Hamas Big Winner of Palestinian Authority's Postponed Elections

by Hugh Fitzgerald

When Mahmoud Abbas, now entering the sixteenth year of his four-year term as President-For-Life of the Palestinian Authority, in January decided to announce that both parliamentary and presidential elections would be held this May and July, it seemed to him like a good idea. He would show the new administration in Washington that he was, despite all the nasty remarks about his sixteen-year uninterrupted tenure, a true democrat; he calculated that this should win him points, and thus money and diplomatic support, from the Biden administration.

It soon became clear that Abbas had miscalculated. He failed to realize how deeply disliked by the Palestinians he had become, for his mismanagement, corruption, and nepotism. Public opinion polls showed his Fatah faction winning only 30 of the 132 seats the Palestinian parliament. In a face-off with a Hamas candidate for president, Abbas would be trounced. And either of the other two conceivable presidential candidates, Mohammed Dahlan and Marwan Barghouti, would each win over 60% of the vote if running head-to-head against Abbas.

Abbas now wanted to stop the very elections he had called for, and on April 30 he did just that.. But he needed a reason, an excuse to do so. It was necessary to blame someone, and that someone of course turned out to be Israel. A piece by Daniel Siryoti discusses the election fiasco, and who, now that the elections are called off, emerges as the big winner: "Hamas is the big winner in Palestinian election farce," *Jihad Watch*.