

## Seven Years Later: Gaza's Reality Under Hamas

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Seven years have passed since Hamas won the elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council. They made a lot of big commitments, and promised the people of Gaza a better life. Today, seven years after Hamas proudly presented its [platform](#), is a good time to stop and check: Did Hamas live up to its own standards?

### What are Hamas' priorities?

*"[Hamas]... will rehabilitate cities and villages and restore infrastructure... [Hamas] attaches great importance to education which will keep abreast of modern innovations."*

*(source)*

Let's see if these promises are reflected in Hamas' budget.

Hamas' [budget](#) in Gaza for the year 2013 stands at 897 million dollars, but Hamas' expected revenue this year is estimated to be 243 million dollars. The deficit of 654 million dollars will be covered by foreign donations.

Where does Hamas' money go? The vast majority of all expected income goes to the Interior Ministry. This ministry funds the Al-Qassam Brigades, which has [launched thousands of rockets](#) at Israel and carried out dozens of [suicide bomb attacks](#) that killed hundreds of Israeli civilians.

If Hamas allocates its budget to building up its ability to attack Israel, where does funding for health care, education and infrastructure in Gaza come from? The answer is foreign funding. Because Hamas puts Gaza's civilians last on its priority list, foreign organizations and groups such as the Red Cross and UNRWA end up [providing services to Gaza residents](#).

### Who Protects Minorities' Rights?

*"The rights of minorities are to be protected on the basis of good citizenship."*

*(source)*

During the last seven years, Hamas banned public dissent while encouraging mass demonstrations supporting Hamas.

Fatah operatives receive harsh treatment and are frequently harassed ever since Hamas' violent overthrowing of Fatah in 2007. According to [Amnesty International's 2009 report](#), Hamas waged a campaign of killings, abductions, torture and death threats against Palestinian opponents in the Gaza Strip. Between December 2008 and February 2009, Hamas executed 24 people and shot numerous others in the legs. It even holds [formal executions of members from opposing political parties](#).

In this video, Hamas operatives throw their Fatah rivals off rooftops:



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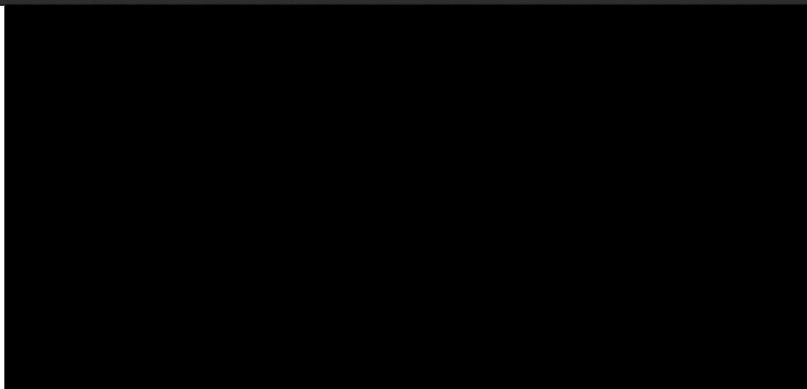
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Other minorities are in danger as well. According to Sharia law in the Gaza strip, homosexuality is illegal. The official punishment for homosexuality in Gaza is severe; homosexuals can be given [10-year prison sentences](#). Hamas preachers aspire to take the punishment even further: homosexuals, they say, deserve the death penalty.



Syrian Scholar Muhammad Rateb Al-Nabulsi in Support of the Death Penalty for Homosexuality on Hamas al-Aqsa TV

As for women in the Gaza Strip, Hamas promised:

*“Women’s rights will be guaranteed so that they can contribute to the building of society, socially, economically and politically. Women’s organizations should be encouraged.”*

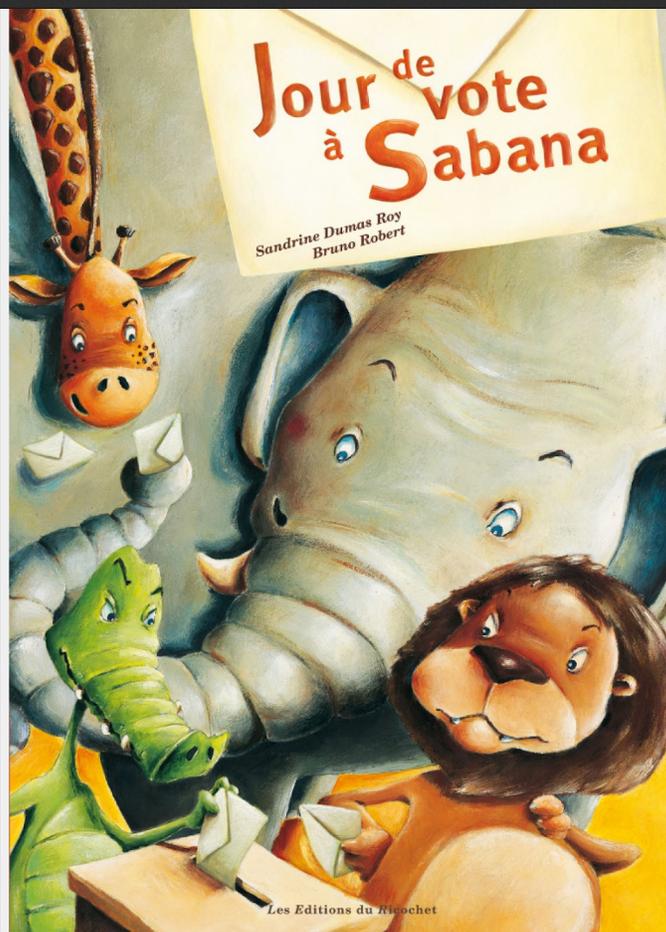
*(source)*

Since this promise was made, many restricting rules were implemented against women in Gaza. For example, women are banned from [dancing](#) or [smoking](#) in public, and even from [getting salon treatment from male hairdressers](#).

### Paranoid about cartoons

*“Freedom of thinking, expression and fairness and safeguarding the youth from external corruptible influence are chief among... [Hamas] concerns.”*

*(source)*



"Election Day in Sabana" cover

In "Election Day in Sabana", a children's book, a yellow lion and a green alligator vie for the leadership of a community of animals. The lion, who comes from a respected dynasty, loses the elections to the alligator, who makes some great promises to the public. But soon after the new leader comes to power, his corruption and misdeeds make the animals regret their choice.

"Election Day in Sabana" was withdrawn from the shelves of Gazan schools and libraries. What made Hamas ban this book?

The answer is simple: the yellow lion shares its color with Fatah, while the green alligator, who is the target of the book's criticism, "represents" Hamas, at least in the eyes of the organization's censors. Hamas' goal is to eliminate any form of criticism, real or imagined.

Election Day in Sabana is only one example of Hamas' censorship policies. On January 2011, Human Rights Watch urged Hamas authorities in Gaza to [lift arbitrary bans on books and newspapers](#) which Hamas claimed have immoral content. Sarah Leah Whitson, Middle East director at HRW, said: "At a time when people around the Middle East demand more freedom, Hamas has decided to restrict the freedom of Gaza residents to choose what they read. Hamas authorities should stop banning books and newspapers now."

Restricting freedom of expression is an everyday occurrence: only three days ago Hamas raided the homes of [two journalists](#) and arrested them with no warrant.

### Democratic Elections?

*"A new Elections Law is to be passed so as to ensure justice and fair representation of our people."*

(source)

reshuffle was announced by the head of Hamas in Gaza, Ismail Haniya, and seven new ministers joined the government. That's the extent of political change in the Strip.

In 2006, the newly-elected Hamas government promised to build new infrastructure, invest in education, protect minorities' rights, ensure freedom of expression and put in place a fair and democratic election system. Instead, over the past seven years, they've killed and tortured their opponents, invested their money in a wide-ranging terror infrastructure, repressed opinions that went against their own and continue to rule the Gaza Strip without any renewal of their democratic mandate.



Children in a Hamas rally

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**Caleb Rodgers** · Tulsa, Oklahoma

there forced to support Hamas even the infidels=the christians because Islam states that nonmuslims are infidels.

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**Vincent Ogunja Odhiambo Ouma**

This is a sad indictment of Hamas.The Palestinian people have a role to play in their oppression by continuing to support Hamas movement.

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**Ellen Hellman** · Top Commenter

7 years of lies and terror. Thanks for sharing this.

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**Haye Hudi**

hamas teaching the life & lessons of muhammad to the children in kindergarten, slay the enemies of islam murder all Jews & Christians and islamise the world all in the name and for the sake of they're moon g-d.

is so pitiful and sad that hurts.

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Destroy Hamas now....

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