

Palestinian Accountability

“The Palestinians have a set of obligations, some of which the Palestinian Authority have met, some of which they have not been as strong on. We want to encourage them to clamp down on violence, to end the incitement that you still hear, unfortunately, in many Palestinian communities.” --President Barack Obama, July 2, 2009

Violence perpetrated by Palestinians against Israel threatens Israelis’ sense of personal security, as well as Palestinian aspirations for an independent state.

President Obama is clear on this point: “Palestinians must abandon violence. Resistance through violence and killing is wrong and it does not succeed.” The President has consistently called on Palestinians to recognize Israel, relinquish support for terror, and abide by their past agreements.

The Palestinian Authority is obligated, under the terms of the Road Map, to take responsibility for security and end incitement against Israel.

In the last year, there has been a dramatic improvement in security throughout the West Bank, due in large part to a Palestinian National Security Forces training program under the direction of U.S. General Keith Dayton. The Obama Administration has held serious and intensive discussions with the leadership of the Palestinian Authority (PA), urging them to take further responsibility for ensuring security and ending incitement against Israel. As President Obama stated, “There’s still a tendency, even...among Palestinians who say they are interested in peace with Israel, to engage in statements that...incite a hatred of Israel or are not constructive to the peace process. Now, I think to his credit, President Abbas has made progress on this issue – but not enough.” On the security issue, Obama bluntly stated: “We still have not seen a firm commitment from the Palestinian Authority that they can control some of the border areas that Israel is going to be very concerned about if there were to be a two-state solution.”

Strengthening Palestinian governance is part and parcel of advancing the peace process.

Good governance – enhanced transparency, accountability, and adherence to the rule of law – is essential for Palestinian self-determination as well as for reaching an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement. President Obama has been explicit in raising his concerns about poor governance in the Palestinian Authority. He has noted that “there are still problems of corruption and mismanagement within the Authority that have to be addressed,” and has urged Palestinians to improve their governance capacity “so that Israelis can be confident that the Palestinians can follow through on any commitments they make across the table.”

Effective Palestinian institutions are a crucial element of a viable Palestinian state.

Palestinians can best build strong national institutions as part of the process of creating an independent state. As U.S. Representatives Boustany, Carnahan, and Cohen wrote in a letter, signed by 87 Congress members, to President Obama: “Building Palestinian capacity in the economic and security sectors and building transparent institutions of self-governance are important goals, deserving of American support and central to the future success of a Palestinian state. Rather than preconditions for statehood, these are goals that can be effectively realized over time once a Palestinian state has been created, with extensive international assistance, involvement, and oversight.”