

*President
of the
Palestinian
National
Authority*

Mahmoud Abbas

Early years

Born 1935, in Safed, Israel (then British Palestine); family fled to Syria during 1928 Arab-Israeli War

Education Bachelor's degree, University of Damascus; doctorate, Oriental College, Moscow

Political career

1959 Founding member of Fatah, Yasser Arafat's Palestinian political party

1968 Member of the Palestinian National Council

1980 Head of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) department for national and international relations

1988 Elected to the PLO executive committee

1993 Signs peace accord with Israel on behalf of the PLO, solidifying his position as a moderate

1996 Elected general secretary of PLO executive committee, becoming Yasser Arafat's deputy

2003 Serves for six months as prime minister of the Palestinian National Authority; resigns over power struggle with Arafat

2005 Elected president of the Palestinian National Authority following Arafat's death

2007 Split between Fatah in West Bank and Hamas in Gaza over recognition of Israel leads to his being recognized as president only by Fatah in the West Bank

2012 Rival factions agree to form unity government with Abbas as head

Source: Jewish Virtual Library, New York Times

Graphic: Pat Carr

© 2012 MCT

