

Chronicles of Resistance: Key Historical Moments and the Rise of the Islamic Student Movement in Palestine

Direnışin Kronikleri: Filistin’de İslami Öğrenci Hareketinin Yükselişı ve Tarihsel Dönüm Noktaları



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Abstract: This study challenges simplistic narratives that reduce the mobilization of Palestine’s Islamic student movement (the Islamic Bloc) to either cultural criticisms or structural aspects. Instead, it argues that the evaluation of transformation from its establishment in 1980 to the 2021 Seif Al-Quds uprising has been shaped by the interplay of cultural agency and structural dynamics. These include basic historical moments (such as the First Intifada, Oslo Accords, and Gaza wars), spatial-institutional contexts, alliances with political factions, and university administrations’ autonomy. Based on qualitative analysis of oral histories and primary sources (1980–2021), the paper examines the extent to which political opportunity structures and the Islamic Bloc’s links to socio-political institutions (e.g., Palestinian factions, universities, Israeli/Palestinian authorities) form its patterns of resistance strategies and collective mobilization. Integrating insights from social movement theory and positioning theory, this analysis bridges cultural narratives such as anti-colonial resistance and collective grievances with structural forces, including institutional autonomy and factional alliances. Findings reveal that successful mobilization required a grievance-driven agency and structural enablers, such as universities’ political independence and strategic adaptation to shifting power dynamics. The study proposes a holistic structure for analyzing student-led conflict in challenged countries, signifying how cultural sense creation and structural opportunity mutually combine action construct these dimensions.

Keywords: Student Movement, Social Movements, Resistance, Palestine, Positioning Theory

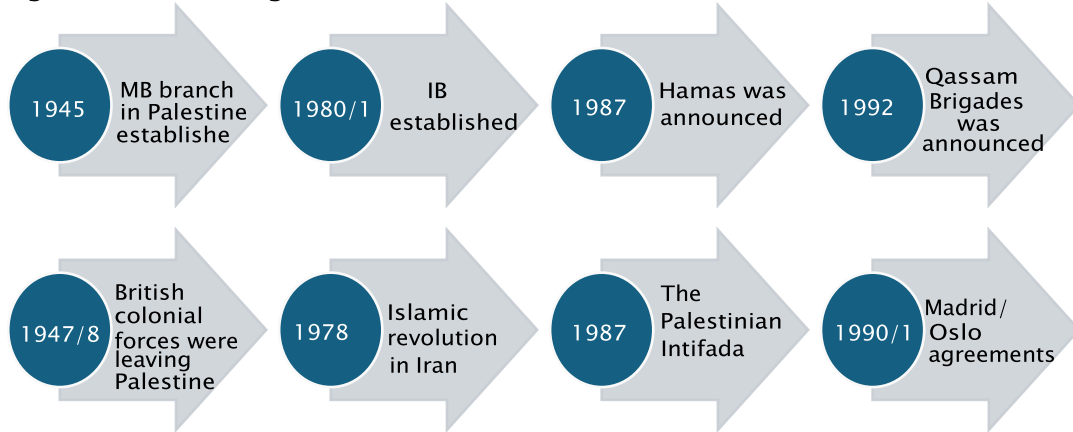
Öz: Bu çalışma, Filistin’in İslami öğrenci hareketinin (İslami Blok) seferberliğini yalnızca kültürel eleştiriler ya da yapısal unsurlarla sınırlayan indirgemeci anlatıları sorgulamaktadır. Bunun yerine, 1980’deki kuruluşundan 2021’deki “Seif Al-Quds” ayaklanmasına uzanan dönüşümün değerlendirilmesinin, kültürel özneleşme ile yapısal dinamiklerin karşılıklı etkileşimi tarafından şekillendiğini ileri sürmektedir. Bu bağlamda, Birinci İntifada, Oslo Anlaşmaları ve Gazze savaşları gibi temel tarihsel anlar; mekânsal-kurumsal bağlamlar; siyasal fraksiyonlarla ittifaklar; ve

üniversite yönetimlerinin özerkliği söz konusu etkileşimin belirleyici unsurları arasında yer almaktadır. 1980-2021 dönemine ait sözlü tarih çalışmaları ve birincil kaynakların nitel analizine dayanan bu makale, siyasal fırsat yapılarının ve İslami Blok'un sosyo-politik kurumlarla (ör. Filistinli fraksiyonlar, üniversiteler, İsrail/Filistin otoriteleri) kurduğu bağlantıların, direniş stratejilerinin ve kolektif seferberlik biçimlerinin oluşumuna ne ölçüde yön verdiğini incelemektedir. Sosyal hareket kuramı ile konumlandırma kuramından elde edilen içgörülerini birleştiren analiz, anti-sömürgeci direniş ve kolektif mağduriyet gibi kültürel anlatıları; kurumsal özerklik ve fraksiyonel ittifaklar gibi yapısal güçlerle birlikte ele almaktadır. Bulgular, başarılı bir seferberliğin, hem mağduriyet temelli bir özneleşmeyi hem de üniversitelerin siyasal bağımsızlığı ile değişen güç dengelerine yönelik stratejik uyum gibi yapısal kolaylaştırıcıları gerektirdiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Çalışma, öğrenci öncülüğündeki çatışmaları "meydan okunan" ülkeler bağlamında çözümlemeye yönelik bütüncül bir çerçeve önermekte; kültürel anlam üretimi ile yapısal fırsatların nasıl karşılıklı biçimde eylemi kurduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğrenci Hareketi, Sosyal Hareketler, Direniş, Filistin, Konumlanma Teorisi

1. Introduction

Undoubtedly, the major events in the Middle East during the twentieth century have had a profound impact on the region's overall political and social dynamics. One of the most prominent manifestations of the influence of historical events on the political and social actors in the region is the emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood movement after the fall of the Ottoman Caliphate at the beginning of the century, followed by the rise of Islamic movements originating from the Muslim Brotherhood, the most notable of which is the Hamas movement (Wagemakers, 2022). However, this historical turning point was not the only event that influenced the trajectory of the Islamic social movement in Palestine, in general, and the emergence of the student movement, in particular. It is no coincidence that the Muslim Brotherhood branch in Palestine was proven at the height of the struggle the Palestinians were witnessing against British colonialism, just before the British withdrawal from historic Palestine. Likewise, it is no coincidence that the Islamic Bloc in Palestinian universities was founded following the success of the Islamic Revolution in Iran as an inspiration for the model and an attempt to replicate it in Palestine and the region (Malm, 2025). We should also not forget that the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas was established and declared itself with the onset of the First Palestinian Intifada, as it transitioned from its educational preparation phase to engage in both popular and armed resistance (Hamoud, 2023). Furthermore, the AlQassam Brigades formally established and announced their existence shortly after the signing of the peace agreements between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Israeli occupation (Hussein, 2021).

Figure 1. Establishing the Islamic Movement and the Historical Junctures in Palestine

Just as historical or pivotal events played a critical role in shaping the Islamic social movement in Palestine, less central events have also contributed to shaping the various phases through which the Islamic Bloc has evolved into what it is today. These events were sometimes linked to political dimensions and, at other times, to cultural and ideological ones. What remains certain, however, is that resistance constituted the most prominent factor influencing the structural and formal transformations that the Islamic Bloc underwent throughout its successive stages—stages which some scholars have divided into three distinct periods before the outbreak of the Second Palestinian Intifada (Ghayatha, 2000). Two additional stages emerged after 2007 due to changes in the dominant political, union, and social priorities that characterized each phase.

2. Forming an Identity and Fighting for Recognition (1979–1986)

The early 1980s were considered the starting point for the IB at the different Palestinian universities existing at that time. Many researchers have agreed that the IB was one of the first student movements to be established in the country, and that its launch coincided with the opening of various universities (Ghayatha; Paz, 2000; Zelkovitz, 2015). Each Islamic bloc had its origin due to different factors such as the nature of the competing student blocs, geographical location, and relations to university management.

In 1980, the IB decided to run in the student council elections under the name Student Action Bloc. But the elections did not take place, as the university was closed for two months, until 1980. The Action Bloc stood against the Unity Bloc, which consisted of all blocs supporting the PLO, gaining 43% of the votes (Ghayatha, 2000). One year later, in

1981, the IB ran in the elections under the name Islamic Bloc for the first time and gained 34% of the students' votes. The IB described the tension between the IB and the PLO student bodies in one of its archive papers, which was written around 1984, in the following way:

The contempt for IB reached such an extent that one of the leftist leaders of the student movement declared that the shoes of the Campos movement members are to be considered a source of honor for the Muslim Brotherhood leaders at Birzeit University. In addition to that, some of the leftist leaders accused members of the IB of being not just an ally of Israel, but members of the Mossad as well.

These documents present the events from the perspective of the Islamic Bloc, but they fail to acknowledge a crucial aspect of that historical period in the Palestinian struggle—the Israeli army's invasion of Beirut and the pivotal battles fought by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and its student factions abroad, notably the “Student Brigade.” What is missing from the documents is the absence of the Islamic forces during this time, as they had not yet embraced armed struggle as a means of liberation.

In Nablus, the IB ran in the student council elections in 1979–1980 as the Independent Bloc and achieved victory by obtaining ten seats out of eleven in the first student council. The council was headed by Khaled Shebaro, a student in the faculty of Physics. The following year, in 1981, the PLO groups united to form a single bloc and won the elections by winning six seats out of eleven, while the IB got five. In 1982, however, the IB won all the 11 seats again, under the leadership of Nasir al-Deen al-Sha'er (Rekhess, 2021).

At that time there were three groups competing for seats on the council: the IB, the National Student Movement Bloc (Fatah), and the Student National Unity Bloc (leftist). Shortly afterwards, however, university administration suspended the council's activities because of the riots which put an end to studying at the university for a long time (Nelson, 2016). These events helped the student national unity bloc to win the elections of the subsequent year 1983, but the IB returned to lead the council again in the following year 1984. This continued until the outbreak of the First Intifada. Since then,

till the second Intifada, the IB has remained in control of the student councils at al-Najah University, except for some rare occurrences (Ghayatha, 2000).¹

In Hebron, there was competition in 1980 between the Sharia Faculty and the new faculty of arts, since most of the Sharia students were close to the Islamic trend, while a lot of the art faculty students were close to the PLO. The Islamic students at that time felt that this new situation required the establishment of an Islamic bloc at the university, which they did. the IB won the student council, leading with a team consisting of members from both faculties, including two women. Kamal El-Khatib, who later became the deputy head of the Islamic movement in historical Palestine, was one of the council members. From that time on, there was competition between the Islamic trend and the PLO faction (R. Aqil, personal communication, July 19, 2011).

The presidency of the IB and its student councils were occupied successively by a group of representatives who have become prominent, such as Nizar Ramadan, who was a member of the second legislative council, and Saleh El-Aruri, who was arrested on charges of establishing a base for Al-Qassam Brigades in Hebron and sentenced to 15 years in prison², with the constraint to be exiled to Turkey after being released, then became Hamas leader and was assassinated after Tufan Al-Aqsa (Hussein, 2021).

In Jerusalem, the Islamic bloc was established at Al-Quds University in the year of its foundation, i.e., in 1982. It began as the faculty of science and technology and the faculty of da'wa and the fundamentals of Islam. Then, in 1982, the faculty of arts for girls in Jerusalem joined it. The bloc at Al-Quds University was established in 1984 by Salah Darwazeh, the head of the IB at the university, who was a biology student and graduated in 1986. He was succeeded by Adel Awadallah, who studied mathematics at the faculty of science and technology, and Mohieddin Sherif, an electrical engineering student.³

Many petitions and protests of the student body, all led by the IB, demanded the right to establish a student council. permission was given for the establishment of student clubs.

¹ For more information on the results of the student council elections at An-Najah University, see appendix no. 3, which shows the results of the student council elections at different Palestinian universities from 1980 until 2016.

² The forum of the Islamic bloc site at Al-Quds University, <http://96.30.44.150/vb/showthread.php?t=11971>, visited on 6/26/2011.

³ Salah Darwazeh was later sent to Marj al-Zuhur, after which he became a well-known Hamas commander. He was assassinated in 2001. As for Awadallah and Mohieddin Sherif, they were both assassinated in 1998.

Six elections took place, four out of which were won by the IB, and two out of which were won by the PLO alliance. The Bloc has participated in all elections for the student council since 1984 (B. Mhammad, personal communication, July 20, 2011).

In Gaza, the first student council was set up in conjunction with the establishment of the Islamic University, which was represented by the faculty of theology and Arabic language in 1979. A year later, the first student elections were held, and candidates from the Islamic movement won all the seats. The following year, three faculties were added to the university, and the work of the committees began in the student council, which was at that time considered to be under the leadership of the IB (A. Yahya, personal communication, August 12, 2011). In 1981, the IB ran in the elections against the candidates of the Popular Front and the Islamic Jihad movement. The IB won all the seats on the council. In 1982, the Islamists ran in the elections under the name of “the Unified Student Action”⁴. A year later, in agreement with the leaders of the IB in the West Bank, the name was changed to IB (ibid). Since then, the IB has run the student councils at the Islamic University. During that period, there were significant political events, and the differences in political and social views became greater, which led to a violent conflict that included physical violence. This conflict reached its peak with the assassination of Dr. Ismail El-Khatib, a lecturer at the Islamic University and an affiliate of the Islamic trend, and members of Fatah were accused of assassinating him (Buck, 2013).

It was not the goal of the IB in the early stages, as its leaders say, to resist occupation, because “it was an emerging bloc which wanted to confirm its existence and establish its identity in the face of competition with other emerging groups. The most important priority for the IB at that stage was the creation of an intellectual, cultural, and educational environment, through which they could establish a group of new Muslim leaders and intellectuals, which in turn would take the lead in “reviving the spirit of Islam” in the community” (Paz, 2000). This would be done, as IB leaders argued, by promoting its Islamic culture, for example via newsletters, magazines, daily lessons, religious lectures and the system of *'Usra* (family). They passed on tapes and used the Islamic anthem, as well as seclusion and fasting, organizing book fairs, public festivals, and plays; they also provided help for volunteer work; raised funds for the construction and restoration of mosques, organized preaching and leisure trips, and secured separate accommodation for male and female students (Bajes, 2012).

⁴ At the top of the list were Khaled El-Hindy, Yahya Sinwar, Yahya Alebadisah, Ibrahim Jaber, Diaa El-Soussi, Ziad Abu-Zeid, Hassan AlMakadmeh, Kamal Abu Jalal, and Shehadeh Al-Swaiki.

At the beginning of the 1980s, there were some conflicts between the IB members and other student movements at that time. These conflicts were the norm in the period during which IB was growing and developing its identity. IB was "fighting" to be recognized as a national power beside the four existing national powers (Fatah, leftists: PFLP and DFLP, and communists). IB adherents did not shy away from violence in their attempts to dominate the Palestinian campuses, as Zelkovitz argues, and they did not fear a clash with the nationalists (Zelkovitz, 2015). As for the IB leaders, it was a matter of identity-proving:

IB was a "castaway entity" by the leftists and seculars. The clashes between IB adherents and nationalists have proved the existence of this new entity. Nationalists have reached the fact that there is a new student movement with a new identity and new discourse. It is the IB identity battle at the university (A. Iyad, personal communication, Dec 5, 2011)

Before the first Palestinian Intifada, the best way for any Palestinian organization to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the Palestinians was by participating in the national struggle (Bajes, 2012). It was difficult for a "foreign body" that did not contribute to the resistance activities to compete with the PLO and its supporting student wings. Even though IB has gained more than the third of the students votes in the student council elections in between 1980–1986 in Birzeit University, al-Najah University, Hebron University, and of course the Islamic University, the IB failed to gain the legitimacy and recognition from the national parties, until the policy of the IB towards the Israeli occupation changed; at the end of 1986, it gave permission for all IB members to participate in the most violent and the bloodiest demonstrations, in which 70 students were wounded, and two were killed, namely Jawad Abu Salmia and Saeb Dahab. After that incident, the IB issued a central statement in every city in the West Bank, mourning the deaths of the two students, and adopted the armed resistance policy against the occupation. Thus, there were demonstrations at al-Najah, Hebron, Jerusalem, and the Islamic Universities. After this broad and active participation, the IB gained a tacit legitimacy to carry out its activities at the universities, and for the first time organized an official ceremony at the University of Birzeit without any trouble (H. Majid, personal communication, Feb 13, 2011). A summarized result of the IB elections can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Summary of Key Electoral Statistics and Outcomes Related to the Islamic Bloc at Palestinian Universities

University	Year(s)	Election Name / Outcome	IB Vote Share / Seats Won	Notes
Birzeit University	1980	Ran as "Student Action Bloc" vs. "Unity Bloc"	43%	Elections delayed due to 2-month closure
	1981	Ran as "Islamic Bloc"	34%	First time using the "Islamic Bloc" name
	1980–1986	Multiple elections	>33% in each	Did not gain full legitimacy until 1986
Al-Najah University	1979–1980	Ran as "Independent Bloc"	10 out of 11 seats	IB-led first student council
	1981	PLO groups united	PLO: 6 seats, IB: 5 seats	
	1982	IB led by Nasir al-Deen al-Sha'er	11 out of 11 seats	
	1983	Post-riot elections	National Unity Bloc victory	Council activities suspended previously
	1984 onward		IB resumed leadership	Continued dominance until Second Intifada
Hebron University	1980	Student council election	IB-led council	Included members from Sharia and Arts faculties, incl. 2 women
Al-Quds University	1982	IB formed in science & da'wa faculties	–	Joined by faculty of arts for girls later
	1984–1990s	Participated in all student council elections	IB: 4 wins, PLO: 2 wins	Salah Darwazeh was first IB head
Islamic University (Gaza)	1979	First council formed	IB won all seats	Represented theology & Arabic faculties
	1981	Contested against Popular Front & Islamic Jihad	IB won all seats	
	1982	Ran as "Unified Student Action"	–	Name changed to IB later
	1980s	Elections continued	65–75% vote share	Conflict peaked with assassination of Dr. Ismail El-Khatib
Bethlehem University	1985	First IB presence	Won presidency of sports club	Stood independently without alliance
All West Bank Universities	1985–1986	Aggregated results	IB: ~40% vote share	

The IB increasingly became an important entity at the Palestinian universities in the West Bank and Gaza, and even at Bethlehem University, where it presented itself for the first time in the 1985 student council elections, managing to win the presidency of the sports

club (Bajes, 2012). It is significant that the IB did not resort to an alliance with any other bloc, preferring to stand alone and develop its own identity, even as a new organization on the campus. At this stage, it won 40% of the votes at universities in the West Bank and 65–75% at the Islamic University in Gaza (Gunning, 2007). The statistics of the electoral performance can be seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Islamic Bloc Electoral Performance at Selected West Bank Universities (2012–2021)

University	2012	2013	2014	2015–2020 (avg)**	2021
Hebron University	–	44%	47%	46%	–
Polytechnic University (Hebron)	–	42%	45%	43%	–
Birzeit University	–	37%	39%	40%	49%
An-Najah University	–	N/A	Postponed	36% avg (2016–2020)*	Won
Khaduri University	–	N/A	Boycott (FYM default win)	~30% est.	N/A

The Islamic Bloc, regained prominence in West Bank universities after a five-year suspension. Between 2013 and 2014, the group gained significant traction at Hebron (47%), Polytechnic (45%), and Birzeit (39%) as shown in figure 2. Despite political and security pressure, the group managed to mobilize significant student support. The rise in vote share at Birzeit from 37% in 2013 to 49% in 2021 demonstrates the Bloc's continued relevance, especially as student councils became a political platform.

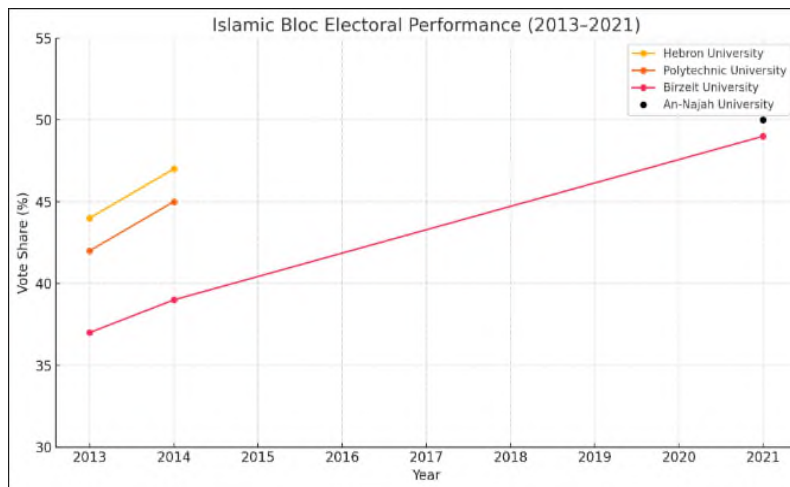


Figure 2. Islamic Bloc Electoral Performance Graph

3. Between Recognition and Competition (1986–1996)

There were many external factors that played a strong role in the weakening of the student movement in general, causing it to return to the state in which it had been in its beginning, due to the closing of the Palestinian universities by an Israeli army, as Israel realized the role of students in the increasing resistance movement, which became known as the Intifada (Abu–Amer, 2004; Zerkovitz, 2015).

The murder of the two students from Birzeit University, Jawad Abu Salmia and Saeb Dahab, as well as others from the student movement at the end of 1986, was considered an important cause of the outbreak of the uprising and the prominent involvement of the IB in it. It also had a profound impact on the implicit recognition of the legitimacy of the IB. Until that time, the term “the four national blocs” (Fatah, PFLP, DFLP, and Communists) had prevailed throughout the Palestinian universities, meaning the blocs belonging to the PLO, but after the IB’s engagement in the confrontations with the Israeli army, the term “the five national blocs” appeared (H. Majid, personal communication, Feb 13, 2011). Marwan Barghouti, president of the student council at Birzeit University that year, was the first to use the term, the day after the demonstration. That day marked a new stage in the history of the IB, which was initially characterized as an attempt by the PLO factions to control the IB. However, these attempts soon failed (ibid).

The IB played an active role in leading the masses in the West Bank and Gaza, as it asked the Palestinians in many statements and at various destinations to participate in public protests, particularly those from the universities of al–Najah, Hebron, and the Islamic University. However, the IB at the Islamic University was the main power behind the demonstrations in the Gaza Strip, organizing various events during the Intifada. This effective leadership of demonstrations led to the closure of the university, as it had happened with the other Palestinian universities (Abu–Amer, 2004).

At the beginning of the Intifada, the Islamic resistance movement Hamas emerged, and the IB officially declared its adoption of Hamas’s approach, despite its previous connection to the Muslim Brotherhood. In fact, the IB and Hamas, at that time, were really the same organization, as members of the IB were the leaders of Hamas in the cities and villages⁵. They were the ones who planned some events of the Intifada and who

⁵ Some examples of the IB members who were, at the same time, leaders of Hamas in their cities and villages: Husam Badran, Jamal Mansour, and Ismail Abu Shanab from An–Najah University, and Yehia Alebadsah, Ismail Haniyah from the Islamic University, as well as Salah Darwaza, Adel Awadallah, Mohieddin Sherif from Al–Quds University, Yahya Ayyash, Saleh Eltalahma from Birzeit, Saleh El Aruri, Nizar Ramadan and Nour El–Din Sherida from Hebron University.

published pamphlets and gathered the marchers for demonstrations (A. Muhsin, personal communication, Dec 6, 2011). They were also the ones who led the military action, which began to take shape in the simplest form of throwing stones, continuing with the use of Molotov cocktails, followed by preparation for suicide bombing operations, which mainly depended on members of the IB. These members were also at the core of the events and activities announced by Hamas during the Intifada. One Hamas leader, who was a student activist at that time, said: "When there was a strike from Hamas, the 'Ashbal' Cubs⁶ and the student members were the ones who distributed the leaflets and who broke Israeli settlers' cars" (A. Muhsin, personal communication, Dec 6, 2011).

The Israeli army closed the universities for more than four years, resulting in irregular student attendance at universities and colleges, as the students were busy with public work. At the same time, the role of the student union decreased, even after the reopening of Palestinian universities after the extended break (Abu-Amer, 2004).

No sooner had the academic year 1990 at Palestinian universities begun than the Israeli group Temple Mount and Eretz Yisrael (Land of Israel) Faithful Movement⁷ released a statement, in which it announced its intention to conduct a march to Al-Aqsa Mosque, and to lay the foundation stone for building the Third Temple there. The students at Al-Quds University in Abu Dis received this news quickly, and the next day, the IB began to gather students by calling out through loudspeakers, and dozens of buses moved towards Al-Aqsa Mosque to demonstrate against them. The presence of large numbers of students inside the mosque did not prevent the Israeli soldiers from carrying out a massacre that day, which was later called the Al-Aqsa Massacre or Black Monday, resulting in 17 Martyrs, 150 wounded, and 270 arrested (Human Rights Watch, 1991).

In 1992, 418 leaders of the Palestinian Islamic movement from Hamas and Al-Jihad were deported to Marj al-Zuhur in Southern Lebanon; most of them had previously been leaders of the student movement, like Jamal Mansour, Jamal Salim, Salah Darwaza, Ismail

⁶ 'Cubs' is a term given to students in middle school and secondary schools who are involved in the thought of the Islamic movement to demonstrate that they are still in the process of preparation and training for the future (Abu A., personal communication, 2011).

⁷ The Temple Guardians group, or Temple Mount and Eretz Yisrael Faithful Movement, is an orthodox Jewish movement; its headquarters are in Jerusalem and its goal is to "[l]iberate the Temple Mount from Arab (Islamic) occupation...and the Dome of the rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque to be transferred to, and rebuilt at Mecca." The founder of the movement is Gershon Salmon, who is an officer in the Israeli army (the official website of the Temple Mount Movement: <http://templemountfaithful.org/>).

Haniyeh, and Ayman Taha. Prominent preachers, who were highly respected and popular among Islamic student movement members, were also deported. Among them were, for example, Sheik Bassam Jarrar, Ibrahim Abu Salem, Hasan Yousef, Nayef Al-Rajoub, and Hamed Bitawi. Also, 20 academic Islamists, such as Aziz Dweik, Mahmoud El-Zahar, Abdel Aziz El-Rantisi, and Atef Adwan, and more than 200 university students from the IB were deported. Despite its huge loss, the IB took advantage of this opportunity to highlight the issue of Palestinian deportees at universities. It organized festivals, at which the deportees' wives and daughters talked about their suffering. In addition, the IB distributed brochures condemning the deportation campaigns carried out by the Israeli authorities.

By the end of 1992, Hamas began to be a threat to the power of Fatah in all the regions, due to winning a series of student elections at prominent and central universities, including the strongholds of the Shabiba (Gunning, 2007) in al-Najah University, Hebron University, Islamic University, Polytechnic, and al-Quds University in Abu Dis. In the same year, i.e., in 1992, there were 12 professional, union, and student elections in different parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. While the voter turnout exceeded 85% in most cases, the ratios achieved by Hamas and its student wing IB ranged from 45% to 50%, which was the same percentage that Hamas was hoping to gain in the Palestinian National Council (Zuhur, 2008).

In 1993, when the Oslo Accords had barely come into existence, the IB strengthened its status through its protest action, and even made alliances with other student blocs. These alliances were characterized by their emphasis on politics rather than ideology, such as the alliance between the IB at Birzeit University and al-Qutub (DPSP) in 1993, and at Al-Quds University in the same period. It also made an alliance with the leftists at An-Najah National University in 1995 and at Al-Quds Open University in Gaza as well, because of their common rejection of the Oslo Accords. The result at Birzeit that year (1993) was not the only indicator of the strength of the opposition to these agreements: at the same time, eight student union elections took place and seven of them were won by the opposition, especially by the IB (Shalhub, 1994).

This period was characterized by giving priority to political discourse in union activities, in contrast to the previous stage, in which the IB concentrated on preaching and student activities. This shows that the Oslo Accords were conceived of as being highly controversial. With the birth of the Palestinian National Authority in 1991, the number of universities and institutes in the West Bank and Gaza Strip had increased, entailing an increase in competition between student blocs, especially between the IB

and the Shabiba. Al-Azhar University was established in Gaza in 1991, and Al-Quds Open University, with its branches, was established in the West Bank and in Gaza in 1991 as well.

In 1994, the Ibrahimi Mosque massacre – also known as the Hebron massacre – took place. More than thirty Palestinian worshipers who were praying Fajr at the mosque were killed by the Israeli Baruch Goldstein in this massacre (Wiles, 2014). After this incident, the reprisals began, led by Yahya Ayyash (known as Al-Muhandis: the engineer), a previous student and IB leader from Birzeit University, who would become among the most celebrated individuals on the Palestinian street (Zelkovitz, 2015), for being responsible for planning a lot of suicide attacks against Israel. Ayyash called these reprisals operations the ‘quintuple plan’.⁸ He established a group of military cells, including the “chosen union cell number zero,” whose five members were former students at the Palestinian universities⁹, who the Israelis later assassinated.

In 1996, Israeli authorities issued a law that criminalized working with the IB and declared all members of the IB terrorists, who were supposed to be imprisoned for two years. This was based on a report from 32 pages by an Israeli expert, which was submitted to one of the Israeli courts when she was asked to testify against the IB. The report was translated to Arabic by one of the members of IB and was put in the archive of the IB in Birzeit. It stated that the IB was the representative of Hamas at higher educational institutions, that its student activists were ready to do anything on behalf of the movement, and that they would eventually become Hamas leaders after graduation or even before (Islamic Bloc in Birzeit 1996).

4. Who Leads Resistance, Leads Students (1996–2007)

In 1996, Israeli army assassinated Yahya Ayyash. His assassination raised the popularity of the IB at Birzeit University, as he was the responsible for suicide attacks against Israel. Since then, Birzeit has joined the ranks of those universities whose student council elections were won by the IB. After the reprisals which were launched by al-Qassam Brigades (Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, EQB: the military wing of Hamas) in response to the assassination of Ayyash, a new stage began with respect to the relationship

⁸ The quintuple plan was drawn up by the al-Qassam Brigades to lead a reprisal in response to the Ibrahimi Mosque massacre in 1994, consisting of five suicide bombing operations carried out by Raed Zakarneh, Ammar Amarneh, Salah Shaker, Saleh Sawy, and Labib Azem, which aimed at the heart of Israel.

⁹ Abdel Moneim Abu Hamid, a student from Birzeit University, Zuhair Farrah, a member of the student council at Al-Quds University in Abu Dis, Islam Abu Rumeileh, a graduate of Birzeit University, College of Arts, Abdul Rahman Hamdan, a student in the faculty of theology at the Islamic University, and Ali Al-Amoudi.

between Hamas and the Palestinian National Authority, the latter of which initiated a massive arrest campaign against members of the IB.

This period was characterized by tense relations between the Palestinian Authority and the IB, many of whose members were arrested in 1996 by the Palestinian security services. These arrests continued until the beginning of the Second Intifada, which coincided with, and was followed by, a campaign of arrests initiated by the Israelis for many male students and some female students as well, who belonged to the IB. The IB and PFLP detainees declared a hunger strike in the Palestinian Authority prisons in 1996, and remained on such a strike until their release (Bajes, 2012). The most prominent detainees of these campaigns were the chairmen of the student councils from various Palestinian universities and institutes.¹⁰ However, the IB also accused the Palestinian security services of assassinating a group of its leaders, including Mohieddin Sharif – the most prominent leader after Yahya Ayyash –, who was an IB leader at Al-Quds University in Abu Dis, and the commander of al-Qassam Brigades after the assassination of Ayyash. Hamas also accused the Palestinian Authority of torturing some IB members to make them confess to crimes they did not commit, including the assassination of Mohieddin, and of illegitimately throwing them in prison for years.¹¹ It also accused the Palestinian security services of handing over Birzeit University's IB leaders¹² to the Israeli

¹⁰ The most prominent of them all were Mohammed Naji Sabha, the chief deputy of the students council at An-Najah University in 1995, the president of the council in 1997, one of the founders of the union of student council chiefs in Palestine, and its first president. He was arrested eight times by the Palestinian security services, the first time on 20 April 1996, followed by his arrest by the occupation authorities, after which he was sentenced to 15 years in prison on charges of belonging to the Qassam Brigades, and for planning a number of military operations. There is also Qais Odwan, the president of the student council in 1999, who was detained by the Palestinian security services in the same period, one of the most wanted by the Israeli government until he was assassinated in 2002 as a leader of the Qassam Brigades in Nablus. There is also Saleh Talahma from Birzeit University, one of the closest friends of Yahya Ayyash. He was detained by the Palestinian security services from mid-1996 until the beginning of 2000. He was assassinated by Israeli army in Ramallah with two leaders from al-Qassam in 2003. Mohammed Abu Warda, the chairman of student council at the Institute of Ramallah in 1997, who was sentenced by a Palestinian Authority court to life imprisonment. He spent six years in prison, was released after a presidential decree because of the attack by Israeli army on the Palestinian cities. After that, the Israelis arrested him in 2002 and gave him 48 life sentences on charges of leading "the sacred reprisals" in response to the assassination of Yahya Ayyash. There is also Nash'at El-Karmi, the chief of the student council at the Polytechnic University in 1998, who was assassinated by Israeli army in 2010.

¹¹ For example, Imad Awadallah and Ghassan Aladasi.

¹² Including Bilal El-Barghouti, a leader of al-Qassam Brigades in the West Bank (16 life sentences) and Walid Anjas, a member of the "Silwan cell," which was formed in response to the assassination of Salah Shehadeh, the founder of al-Qassam Brigades (36 life sentences), and Ahmad Abu Taha (a 25-year sentence). Please write

army during the storming of the Preventive Security headquarters in Beitunia in 2002 (Zahda, 2024).

By the end of 2000, elections at the Palestinian universities were halted by the Palestinian Authority, justifying it with the lack of suitable conditions, because of the outbreak of the second Palestinian uprising. Four years later, in 2003, elections were reinstated at universities. The IB again won the student council presidency at most Palestinian universities and institutes.¹³

The IB participated in the second Intifada, like all other student bodies, supporting the suicide bombing operations. A study shows that the number of suicide bombers from Hamas between September 28th, 2000, and November 20th, 2008, has reached 72, including 3 women (Singh, 2008). While in the Islamic Jihad, suicide bombers have reached 48, including 4 women. Fatah has adopted 42 suicide bombers, including 7 women, and the PLFP has adopted 10 (ibid). A high proportion of suicide bombers were university students from within its ranks. At al-Najah National University, there were 14 suicide bombers who were members of the IB, in addition to 21 others who were killed because of armed clashes or assassinations carried out by the Israeli army (Islamic Bloc in al-Najah 2012). At Birzeit University, Khalil Sharif, who was one of the leaders of the "Martyrs for prisoners" cell,¹⁴ was killed in a suicide bombing operation in 1998, and two other students, Diaa El-Taweel and Ihab Abu Salim,¹⁵ A statement of prisoners of Birzeit University who are in the prisons of authority to the university students, Birzeit University Archive, carried out suicide bombing operations in 2001 and 2003. The IB at Hebron University had its share of suicide bombers, too – ten of them to be exact, in addition to other kinds of military action.¹⁶

The IB electoral propaganda at all universities and institutes promoted suicide operations, and it began to define itself in its election campaigns through the number

in complete sentences and explain these cells and their activities in the text in order to inform the reader about the activities of the IB! Irving, S. (2011). *Palestine*. Bradt Travel Guides.

¹³ See appendix no.3, which shows the results of the student council elections at Palestinian universities until 2016.

¹⁴ "Martyrs for prisoners" is a military cell which was founded by a group of Palestinian fighters from al-Qassam Brigades. Its goal is to liberate the Palestinian prisoners who were serving long sentences in Israeli jails. This cell includes Mahmoud Abu Honoud, Ammar El-Zibn, Khalil Sharif, and others (Bilal 2009).

¹⁵ Raed Misk was one of them, along with two members of the student council, namely Nabil Khater and Taha Ezzat; and there is also Mahmoud Al-Qawasma from the Polytechnic University.

¹⁶ Raed Misk was one of them, along with two members of the student council, namely Nabil Khater and Taha Ezzat; and there is also Mahmoud Al-Qawasma from the Polytechnic University.

of “martyrs and prisoners” members of IB, as well as the number of Israelis who were killed in these operations.

The IB at each university had several “Mujahidin,” as a high percentage of the prisoners serving long sentences belonged to the student movement; the number of IB prisoners from al-Najah University serving life sentences amounted to as many as 13. At Birzeit University there were eight, including the head of the student council of 1999, Mahmoud Shuraitah, and a girl, Ahlam Al-Tamimi, who received the highest sentence that a woman had ever received in the history of the Palestinian cause, namely 16 life sentences. From the Polytechnic University, two students were sentenced to life imprisonment: Mounir Mar’i, who received five life sentences, and Fady El-Dowik, who received 15.

The commencement of village councils and municipal elections in 2005, and the victory of the Change and Reform Bloc, which is considered to be the representative bloc of Hamas in the local and legislative elections, which controlled the majority of these councils, as well as of the legislative council elections in 2006, which Change and Reform bloc also won gave the IB a clue about election results in this period, which the students called the “green tsunami” stage, clearly hinting at the control of the IB at various universities and institutes for the student councils elections.

5. Palestinian Split Led to Compulsory Prohibition (2007–2012)

On 14 June 2007, the Qassam Brigades took control of the head offices of the Palestinian security bodies in Gaza, after fatal events and a lack of security in the Gaza Strip that had lasted for many weeks. Hamas now had full control over the Gaza Strip, and elections at universities were prohibited for security reasons. Such a change also had an impact on the West Bank, where public freedom was greatly limited, something that had never occurred before, especially not among Hamas supporters and the IB supporters at West Bank universities. IB activities were banned at West Bank universities, either by order of the Palestinian security bodies or by decisions of the councils of Hebron and Bethlehem Universities, or even by the FYM (Barakat, 2008).

The Palestinian security bodies embarked on a vast campaign of arrests targeting IB leaders from all universities, as well as student council members representing the IBC (Bajes, 2012). The number of Hamas detainees in 2007, as stated by the Hamas media office in an official, detailed bulletin, was 1,460, and increased to 2,046 in 2008. In 2009, the number further increased to 2,229, and in 2010, the peak of political arrests was reached, as the number of detainees climbed to 3,020 (Hamoud, 2023). In 2011, there were 1,011 detainees, and in 2012, the figure further decreased to 830 (Joronen &

Griffiths, 2022). Several IB leaders in the West Bank were shot in the stomach and legs, such as Muhammad Quzmar, a student from Birzeit University, or in the head, like Muhammad Radad, who was shot directly on the head on al-Najah National University Campus.

In 2008, the Palestinian security services worked hard to destroy the IB organizational structure at West Bank universities by embarking on a campaign of arrests against Hamas leaders among both the student movement and the political organization (Bajes, 2012). Furthermore, funds, which Hamas distributed to the students as scholarships or means of assisting IB activities at universities, were confiscated (Huda, 2024).

As a reaction to the unprecedented measures against the IB, the arrest of its cadres, and the banning of its activities, the IB suspended its participation in student elections from 2008 to 2012 to the extent that it nearly disappeared from the scene and organized no activities – they did not even issue circulars, organize panels, or hang up posters.

On the internal Palestinian level, this period was characterized by the reticence of the IB at the different universities in the West Bank and the unprecedented secrecy of student activities. It also witnessed an increase in the gap between the supporters of the conflicting parties (IB the student wing of Hamas and Shabiba the student wing of Fatah), which had a negative impact on the general university atmosphere and led the universities to impose rigid laws governing many prohibited activities on campuses, such as political festivals and distribution of publications (Bajes, 2012). Table 3 and Figure 3 show the number and trends of Hamas detainees during the period from 2007–2012.

Table 3. Fluctuations in the Number of Hamas Detainees During the Period from 2007 to 2012

Year	Number of Detainees
2007	1,460
2008	2,046
2009	2,229
2010	3,020
2011	1,011
2012	830

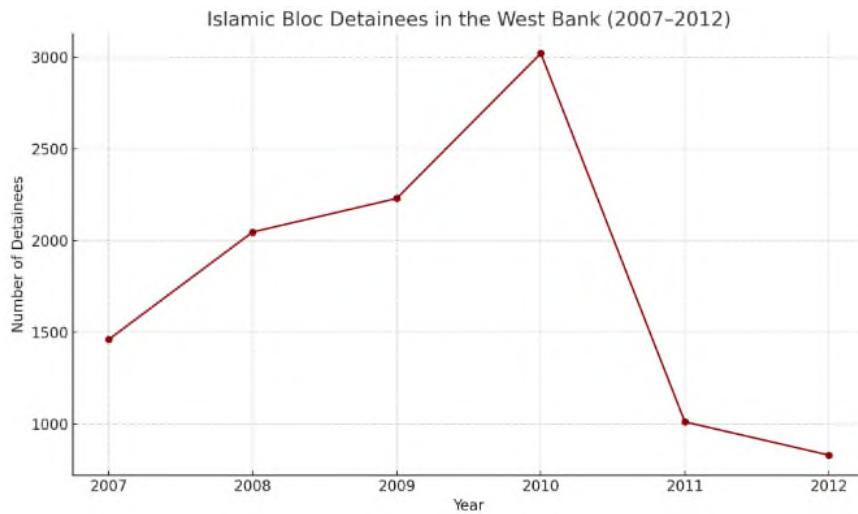


Figure 3. Trend Shown of IB Detainees in the West Bank

The rapid rise of detainees between 2007 and 2010 demonstrates the ferocity of the crackdown on the IB's organization foundation, which peaked in 2010. A partial relief is evident in the resulting decline, which may have been brought on by both internal and foreign political factors. The table shows the number of arrests as well as the increase and decrease of political detainees throughout this time period.

6. Launching Rockets Leads to Relaunching the Student Movement (2012-2021)

From 2008 until 2012, there were very few attempts from IB members to change the IB domestic situation within universities or violate the prohibition of its activities until IB student members started a campaign of sit-ins and protests against the political arrests by the Palestinian Authority at universities. This stage featured hunger strikes, the issuing of demands, the most prominent of which was to decriminalize the IB's activities and to end the harassment of its members by the Palestinian security forces under the slogan "Yes for Safe University Life".

The IB at West Bank universities started to resume its activities with statements, circulars, and panels, as well as festivals, art, and charity exhibitions and events, until it became active again at most of the universities except for a very limited number of colleges and universities such as Al-Najah and Khaduri.

By the end of 2012, the IB had resumed its participation in student elections at all West Bank universities; the results were satisfactory, and even exceeded expectations in some

cases. The IB used the events of Hamas' 25th anniversary, which was greatly organized by IB supporters, as an exemplification of its power. This took place at both Birzeit University, through the participation of the Hamas senior official, Gamal Al Taweel, and Polytechnic University in Hebron, through the participation of the Hamas senior officials, including Abdel Khalek Al Natsha, the legislative council member from Hebron, as well as Samira Al Halyaka and Abdel Aziz Doweik, legislative council members of Hamas. These activities enabled the IB's participation in the students' elections in 2013 and revived its involvement at the large universities in the West Bank, like al-Najah National University, after the Palestinian split (Bajes, 2012).

Hamas considered the revival of its involvement at the large universities in the West Bank to be significant in the Palestinian arena at a time when there were no union, labor, municipal, legislative, or other elections. As a result, Hamas, as they have argued, should not be excluded from any political decisions (Bajes, 2012).

In 2013, because of the general political situation following the prisoner exchange agreement that was made between Hamas and Israel, the eight-day war in Gaza, and the bombing of Tel Aviv by one of the IB members from Birzeit University, namely Ahmad Musa, Hamas saw a new political opportunity to prove itself. In addition, strenuous efforts were made by students and unions in the form of successive sit-ins and hunger strikes launched by the IB at the universities of Birzeit, Hebron, and Khaduri, in rejection of the principle of political arrests. All these factors made it possible for IB to take part in the elections that year (Bajes, 2012).

In April and May 2014, the student elections were held at West Bank universities, and the IB increased its share of the vote. It won 47% of the seats at Hebron University, 45% at Polytechnic University, and 39% at Birzeit University. At al-Najah University, the elections were postponed until the first semester of the following year. Except for the FYM, all the student blocs boycotted Khaduri University elections, so the Shabiba won by default.

In 2021, IB won 25 seats on the 51-seat Birzeit University student council. The IB had also won similar elections that took place at An-Najah National University in Nablus.¹⁷

¹⁷ See <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20230524-palestinian-student-elections-provide-rare-test-of-voter-mood/>

7. Discussion

According to the history of the Palestinian student movement and its effectiveness in Palestinian resistance since its inception, researchers and analysts had anticipated a significant role for the student movement—particularly the Islamic Bloc—in supporting the Palestinian resistance during the Al-Aqsa Intifada operation (Uddin, 2022). However, the role fell short of expectations. This underperformance is not only in comparison to the historical roles Palestinians have traditionally played but also in contrast to the impressive mobilization witnessed during the “Saif Al-Quds: Sword of Jerusalem” battle in 2021, when Palestinians across the board united behind the resistance against the aggression of the occupation (Glover, 2023).

This discrepancy prompts questions about whether the divergence in performance stems from subjective or objective reasons. It also invites a rapid analysis of the relationship between the student movement and Palestinian factions, especially those involved in the Al-Aqsa Flood battle—whether supportive, neutral, or even opposed to the strategy of armed resistance (Abukmeil, 2022). The relationship between the student movement and Palestinian factions has played a crucial role in transforming the student movement in the West Bank, as previously elaborated (Moghli, 2024). Four stages of this relationship can be identified following the Nakba of 1948 (Manna, 2022):

1. The creation of the student movement by Palestinian factions, marked by a spirit of struggle and representation,
2. Integration with Palestinian factions,
3. Subordination to factions, institutions, and their agendas,
4. Separation from parent movements, dismantling, and marginalization of its roles

Today, the student movement—national (e.g., the Fatah-affiliated Student Youth Movement) and Islamic (e.g., the Islamic Bloc affiliated with Hamas)—has reached the fourth stage (Bajes, 2012). In the West Bank, most cadres of the Student Youth Movement have been absorbed into the Palestinian Authority's security apparatus, essentially acting as informants against their peers in opposing student frameworks. They have also, at times, repressed student activism under directives from security leadership in the West Bank, in line with preserving the political settlement project adopted by their parent movement (Moghli, 2024).

In contrast, in Gaza, most Islamic Bloc cadres were recruited into armed resistance, with their energies directed toward mobilization in support of the armed struggle. This focus became highly visible during the latest war. Still, it significantly weakened attention to unionist and academic engagement, diminishing its importance in Gaza—especially after

Hamas took control of the Strip and began implementing its vision of armed resistance as the sole strategic path to end the occupation.

With the onset of the Al-Aqsa Intifada, the suspension of in-person university education in favor of online systems, and the loss of organizational infrastructure, it became difficult for student movements affiliated with Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Popular Front to rebuild their structures and regain their momentum. Meanwhile, the Fatah-affiliated Student Youth Movement adhered to the Palestinian Authority's directive to keep the West Bank neutral and refrain from organizing solidarity events with Gaza (Bernstein, 2024).

As a result, nearly a quarter of a million students in Palestinian universities and colleges were effectively neutralized from participating in support activities for Gaza. Regarding the role of the Israeli occupation, it implemented the long-standing "mowing the grass" strategy against the student movement—an old security tactic applied to the broader Palestinian national movement. It aims to keep the student movement under pressure and below the threshold of influence by targeting it with systematic security crackdowns and widespread arrests. This approach aims to prevent students from taking initiative, instill fear among them, and convince them of the futility of resistance.

Despite all efforts to neutralize the West Bank from resistance and, specifically, university students and members of the student movement during the period from the May 2021 "Sword of Jerusalem" battle until March 1, 2025, there were more than 4,374 shooting operations targeting Israeli occupation forces and settlers in the West Bank and Jerusalem. Additionally, 1,788 explosive devices were thrown or planted on bypass roads, in alleys, and in locations where Israeli forces were likely to be present. There were also 80 vehicular attacks and 149 stabbing incidents. Attempts were made to return to bombing operations using two booby-trapped cars and a bus explosion. Resistance fighters also succeeded in downing 42 reconnaissance drones and other aircraft used by the occupation to monitor and record the movement of resistance fighters (Hamdan, 2023).

As for popular resistance activities and protests, they amounted to 34,446 acts during the same period. These included 25,947 confrontations with Israeli forces, 3,859 repulsions of settler invasions in Palestinian villages and towns, 1,141 Molotov cocktails thrown at military jeeps or settlement perimeters near Palestinian villages, 2,987 demonstrations held either within Palestinian cities or at military checkpoints, and 165

nighttime disruption actions. The total toll of these resistance acts was the killing of 119 Israelis and the wounding of 1,694 as shown in table 4 (Hamdan, 2023).

Table 4. Breakdown of Resistance Activities Involving Palestinian Youth and Students (May 2021–March 2025)

Type of Activity	Number of Incidents
Confrontations with Israeli forces	25,947
Repulsions of settler invasions	3,859
Molotov cocktail attacks	1,141
Demonstrations (in cities or at checkpoints)	2,987
Nighttime disruption actions	165
Killing of Israelis	119
Wounding	1,694
Total Incidences	34,446

Although these statistics are known, they cannot be officially attributed to the student movement or any Palestinian group or faction. The university student is the same young man involved in daily confrontations, the same masked individual throwing explosives at night, and the same armed activist in resistance battalions stationed in refugee camps—especially in northern West Bank areas and Jericho. Thus, these acts of resistance cannot be formally attributed to the student movement but rather to the Palestinian youth, who, by nature, are often university students. the intensity of resistance can be seen in figure 4.

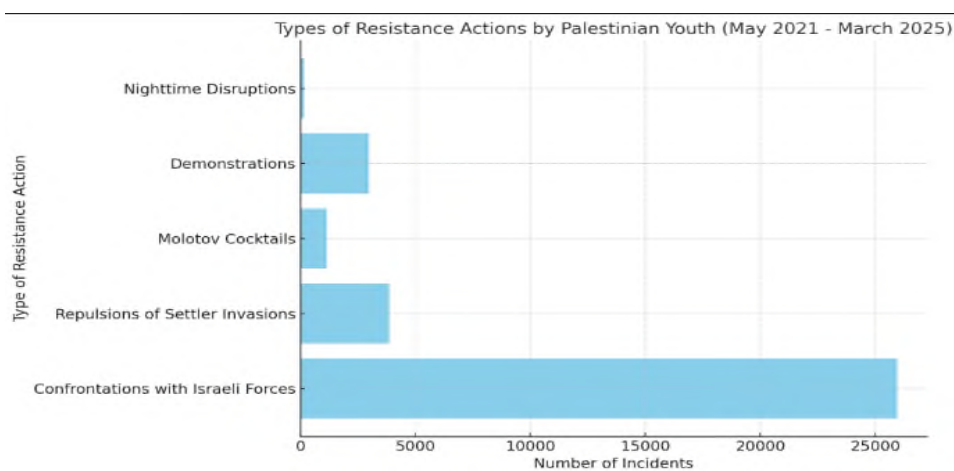


Figure 4. Intensity and Types of Resistance Action by Palestinian Youth and Number of Incidences

During the war period from October 7, 2023, until early March 2025, the Islamic Bloc estimates that around 400 of its members—both male and female—were arrested, including 40 female leaders and members of the student council and student conference. Although there is no precise official statistic for other student detainees unaffiliated with the Islamic Bloc, the most reliable estimates report that an additional 300 students from other student groups and independents were arrested in the same period. Furthermore, 20 students from West Bank universities were martyred during resistance operations or confrontations, including 6 from the Islamic Bloc and its supporters.

In Gaza, the entire higher education infrastructure was destroyed. All universities, academic staff, and students were indiscriminately targeted, with no distinction between student movement members and others. Unfortunately, there is no available data on student movement martyrs in Gaza, and it is nearly impossible to distinguish Islamic Bloc members directly involved in resistance activities among the dead, wounded, imprisoned, or those missing under rubble. Most of the armed cadres in Palestinian resistance groups—starting with Hamas, through Islamic Jihad, and including the Popular and Democratic Fronts—are young people enrolled in or graduated from universities. However, their involvement in resistance was not under the banner of the student movement but rather that of their parent organizations.

The Islamic Bloc participated in numerous protests, marches, and public demonstrations in the West Bank, organizing dozens of events with student participation—particularly at Birzeit University, Al-Quds (also known as Abu Dis), and An-Najah University. The Bloc also engaged in several strikes, most notably the June 2022 strike at An-Najah University following the assault by university security forces on a student sit-in protesting the dismissal of five Islamic Bloc students. This strike led to the university conceding to student demands, dismissing the security officers who had attacked them, including the chief of security—and reinstating the dismissed students.

Another sit-in at An-Najah took place in June 2023 and lasted five days over a union-related demand. The university complied with rescheduling exams for students who had missed them. The Islamic Bloc also held a sit-in after university security expelled students protesting political arrests. That protest lasted 26 days and ended with an agreement not to target protesting students, to ensure freedom of student union activities, and to reject political arrests.

In December 2024, the Student Council at An-Najah University organized a sit-in demanding several measures in response to the conditions of war and genocide,

including easier installment plans for tuition, reimbursement of insurance and internet fees, and activation of student health insurance. The sit-in lasted 25 days and ended with an Israeli raid on the university campus and the arrest of all participating students. Table 5 shows the summary of arrests and sit-in.

Table 5. Student Movement Activity and Repression (Oct 2023–Mar 2025)

Incidence	Reasoning	Number of Arrests
Arrests (Islamic Bloc)	Total members arrested (male & female)	400
	Female leaders/members of student bodies arrested	40
Arrests (Other Groups)	Estimated students from other movements or independents	300
Student Martyrs (West Bank)	Killed in confrontations or resistance ops	20 total (6 from Islamic Bloc/supporters)
Student Martyrs (Gaza)	No confirmed data due to total destruction of infrastructure	Unknown
Sit-ins / Strikes (West Bank)	An-Najah University sit-ins (2022, 2023, late 2024)	Multiple (5-day, 26-day, 25-day)
Birzeit Sit-ins	3 sit-ins to protest political arrests; all ended with mass arrests	3

At Birzeit University, the Islamic Bloc organized three sit-ins during the same period to protest political arrests. The Israeli occupation stormed the university each time, arresting all the participating students, including the student council president and female council members.

In terms of media suppression, the Islamic Bloc's social media pages were shut down dozens of times. Facebook imposed the strictest content censorship, followed by Instagram, while Telegram was the least restrictive. The Bloc organized dozens of protest actions on and off campuses, in addition to solidarity human chains, protest marches, cultural and national seminars, and art exhibitions telling the stories of the Al-Aqsa Flood and the genocide (Bajes, 2012). One notable initiative from the Islamic Bloc and the student movement was the call to integrate Gaza students into West Bank universities to continue their higher education after the destruction of Gaza's universities. This initiative became a reality after being adopted by the Palestinian Universities Union.

The Islamic Bloc regularly visits the families of detained students to offer moral support, especially during holidays and public occasions. They offer symbolic gifts and honorary

plaques, and they also follow up on the academic affairs of imprisoned students by contacting professors and notifying the relevant university departments, which then coordinate with public relations offices to assign legal representation and handle the cases of student detainees when necessary.

8. Conclusion

This study has discovered the progress of the Islamic Bloc (IB) in Palestinian universities, signifying how its creation, evolution, and movements are intensely knotted with extensive historical and political fundamental powers in Palestine. Instead of considering the Islamic student movement as exclusively determined by ideology or responsive to structural circumstances, this study has demonstrated that its flexibility and evaluation arise from a planned communication of cultural action and structural prospects. The IB has directed a complicated terrain of overpowering, rivalry, and gratitude from its grounds in the late 1970s to its regeneration post-2012. It reformed its particularity and resistance methods in response to crucial actions such as the First Intifada, the Oslo Accords, and frequent impacts of captures and dominance. These modifications were inclined not only by student policies but also by wider political progress within Hamas and the Palestinian Authority. While the IB was once crucial to mobilising resistance and shaping political awareness on the ground, its existing impact reveals a wider modification in the association between Palestinian youth and formal student structures. The movement is waning in unionist meetings, mainly in Gaza, dissimilarities with its efforts to restate itself in the West Bank, specifically throughout and after the 2021 Sword of Jerusalem revolution. The corrosion of student movement substructure due to both internal disintegration and external suppression has derailed the IB's capability to function as a unified political force. However, the continuing membership of youth, including students, in actions of resistance recommends that while the recognised student movement may have deteriorated, its essence persist through more dispersed and less established means of political action. The IB's development thus reveals wider pressures in Palestinian resistance among organisation and impulsiveness, strict leadership and grassroots action, political destruction and the continuing will to repel. This conclusion highlights the necessity for further research into how youth actions develop under occupation, the latent role of student involvement in postcolonial hardships, and how political suppression forms new practices of mobilisation.

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