



By: TA | AP Insight

Abbas postpones Palestinian legislative elections another year



President Mahmoud Abbas postponed what would have been the first **Palestinian elections** in nearly 20 years, issuing a decree to further delay voting for the Palestinian Legislative Council almost another year.

Rather than take place as scheduled next month, the decree pushes the elections back to Sept. 11, 2027, according to WAFA, the official Palestinian news agency.

Presidential elections, which have not taken place for more than two decades, are scheduled for the same day.

The postponement leaves entrenched Palestinian leaders unchallenged and threatens to further erode the **Palestinian Authority's credibility** among ordinary Palestinians and donor countries who fund it.

The internationally backed body is dominated by Abbas' party, Fatah, and has administered semiautonomous parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank since agreements reached in the 1990s.

It has grown increasingly unpopular throughout Abbas' presidency. Many Palestinians view it as corrupt and criticize its security cooperation with Israel.

The move was expected

The decree came after a committee of top Palestinian officials met Saturday morning to discuss postponing the vote.

The Palestine Liberation Organization's Executive Committee, which Abbas heads, said in a statement that conditions in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were not conducive to holding elections, noting that Israel had not allowed election materials or international observers to enter Gaza.

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Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar on X said that Abbas' "attempt to drag Israel into this, falsely claiming that Israel imposed obstacles to holding elections, is yet another ridiculous lie designed to evade responsibility and accountability."

The move was expected after **Palestinian factions** across the political spectrum met in Cairo for discussions on delaying the vote, Islamic Jihad deputy secretary-general Mohammed al-Hindi told The Associated Press earlier this week.

Behind the scenes

Palestinians have not held a legislative election since 2006, when Hamas won a majority of seats.

Israel and Western countries then boycotted its government, fueling months of unrest that led to the Hamas takeover of Gaza the following year.

Power has been divided between Gaza and the West Bank in the two decades since, with Hamas in control of Gaza and Abbas' Palestinian Authority in power in the West Bank.

The **West Bank** has grown increasingly violent in recent years as Israel has expanded settlements and outposts. Settler attacks on Palestinians and Israeli army raids on cities under the authority's control are both regularly reported.

Though the **U.S.-brokered ceasefire** plan reached last year outlined a future role for the authority, its immediate role was left mostly undefined as Hamas has continued to govern Gaza and the technocrats under the Board of

Peace remain in Cairo awaiting permission to enter the territory to oversee a transition of power.



An unlikely alliance had emerged between Hamas, Islamic Jihad and a bloc led by former Fatah security chief Mohammed Dahlan

Before the postponement, leading factions had not registered slates to contest the election.

But behind the scenes, veteran officials had been in talks to join forces and take aim at Abbas.

An unlikely alliance had emerged between Hamas, Islamic Jihad and a bloc led by former Fatah security chief **Mohammed Dahlan**.

Dahlan had previously been driven from Gaza by Hamas and was exiled in 2010 after a falling-out with Abbas.

"Abbas is terrified by the electoral alliance bringing our faction together with opposition factions and forces within Fatah that reject his leadership," Dimitri Dilliani, a spokesperson for Dahlan's faction, said in a statement.

Abbas has served as president since 2005 and delayed several presidential and legislative elections throughout his tenure.