicide attacks, by now the almost "normal" form of attack" (Terhoeven, 2018. P.10). By sacrificing or confronting the other, even through attempted assassinations as Terhoeven states, they will be remembered as heroes in the group they belonged to. It can be argued that Abbas's use of rhetoric describes the fedayeen as heroes of the past who started the Palestinian revolution, as victims in exile but who took up arms against the occupying Zionist state. This can be said to be in line with Juergensmeyer's perspectives on the matter. Juergensmeyer pinpoints the issue of how death inside groups which includes terrorist activities, is being transformed and remembered as something more heroic and memorable. Arguing that this kind of communication is used as a tool towards others to remember the heroic act done. Abbas seems to portray the acts of the revolt of the fedayeen as memorable, and a tradition the PA wants to uphold. As Khalili highlighted that when a claimed legacy of revolt and riots, and the political organizations commemorate and also celebrate it, all revolts and wars against the common enemy of the nation as historic occurrences "in which the existence and resilience of the nation is affirmed" (Khalili, 2007. p. 93). Khalili also addressed that

By producing continuity between these distinct historical events, an essentialist identity of "us" and "them" is created, reinforcing the boundaries of the nation, while the nationalist ideology obscures class differences, gender disparities and potential religious discords within the nation (Khalili, 2007. p.93).

Meaning the troubles inside the society becomes secondary when the battle against the common enemy is the primary. And according to Terhoeven, “martyrs” are made in confrontation with the police, in hunger strikes, and in attempted assassinations, and they are usually remembered as heroes in sympathetic milieus and invoked to help close the ranks within the terrorist group itself (Terhoeven, 2018. p.10). Though the PA is not currently condemned as a terrorist group internationally, the PLO has a history, as well; members which are pushing activities. As shown to, Abbas himself said, the PLO is the sole representative of the Palestinian people. The P1 is clear on Article 7, that Palestinians must be prepared for armed struggle and be willing to sacrifice his life to win back their homeland, and its liberation.

As shown, Juergensmeyer links martyrdom to a religious act as a sacrifice, saying that martyrdom is being viewed in some groups as a testimony of one’s belief and commitment to one’s religion (Juergensmeyer, 2017) Furthermore, that “the destruction is performed within a religious context that transforms the killing into something positive” (Juergensmeyer, 2017. P. 209). The P1 is not a religious document, it is a political document, but it uses religious terms. Abbas does use religious rhetoric in his speech, but he stated that the conflict is political, but it could turn out to be a religious one if rules concerning the religious sites in Jerusalem were changed. However, Abbas saluting the martyrs is arguably a way of idealizing their acts, like Weinberg expressed that martyrdom has returned as an active factor in politics. The portraying of the circumstances of the Palestinians suffering under the racist occupation as Abbas presents in his speeches can be used to justify the acts of the individuals who conduct terror on the other side, by viewing themselves as solely victims. The system which the PA has built up in the Palestinian society by incorporating payments for the families of the martyrs makes suicidal acts to idealism as Weinberg et al. explained. If Abbas truly wants peace with the state of Israel, why is it that he, head of the PA, continues with offering the well financial incentives to spur up his people to conduct violence? Which he also knows that the state of Israel will act upon, as every rule of law state would, when violence occurs, the one who conducts the act will be met with the prosecution and in most cases, prison time. It can therefore be argued that individuals struggling financially in their daily life, seek a financial solution through committing a crime against civilians of the state of Israel, or the state of Israel, in order to gain payment by their government. Others may find solutions as sacrificing their life as a martyr as the study showed according to Yaari, in chapter 3. Abbas is

through his saluting to the martyrs and the imprisoned individuals upholding a narrative domestically that sacrificing for the Palestinian Authority is a praiseworthy act and an act which will be noticed and financially rewarded. This can and will continue a long-lasting drain of the conflict, as much as it creates instability for the Palestinian people when common taxpayers' social welfare and security is not the highest priority of the Palestinian Authority. Khalili explains that the refugee camps, which today are cities, have become militant and military bases instead of miserable places in the heroic Palestinian narrative and function as forceful nationalistic symbols. It can be argued that the narrative of the hero has armed resistance as the central topic in the Palestinian context. As the PA supports the UNWRA syllabus, the education system is educating the coming generations without addressing peace or co-existing nor a map with the existence of Israel. As Inbari (2019) wrote that children are given plastic rifles at schools to pretend to be warriors. Children are taught that liberation of the whole of Palestine is needed, educating children that struggle is not over before the land is liberated, the children can be said to be victims of the PA leaderships propaganda. Refusing to teach them and give them hope of a future with peace and coexisting. As Yaari writes; “the school pageants at which small children are praised for saying they want to grow up to be killers of the Jewish “occupiers,” (Yaari, 2017), indoctrinating children to sacrifice their lives for the bigger cause. It can be noted that the argument of Weinberg et al, when the practiced faith teaches a direct an immediate reward for entering the afterlife as a martyr, “such deaths not something to be avoided, but rather something to be embraced” (Weinberg et al, 2006. p. 76). The PA can be said to transfer the struggle against Israel to the next generation. It can be argued if the syllabus is more of a reflection of the true ideology of the PA and their plan of action. As previously noted in chapter 3, there is an intertwining of victimhood and heroes in the memorialization and commemoration of martyrs in Palestinian society. Martyrs become national heroes, portrayed almost like icons. Abbas upholds this in his speeches as well as his acts presented in chapter 5. Families are given honor, sponsorships, and payment from the authorities, and political factions show the martyr's commitment to resistance (to Israel), used as a tool for sustaining the struggle. Martyrs become like fertile to the resistance, somebody's death can spark motivation for riots and reactions in the population. "A common comment during the height of the second uprising was that, for every activist killed, ten more would become involved as a result” Allen explained (Allen, 2006. p.118). Also noting that school, streets, and city places are named after ceased individuals who has aimed and killed civilians,

Abbas praised the terrorist as heroes and martyrs and the law who rewards such acts. Not forgetting that Mahmoud Abbas has admitted to the use of incitement in the PA-controlled territories.

### *7.3 Abbas's portrait of peace with Israel*

As shown in chapter 3; longstanding conflict drains a society on all levels and politicians have a major impact on the social scene the society is finding itself in. Political exclusion and corruption may fuel instability and conflict as Muller and Tobias (2016) describe. Corruption is a factor in the Palestinian Authorities. Also, political institutions such as the PA with the head leader, Mahmoud Abbas may as well be a factor for conflict in societies, but he can also be the preventer of conflict and diversity between Israel and the Palestinian society as rhetoric can turn people against people ending violent clashes. As shown, the definition of dangerous speech is by Benesch; “Any form of expression (e.g., speech, text, or images) that can increase the risk that its audience will condone or commit violence against members of another group” (Benesch, 2018).

As previously mentioned in chapter 4, former President Barack Obama addressed the need for the PA to reject incitement towards Israel and recognize the legitimacy of Israel, same did the UN Security Council which implicitly criticized Palestinian leaders' inflammatory rhetoric and incitement against Israel. President Mahmoud Abbas has admitted that they do incite against Israel in both the media and in educational institutions.

PLO states that they desire the removal of the Zionists in the territories. There are complexities with these findings. Abbas is through his speeches making references to the members of the group viewed as *the other*. He is making a clear distinction on who the other are, the Zionists. He pictures as a threat very seriously and it is discussable if some take his statements so seriously that violence or attack against the other, could become acceptable in order to solve a problem. As previously shown to people, or groups as been framed as “scapegoats” for different reasons. It can be an economic failure, illness, or just an enemy to a society, or the world. As Abbas can be said to blame the Zionists and the Zionist occupation

for the issues the PA has. If this is a form of communication which has can termed as “dangerous speech” by several scholars (Benesch, 2018) needs to be further addressed. The five variables outlined by Benesch do affects the dangerousness of a speech can act in time and place and due to circumstances. The five variables explained by her are; the speaker, the audience, the speech act itself, social and historical context, and the means of dissemination (Benesch, 2013). Abbas and the rhetoric used in his speeches can be said to fit some of the variables described. He is the head of both the Fatah and the PLO, and he is the President of the Palestinian Authority, by this, he has a tremendous impact on the Palestinian people with his public statements. The audience in his speeches presented is the international community, but it is also the Palestinian people. Abbas does speak in Arabic when holding his speeches, he is using religious sites and religious language, referring to the Palestinian people which endures a longstanding conflict that has cost tremendous amounts of lost lives affecting the family and relatives. As shown, corruption among the top leaders is a factor in the society and drains the aid which the Palestinian people should have had to boost their economy, strengthen the health institutions, and the peacebuilding and stability. Mahmoud Abbas is a highly influenced and powerful speaker. His domestic audience can be said to have grievances and or fear the speaker can cultivate, combined with words that call to violence, as he has admitted he has done in the past. The withholding of elections for over a decade may weaken Abbas’s trust among the Palestinians,

In this case, it has links to the honoring of martyrs who have sacrificed for the cause of liberation. The PLO has a history of violence which must not be overlooked, there is a longstanding conflict between territories, and there is seemingly a lack of efforts to solve grievances and accept the state of Israel as Jewish, as Benesch describes (2013) it is a factor of dangerous speech.

Then, there is a seemingly some duality in Abbas's rhetoric when he presents that the PLO is committed to peace which should in this conflict be with the state of Israel, but the charter of PLO is stating Palestinians needs to be willing to sacrifice his life for the liberations and the removal of the Zionist occupation. It’s questionable what kind of peace with Israel Abbas and the PA then wants.



## 8 Conclusion

I will in this chapter do the final summarize of this thesis, and show my conclusion to the research question; how does President Mahmoud Abbas's rhetoric reflect the Palestinian Authority's attitude towards peace with the state of Israel in the public discourse?

As well as answering the two secondary questions;

- *How does the Palestinian Authority with Mahmoud Abbas communicate who their "enemies" are?*
- *How does Mahmoud Abbas portrait the Palestinian Revolution?*

In front of the international community, Abbas presents the attitude of a PA who is committed to a non-violent struggle of liberation of territories, who are combatting terrorism together with the international community. A PA that is peace-loving and just and works for democracy and as well as human rights. Abbas's rhetoric presents a PA who are suffering and are continuous victims due to the "racist occupying" state of Israel.

The PA was for almost 30 years ago, given the sole responsibility for its Palestinian people, the further expectations could and cannot be solved by the international community, it has to derive from the PA themselves. Abbas has not taken the responsibility or willingness to declare the territories they do have, as a Palestinian state, which he has an opportunity to do. Neither does he want to negotiate with Israeli prime ministers. The PA has not held an election since 2006/07, hereby denying the Palestinian people the basic rights in choosing their own government.

Abbas blames the shortcomings and the troubles of his people on the state of Israel which he addresses as the racist occupying power. He himself has misused the financial support given, he sets the continuous struggle against "the racist occupying Power" above the wellbeing of his people.

President Abbas and the PA chooses to use huge amounts of international aid in honoring the families of martyrs and payment of salaries to convicted prisoners in Israeli jails. Abbas with the PA justifies the struggle against Israel, which includes terrorism when the aid given for peacebuilding is given to prisoners through the programs as the Palestinian Prisoners Law No.19 and the Palestinian Authority Martyr's Fund. Abbas uses international aid to prolong the struggle when doing so. The payments to convicted individuals and their families are also a breach of the international treaties and resolutions, as well as the Oslo Accord signed in 1993. These actions speak louder than their words internationally.

It can be argued that through these support funds to martyrs by the Palestinian Authority which Abbas strongly supports and salutes as shown in this thesis, the PA is making a waste of the aid given in support, the financial aid derives most often from tax money in the donor countries, which is problematic. This makes the financial aid a tool for support of terrorism, but also makes the financial aid a further prolonging of the corruption in the PA, as well as the internal problems in the PA society and the prolonging of the conflict with Israel. Furthermore, whilst schoolbooks honor martyrs convicted of murders of civilians, but due to the fact that the victims belong to the other, the acts are justified and viewed as honorable, depriving the children in the Palestinian society to be educated with the possibilities of peace and peaceful solution with their neighbor.

According to Abbas's speeches, the cultivated Palestinian dream by the PA is to return to the borders of 1967 and claim Jerusalem as its capital. However, this rather diplomatic narrative does not exist in the PA supported textbooks. The lack of a solid recognition of Israel, not only as a Jewish state but as a state at all, is deeply instilled in the Palestinians' domestic political narrative. As the previously mentioned Arab journalist based in Jerusalem, Khaled Abu Toameh (2015) states that Abbas's fiery rhetoric is encouraging Palestinians to violence, prompting young men out on the streets with rocks and firebombs, as well as destroys any chance of further peace Abu Toameh (2015). Abbas does not mention is that PLO, an organization he was a part of bringing to life, was for many years a forefront terrorist organization globally. As previously mentioned, PLO was involved in numerous terrorist attacks internationally before renouncing these acts of violence in the 1990s. It's legit to ask the question if both the PA and the PLO are still promoting violence when urging Palestinians to continue the struggle against their enemy and "the liberation of Palestine". The PLO,

founded in 1964 with the main purpose of the "liberation of Palestine" through armed struggle, was before the Six-Day war in 1967 and the 1967 borders. President Mahmoud Abbas can be said to stagnate the Palestinian people towards a brighter future when the charter of the PLO is not amended, which makes difficulties towards peace processes. Abbas's popularity in the PA territories is on a heavy decline, while the anti-Israel sentiment is on the rise (Diker & Abu Toameh, 2020).

The conclusion of the main research question of this thesis is that President Mahmoud Abbas's rhetoric reflects a duality of the Palestinian Authority's attitude towards peace with the state of Israel in the public discourse.

The previous mention Bassam Tawil has raised his voice against what he sees as a double standard in the PAs discourse (Tawil, 2020). Tawil argues that in front of the international community Abbas's rhetoric is filled with his wishes and desires for peace and prosperity for the Palestinian people in correlation with Israel. However, Abbas's political party with the Fatah leaders sends a totally different message towards the Palestinian people, which glorifies armed struggle towards Israel. This is done through social media, as well as posters, music, and videos with military uniformed persons taking an oath to remain loyal to Palestine and its work for liberation. Maps and pictures portraying the Palestinian land, used by Fatah and other factions, have eliminated Israel. His analysis of the PA is that he sees them as seekers of war with the wish of elimination of the State of Israel, Abbas needs to control his Fatah members with its soldiers and stop inciting to violence as well as the urging to "liberate Palestine." He emphasizes that Palestinians do not listen to Abbas's messages to international leaders, but rather what Fatah and the PA are saying domestically in Arabic. The conclusion of his analysis of the current situation is; "What Fatah is saying in Arabic is infinitely more important than what Abbas writes in a letter to the UN secretary-general or to any world leader" (Tawil, 2020).

The same can be said of President Mahmoud Abbas's speeches in the United Nations General Assembly. In this thesis, I have shown that the Palestinian Authority with Mahmoud Abbas communicates who their "enemies" are to a great extent. He states that Israel has racist traditions and an apartheid regime. Most of the residence of Israel are from the Middle East. The Israeli Jews are mainly from Iraq, Iran, Morocco, Egypt, and Yemen, and have the same

skin color as the Palestinian Arabs. However, many families derive from Europe and Africa such as Ethiopia. It seems that Abbas is trying to “hijack” the terminology of apartheid<sup>1</sup> which was based on skin colour, Israel controls its borders and checkpoints according to citizenships and not skin colour.

Furthermore, Mahmoud Abbas portrays the Palestinian revolution as a war of liberation. A revolution where those who are willing to sacrifice their lives or commit crimes against Israeli civilians are looked upon as a noble act, and justified from the PA, and saluted by Abbas domestically, but also in front of the U.N. General Assembly. This use of rhetoric shown in this thesis can be qualified as dangerous speech.

This research does not add a magical revelation concerning the matter, neither does it imply any solution for the domestic issues the Palestinian society endures, neither any solutions for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. However, it has arguably shown a duality in President Mahmoud Abbas's rhetoric of the Palestinian Authority's attitude in the public discourse towards peace with the state of Israel.

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## 10 Attachments

Due to the length of the speeches of Mahmoud Abbas in the United Nations General Assembly I will the attach the links to the websites where the speeches have been found. I will only attach the charter of PLO.

### *10.1 S14*

#### **United Nations General Assembly 2014**

Staff, T (2014, September 26<sup>th</sup>).

#### **Mahmoud Abbas's speech to the UN**

Retrieved at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/full-text-of-abbas-speech-to-un/>

### *10.2 S15*

#### **Mahmoud Abbas's speech to the UN**

United Nations General Assembly 2015

Retrieved at <http://palestineun.org/2015/09/>

### *10.3 S17*

#### **Mahmoud Abbas's speech to the UN**

United Nations General Assembly 2017

Retrieved at <http://palestineun.org/2017/12/>

### *10.4 S18*

#### **Mahmoud Abbas's speech to the UN**

United Nations General Assembly 2018

Retrieved at <http://palestineun.org/2018/09/>

### *10.5 S19*

#### **Mahmoud Abbas's speech to the UN**

United Nations General Assembly 2019

Retrieved at <http://palestineun.org/2019/09/>

## 10.6 P1

Retrieved at

<https://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/the%20palestinian%20national%20charter.aspx>

### **The Palestinian National Charter: Resolutions of the Palestine National Council July 1-17, 1968**

#### **Text of the 1968 Charter:**

**Article 1:** Palestine is the homeland of the Arab Palestinian people; it is an indivisible part of the Arab homeland, and the Palestinian people are an integral part of the Arab nation.

**Article 2:** Palestine, with the boundaries it had during the British Mandate, is an indivisible territorial unit.

**Article 3:** The Palestinian Arab people possess the legal right to their homeland and have the right to determine their destiny after achieving the liberation of their country in accordance with their wishes and entirely of their own accord and will.

**Article 4:** The Palestinian identity is a genuine, essential, and inherent characteristic; it is transmitted from parents to children. The Zionist occupation and the dispersal of the Palestinian Arab people, through the disasters which befell them, do not make them lose their Palestinian identity and their membership in the Palestinian community, nor do they negate them.

**Article 5:** The Palestinians are those Arab nationals who, until 1947, normally resided in Palestine regardless of whether they were evicted from it or have stayed there. Anyone born, after that date, of a Palestinian father - whether inside Palestine or outside it - is also a Palestinian.

**Article 6:** The Jews who had normally resided in Palestine until the beginning of the Zionist invasion will be considered Palestinians.

**Article 7:** That there is a Palestinian community and that it has material, spiritual, and historical connection with Palestine are indisputable facts. It is a national duty to bring up individual Palestinians in an Arab revolutionary manner. All means of information and education must be adopted in order to acquaint the Palestinian with his country in the most profound manner, both spiritual and material, that is possible. He must be prepared for the armed struggle and ready to sacrifice his wealth and his life in order to win back his homeland and bring about its liberation.

**Article 8:** *The phase in their history, through which the Palestinian people are now living, is that of national (watani) struggle for the liberation of Palestine. Thus the conflicts among the Palestinian national forces are secondary, and should be ended for the sake of the basic conflict that exists between the forces of Zionism and of imperialism on the one hand, and the Palestinian Arab people on the other. On this basis the Palestinian masses, regardless of whether they are residing in the national homeland or in diaspora (mahajir) constitute - both their organizations and the individuals - one national front working for the retrieval of Palestine and its liberation through armed struggle.*

**Article 9:** *Armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine. This it is the overall strategy, not merely a tactical phase. The Palestinian Arab people assert their absolute determination and firm resolution to continue their armed struggle and to work for an armed popular revolution for the liberation of their country and their*

**return to it . They also assert their right to normal life in Palestine and to exercise their right to self-determination and sovereignty over it.**

**Article 10: Commando action constitutes the nucleus of the Palestinian popular liberation war. This requires its escalation, comprehensiveness, and the mobilization of all the Palestinian popular and educational efforts and their organization and involvement in the armed Palestinian revolution. It also requires the achieving of unity for the national (watani) struggle among the different groupings of the Palestinian people, and between the Palestinian people and the Arab masses, so as to secure the continuation of the revolution, its escalation, and victory.**

**Article 11:** The Palestinians will have three mottoes: national (wataniyya) unity, national (qawmiyya) mobilization, and liberation.

**Article 12:** The Palestinian people believe in Arab unity. In order to contribute their share toward the attainment of that objective, however, they must, at the present stage of their struggle, safeguard their Palestinian identity and develop their consciousness of that identity, and oppose any plan that may dissolve or impair it.

**Article 13:** Arab unity and the liberation of Palestine are two complementary objectives, the attainment of either of which facilitates the attainment of the other. Thus, Arab unity leads to the liberation of Palestine, the liberation of Palestine leads to Arab unity; and work toward the realization of one objective proceeds side by side with work toward the realization of the other.

**Article 14:** The destiny of the Arab nation, and indeed Arab existence itself, depend upon the destiny of the Palestine cause. From this interdependence springs the Arab nation's pursuit of, and striving for, the liberation of Palestine. The people of Palestine play the role of the vanguard in the realization of this sacred (qawmi) goal.

**Article 15: The liberation of Palestine, from an Arab viewpoint, is a national (qawmi) duty and it attempts to repel the Zionist and imperialist aggression against the Arab homeland, and aims at the elimination of Zionism in Palestine. Absolute responsibility for this falls upon the Arab nation - peoples and governments - with the Arab people of Palestine in the vanguard. Accordingly, the Arab nation must mobilize all its military, human, moral, and spiritual capabilities to participate actively with the Palestinian people in the liberation of Palestine. It must, particularly in the phase of the armed Palestinian revolution, offer and furnish the Palestinian people with all possible help, and material and human support, and make available to them the means and opportunities that will enable them to continue to carry out their leading role in the armed revolution, until they liberate their homeland.**

**Article 16:** The liberation of Palestine, from a spiritual point of view, will provide the Holy Land with an atmosphere of safety and tranquility, which in turn will safeguard the country's religious sanctuaries and guarantee freedom of worship and of visit to all, without discrimination of race, color, language, or religion. Accordingly, the people of Palestine look to all spiritual forces in the world for support.

**Article 17:** The liberation of Palestine, from a human point of view, will restore to the Palestinian individual his dignity, pride, and freedom. Accordingly the Palestinian Arab people look forward to the support of all those who believe in the dignity of man and his freedom in the world.

**Article 18:** The liberation of Palestine, from an international point of view, is a defensive action necessitated by the demands of self-defense. Accordingly the Palestinian people, desirous as they are of the friendship of all people, look to freedom-loving, and peace-loving states for support in order to restore their legitimate rights in Palestine, to re-establish peace and security in the country, and to enable its people to exercise national sovereignty and freedom.

**Article 19: The partition of Palestine in 1947 and the establishment of the state of Israel are entirely illegal, regardless of the passage of time, because they were**

**contrary to the will of the Palestinian people and to their natural right in their homeland, and inconsistent with the principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, particularly the right to self-determination.**

**Article 20: The Balfour Declaration, the Mandate for Palestine, and everything that has been based upon them, are deemed null and void. Claims of historical or religious ties of Jews with Palestine are incompatible with the facts of history and the true conception of what constitutes statehood. Judaism, being a religion, is not an independent nationality. Nor do Jews constitute a single nation with an identity of its own; they are citizens of the states to which they belong.**

**Article 21: The Arab Palestinian people, expressing themselves by the armed Palestinian revolution, reject all solutions which are substitutes for the total liberation of Palestine and reject all proposals aiming at the liquidation of the Palestinian problem, or its internationalization.**

**Article 22: Zionism is a political movement organically associated with international imperialism and antagonistic to all action for liberation and to progressive movements in the world. It is racist and fanatic in its nature, aggressive, expansionist, and colonial in its aims, and fascist in its methods. Israel is the instrument of the Zionist movement, and geographical base for world imperialism placed strategically in the midst of the Arab homeland to combat the hopes of the Arab nation for liberation, unity, and progress. Israel is a constant source of threat vis-a-vis peace in the Middle East and the whole world. Since the liberation of Palestine will destroy the Zionist and imperialist presence and will contribute to the establishment of peace in the Middle East, the Palestinian people look for the support of all the progressive and peaceful forces and urge them all, irrespective of their affiliations and beliefs, to offer the Palestinian people all aid and support in their just struggle for the liberation of their homeland.**

**Article 23: The demand of security and peace, as well as the demand of right and justice, require all states to consider Zionism an illegitimate movement, to outlaw its existence, and to ban its operations, in order that friendly relations among peoples may be preserved, and the loyalty of citizens to their respective homelands safeguarded.**

**Article 24: The Palestinian people believe in the principles of justice, freedom, sovereignty, self-determination, human dignity, and in the right of all peoples to exercise them.**

**Article 25: For the realization of the goals of this Charter and its principles, the Palestine Liberation Organization will perform its role in the liberation of Palestine in accordance with the Constitution of this Organization.**

**Article 26: The Palestine Liberation Organization, representative of the Palestinian revolutionary forces, is responsible for the Palestinian Arab people's movement in its struggle - to retrieve its homeland, liberate and return to it and exercise the right to self-determination in it - in all military, political, and financial fields and also for whatever may be required by the Palestine case on the inter-Arab and international levels.**

**Article 27: The Palestine Liberation Organization shall cooperate with all Arab states, each according to its potentialities; and will adopt a neutral policy among them in the light of the requirements of the war of liberation; and on this basis it shall not interfere in the internal affairs of any Arab state.**

**Article 28: The Palestinian Arab people assert the genuineness and independence of their national (wataniyya) revolution and reject all forms of intervention, trusteeship, and subordination.**

**Article 29: The Palestinian people possess the fundamental and genuine legal right to liberate and retrieve their homeland. The Palestinian people determine their attitude toward all states and forces on the basis of the stands they adopt vis-a-vis to the Palestinian revolution to fulfill the aims of the Palestinian people.**

**Article 30:** Fighters and carriers of arms in the war of liberation are the nucleus of the popular army which will be the protective force for the gains of the Palestinian Arab people.

**Article 31:** The Organization shall have a flag, an oath of allegiance, and an anthem. All this shall be decided upon in accordance with a special regulation.

**Article 32:** Regulations, which shall be known as the Constitution of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, shall be annexed to this Charter. It will lay down the manner in which the Organization, and its organs and institutions, shall be constituted; the respective competence of each; and the requirements of its obligation under the Charter.

**Article 33:** This Charter shall not be amended save by [vote of] a majority of two-thirds of the total membership of the National Congress of the Palestine Liberation Organization [taken] at a special session convened for that purpose.

*\* English rendition as published in Basic Political Documents of the Armed Palestinian Resistance Movement; Leila S. Kadi (ed.), Palestine Research Centre, Beirut, December 1969, pp.137-141.*