The Palestinians Are a Superpower at the UN But a Weak Mess in Reality

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## The United Nations (UN) is often a theater of the absurd, where events take place that represent the exact opposite of reality. So it was with the Palestinians and the G-77 last week.

Palestinian Authority Chairman and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) chief Mahmoud Abbas [assumed](https://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Mahmoud-Abbas-chairs-Group-of-77-at-UN-taking-control-of-largest-bloc-577450) the presidency Tuesday of the largest United Nationa bloc – the Group of 77 plus China — as the “President” of “the State of Palestine.”

The G-77 has 134 member nations. On the face of things, electoral victory at the G-77 is a stunning victory for Abbas and a scathing defeat for Israel.

The most stunning aspect of the Palestinian presidency is that “the State of Palestine,” which was elected to lead the group of developing nations, doesn’t exist.

Whereas Israel – an actual state that “Palestine” seeks to destroy – is [excited](https://unitedwithisrael.org/137-countries-support-israeli-un-resolution-encouraging-entrepreneurship/) when it can pass a completely uncontroversial and effectively meaningless resolution in a minor UN agency encouraging business entrepreneurship, the Palestinians run a 24/7 campaign against the only democracy in the Middle East and have a lock on success in every UN agency and committee – large and small – except for the Security Council.

Due to this state of affairs, Israel is [condemned](https://www.unwatch.org/un-israel-key-statistics/) more than all other UN member states put together. The UN has a [special day](http://www.un.org/en/events/palestinianday/) set aside each year bemoaning Israel’s very existence. Condemning Israel is a permanent agenda item at the UN Human Rights Council. The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) devotes its energy to erasing Jewish history from the history books and condemning Israel for refusing to get with the program.

All this, as every tin pot dictatorship wins [senior positions](https://www.unwatch.org/farce-u-n-s-2018-membership-human-rights-council/) on the most illustrious – and [progressive](https://www.unwatch.org/un-sells-3-womens-rights-bodies-oil-rich-saudi-arabia/) – committees. All this, as the Palestinians have done nothing but reject peace and work for Israel’s destruction for the past hundred years.

And now, by elevating the non-existent State of Palestine to lead them for the next year, the G-77 has given the Palestinians their greatest victory yet. Palestine may not be a state in the real world. But at the UN, it is a superpower.

Yet at the end of the day, facts on the ground actually matter. And on the ground, Palestine isn’t a state. Abbas isn’t a president, and he isn’t legitimate.

The roster of the members of the G-77 points clearly to the disparity between actual policies of governments and their support for the UN superpower “Palestine.”

Over the past several years, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vastly improved and expanded Israel’s relations with governments in Africa, Latin America, and Asia — all members of the G-77.

But even as newly-inaugurated Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has pledged to move the Brazilian embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, and made strengthening Brazilian ties with Israel a major goal of his administration, as a member of the G77, Brazil accepts non-existent “Palestine, “which seeks to destroy Israel, as the leader of the bloc. The same goes for India and Kenya and dozens of other G-77 member states with massively expanding bilateral ties with Israel.

In other words, their embrace of “Palestine” at the UN doesn’t block them from embracing “Palestine’s” real-world nemesis.

Then there is the issue of Abbas’s legitimacy on the ground.

Currently, Netanyahu is standing for reelection. He will likely win a fifth term as prime minister and fourth consecutive term in office on April 9.

In contrast, Abbas – the “President” of “Palestine” — ended his legal term in office ten years ago. He lost control over the Gaza Strip to Hamas twelve years ago. His continued survival in office owes to his [brutal repression](https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/10/23/palestine-authorities-crush-dissent) of his critics and opponents on the one hand, and to the fact that Israel controls security in Judea and Samaria, and so prevents his opponents from unseating or assassinating him, on the other.

Making Abbas’s illegitimate claim to leadership all the more difficult to uphold, the Jerusalem Post [reported](https://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Mahmoud-Abbas-chairs-Group-of-77-at-UN-taking-control-of-largest-bloc-577450) that on Tuesday — the day Abbas took over the G-77 — “80 civil society institutions in the Gaza Strip sent a letter to the Group 77 and China in which they said that Abbas was not authorized to represent or speak on behalf of the Palestinians because his four-year term in office had expired in 2009.”

The groups blamed Abbas for the humanitarian crisis in claiming that his decision to impose sanctions on the Hamas terror state had raised unemployment to 46 percent and the poverty rate to 65 percent.

They also criticized Abbas’s violation of human rights in Judea and Samaria, accusing him of “cracking down on university lecturers and students, lawyers, physicians, engineers, journalists and human rights activists.”

The group finally asked the G-77 to withdraw its recognition of Abbas as “President of the State of Palestine.”

The letter from the Palestinian organizations is in line with survey data among the Palestinians, which show that they overwhelmingly view Abbas as illegitimate. In a December 2017 [survey](http://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/715) carried out by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey research, 70 percent of Palestinians wanted Abbas to resign.

Word of the terror attack in Kenya came during the G-77 meeting. And during his speech, Abbas condemned terrorism. “Terrorism,” Abbas said, “takes place worldwide on a daily basis. It is an epidemic and I therefore call on all countries of the world to cooperate, to put an end to terrorism, to uproot it.”

He added, “The State of Palestine has adopted 83 protocols with 83 countries throughout the world to put an end to this scourge and to fight against terrorism and I call on all states to work with us to combat terrorism.”

While Abbas was giving his speech, some 200 protesters were standing outside the UN building condemning the G-77 for electing Abbas and “Palestine” in light of his direct [sponsorship](https://www.jns.org/protesters-respond-to-abbas-taking-over-largest-bloc-of-member-states-at-un/) of terrorism.

As he condemned terrorism, Abbas failed to mention that he devotes [7 percent of the Palestinian Authority’s](http://jcpa.org/the-2018-report-on-palestinian-authority-payments-of-salaries-to-terrorists-in-2018/) budget, and nearly half of the foreign aid the PA receives, to incentivizing terrorism.

In 2018, Abbas spent $340 million of the PA’s $5 billion overall budget on paying salaries to terrorists sitting in Israeli prisons, and on transfer payments to the families of terrorists wounded and killed in the course of carrying out terror attacks against Israel.

The protest outside the UN was organized by New York City Councilman Bruce Blakeman and Stuart Force, whose son Taylor Force, a U.S. army veteran, was murdered in Tel Aviv by a Palestinian terrorist in 2016. Last year, Congress passed the Taylor Force Act, which bars the U.S. from funding the Palestinian Authority so long as it maintains it maintains its payments to terrorists and their families.

The disconnect between the events in the hall and the outside world – in terms of the member states’ bilateral relations with Israel; the Palestinian public’s rejection of Abbas; and Abbas’s role as terror sponsor and financier – points to a basic truth about the Palestinians and the nature of international relations.

International support for the Palestinians grows with the level of abstraction. The more concrete one’s relations are with the Palestinian Authority – whether as Palestinians who live under its jackboot, or Israelis who are the target of its aggression – the less legitimate Abbas is, and the smaller the octogenarian with no legitimate claim to power appears.

The more symbolic one’s relations with the Palestinians, the more fervent support for “Palestine” becomes. The G-77 isn’t elevating the “State of Palestine” because it cares about the Palestinians. The G-77 is elevating the “State of Palestine” because it doesn’t care about the Palestinians.

Although India, for example, rarely votes against the “State of Palestine” at the UN, its bilateral ties with Israel have expanded exponentially in recent years.

Netanyahu has worked assiduously to leverage the ties he has developed with states like Kenya, Rwanda, Brazil, and India into diminished support for the Palestinians at the UN. His efforts have brought about only a marginal change in behavior.

By and large, the Palestinians can continue to expect support from the vast majority of UN member states for any initiative they launch against Israel. Indeed, long after Abbas, his successors and their PLO are ousted from power, they will remain in senior leadership positions at the UN.

But as the recent massive growth of Israel’s bilateral ties to the nations of the world makes clear, there is often little connection between support for “Palestine” at the UN and animosity for Israel.