

# Promised Reform, Old Practice: The Palestinian Authority and “Pay For Slay”

For years, American and European officials have pressed the Palestinian Authority to end payments to convicted terrorists and the families of attackers. Palestinian leaders have repeatedly assured Western audiences that the system would be reformed or replaced. Yet recent reporting shows that the core policy remains intact, repackaged but not dismantled. The result is a credibility problem that affects U.S. law, congressional funding decisions, and the broader case for reform within the Palestinian political system.

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## Key Takeaways

- The Palestinian Authority pledged<sup>[1]</sup> to end or reform its so-called “Pay for Slay” program under international pressure.
- Recent reporting<sup>[2]</sup> indicates the payments continue, even if rebranded or administratively shifted.
- The policy conflicts directly with U.S. law, including the Taylor Force Act<sup>[3]</sup>.
- PA officials have publicly defended<sup>[4]</sup> payments to prisoners and “martyrs,” undermining reform claims.
- Continued payments weaken trust with Washington and complicate future diplomatic engagement.

# What “Pay for Slay” Means

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The phrase “Pay for Slay” refers to the Palestinian Authority’s longstanding policy of providing stipends to Palestinians imprisoned for terrorism offenses and to families of those killed while carrying out terrorist attacks against Israelis. Payment levels have historically been tied to the length of prison sentences, meaning individuals convicted of more serious attacks often receive higher compensation.

Critics argue the structure creates a financial incentive tied to violence and murder. The policy gained particular prominence in the United States after the 2016 murder of American citizen Taylor Force in Tel Aviv. In response, Congress passed the Taylor Force Act in 2018, which restricts certain U.S. economic assistance to the Palestinian Authority unless it ends payments tied to acts of terrorism. The law was signed by President Donald Trump and remains in force.

## The Palestinian Authority’s Promises

Over the years, Palestinian officials have repeatedly signaled that reforms were coming. In 2021 and 2022, PA leaders indicated to U.S. interlocutors that the system would be reviewed and adjusted. There were claims that payments would be shifted to a different administrative body or folded into a broader welfare structure.

These assurances were widely reported as signs of possible change. American policymakers and European officials framed them as steps toward compliance with international expectations. The argument from Ramallah was that the program would no longer reward violence but would instead function as neutral social support.

Yet critics warned that cosmetic changes would not satisfy U.S. law. If payments continued to be tied to terrorism convictions, a rebranding would not alter the substance.

## Reform in Name Only

A recent report<sup>[2]</sup> in The Jerusalem Post states that the Palestinian Authority continues to fund stipends to convicted terrorists and their families despite prior commitments to stop. According to the article, the payments were not eliminated but transferred in a way that preserved the financial flow.

The report describes how the Palestinian leadership did not hide the continuation of payments. Instead, officials defended the policy publicly, reaffirming their commitment to prisoners and families of those killed in attacks. That stance stands in direct tension with assurances given to American officials that the practice would end.

This means that the issue is not ambiguity but credibility. Promises were made. The payments continued<sup>[5]</sup>.

# Public Statements That Undermine Reform Claims

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Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has previously declared<sup>[6]</sup> that even if the PA had only “one penny left,” it would go to prisoners and families of martyrs. That statement has been cited repeatedly in debates over reform and was widely reported.

Such statements complicate any claim that the policy is merely a misunderstood welfare mechanism. They reflect a political choice that elevates the payments as a priority.

## Why This Matters for the United States

The Taylor Force Act was designed to create clear consequences. If the Palestinian Authority continues to provide payments linked to acts of terrorism, U.S. direct economic assistance is restricted. Lawmakers across party lines have emphasized that American taxpayer funds cannot indirectly subsidize a system that rewards violence.

The credibility gap also affects broader diplomatic initiatives. Any future negotiations over statehood, normalization, or reconstruction require trust. If reform promises are followed by public confirmation that the core policy remains intact, skepticism deepens in Washington.

Members of Congress have repeatedly cited “Pay for Slay” as a barrier to restoring or expanding aid. Congressional hearings and statements have pointed to continued payments as evidence that reform commitments have not been met.

## A Pattern of Rebranding

One recurring theme in the debate is administrative reshuffling<sup>[5]</sup>. Payments may be shifted from one ministry to another. Terminology may change. Budget lines may be reorganized. Yet if eligibility criteria still depend on imprisonment for terrorism offenses or death during attacks, the underlying incentive structure remains.

That distinction matters. Reform requires altering the criteria and severing the link between violence and financial benefit. Anything short of that does not meet the standard set by U.S. law.

# Conclusion

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The Palestinian Authority has faced sustained pressure to end payment rewards tied to acts of terrorism. Public assurances suggested reform was forthcoming. Recent reporting indicates that the payments continue, even if presented under a different framework.

For American policymakers, the issue is straightforward. The Taylor Force Act sets a clear condition. If payments persist, restrictions remain justified. For Palestinian leaders seeking stronger ties with Washington, credibility now hinges on action rather than rhetoric.

Ending “Pay for Slay” would signal a genuine shift. Maintaining it while promising reform reinforces doubt. The next step is clear: align policy with promises and comply with the standards already written into U.S. law.

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## FAQ on 'Pay for Slay' and PA Funding Methods

### How has the international community responded to 'Pay for Slay' programs?

International responses generally categorize “**Pay for Slay**” as a specific but contentious issue: payments associated with imprisonment for security offenses or to families of attackers, with higher stipends linked to longer sentences. This connection is critical as it creates an *incentive structure* that donors argue undermines civilian protection and peace efforts. Recent developments indicate sustained pressure... especially from the United States and the European Union...to reform these payments and align foreign assistance with clear conditions. In February 2025, PA President Mahmoud Abbas issued a decree purportedly ending the old system, which the European Commission welcomed as a shift toward need-based welfare.

However, oversight has tightened amid reports and donor statements expressing doubts about implementation. The European Commission later stated it “*profoundly regrets*” payments made “regardless” of the fund’s closure, with reports citing continued transfers (including nearly 19 million shekels after the announcement) routed through alternative channels to reduce scrutiny.

## Footnotes

1. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/2/10/pas-abbas-overhauls-payments-for-families-of-slain-and-jailed-palestinians> (<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/2/10/pas-abbas-overhauls-payments-for-families-of-slain-and-jailed-palestinians>) ■
2. <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-888003> (<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-888003>) ■
3. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/1164> (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/1164>) ■
4. <https://palwatch.org/page/41912> (<https://palwatch.org/page/41912>) ■
5. <https://palwatch.org/page/41889> (<https://palwatch.org/page/41889>) ■
6. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/abbas-vows-to-continue-stipends-to-terrorists-even-with-pas-last-penny/> (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/abbas-vows-to-continue-stipends-to-terrorists-even-with-pas-last-penny/>) ■

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# From Startup Nation to AI Superpower: Why Israel's AI Infrastructure Buildout Matters to the United States

📅 March 5, 2026(<https://innovascope.org/2026/03/05/>)

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Israel has long been known as the "Startup Nation (<https://startupnationcentral.org/why-israel/>)," a country with more startups per capita than almost anywhere in the world. Now it is making a strategic move into artificial intelligence infrastructure, announcing plans (<https://thejewishedition.com/news/israel/2026/02/22/startup-nation-to-ai-superpower-israel-to-build-ai-server-farms-double-power-plants/>) to build large-scale AI server farms and significantly expand its power generation capacity. This is not just a domestic economic story. It has direct implications for the United States, particularly as Washington competes with China in advanced computing, supply chains, and defense technology. Israel's decision to invest in AI at the infrastructure level signals a shift from software innovation alone to heavy industrial and energy-backed computing capacity.

## Key Takeaways

- Israel plans to build (<https://thejewishedition.com/news/israel/2026/02/22/startup-nation-to-ai-superpower-israel-to-build-ai-server-farms-double-power-plants/>) large AI server farms and expand electricity production to support them.
- The project marks a shift from a startup-driven AI ecosystem to national-scale infrastructure investment.
- Increased Israeli AI capacity strengthens joint U.S.-Israel research, defense cooperation, and secure technology development.
- Expanded power generation and data capacity in Israel can diversify allied computing infrastructure away from adversarial states.
- The initiative aligns with U.S. strategic goals in AI competition, supply-chain resilience, and military readiness.

## What Israel Is Building

Israel intends (<https://www.gov.il/en/pages/pm-netanyahu-at-today-s-government-meeting-on-the-government-decision-to-accelerate-building-an-ai-server-farm-22-feb-2026>) to construct major AI server farms while doubling power plant output to meet the energy demands of advanced computing. AI data

centers require enormous and stable electricity supplies. Training large language models, advanced military AI systems, and complex data analysis tools consumes far more power than traditional cloud computing.

By pairing server farms with expanded energy production, Israel is treating AI infrastructure as a national strategic asset. This is not merely about hosting startups. It is about building physical capacity (<https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/technology-science/artc-netanyahu-hails-plan-to-fast-track-ai-server-farms-as-strategic-breakthrough>) for high-performance computing inside a trusted allied country.

Israel has already built a reputation for cybersecurity leadership, semiconductor design, and defense innovation. Companies such as Mobileye and Intel's Israeli operations demonstrate the country's role in global chip development. This new push moves beyond research and into sovereign computing scale.

## Why Infrastructure Matters in AI Competition

Artificial intelligence is no longer just about algorithms. It is about computing power, secure data, and reliable energy. The United States and China are locked in a long-term contest over AI supremacy. Washington has restricted (<https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R48642>) advanced chip exports to China precisely because computing power determines who can train the most advanced models.

When a close U.S. ally expands AI server capacity under Western regulatory standards, it increases the total trusted computing pool available to American firms and defense agencies. Israel's infrastructure buildout can operate as part of a broader allied AI network (<https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesperson/2026/01/joint-statement-of-the-united-states-and-israel-on-the-launch-of-a-strategic-partnership-on-artificial-intelligence-research-and-critical-technologies>) that includes U.S., European, and Indo-Pacific partners.

Instead of relying solely on domestic U.S. server farms, American companies and research institutions could collaborate with Israeli facilities under shared security protocols. This reduces vulnerability to supply-chain shocks and political risk in less stable regions.

## Defense and National Security Benefits

U.S.-Israel defense cooperation is deep and longstanding. Joint programs such as the Arrow missile defense system and Iron Dome demonstrate how co-development benefits both countries. AI infrastructure expands this model into new terrain.

Military applications of AI include drone defense, cyber threat detection, battlefield data analysis, logistics planning, and predictive maintenance. High-capacity server farms in Israel allow faster development and testing of these systems in partnership with American defense contractors.

Israel's operational experience confronting threats from Hamas and Iranian-backed groups gives it a real-world testing environment for AI-enabled security tools. When these tools are developed on large-scale infrastructure compatible with U.S. systems, integration becomes smoother and faster.

This strengthens American military readiness without requiring the United States to carry the entire infrastructure burden alone.

## **Energy Expansion and Grid Resilience**

Doubling power plant capacity is not a minor step. AI server farms require uninterrupted, stable electricity. Israel's plan to expand generation capacity signals that it views energy security as inseparable from technological strength.

For the United States, this model offers lessons. AI leadership depends not only on software engineers but on physical infrastructure, grid reliability, and industrial policy. Israel's compact geography and integrated planning allow it to align energy and technology goals quickly.

Joint energy and AI projects could allow American firms to participate in infrastructure development while benefiting from additional overseas compute capacity located in a stable allied democracy.

## **Economic and Industrial Gains for the United States**

American semiconductor manufacturers, cloud service providers, and defense contractors stand to gain from Israeli expansion. Building AI server farms requires high-end chips, networking equipment, cooling systems, and cybersecurity layers. Many of these technologies are American-made.

Closer AI integration also strengthens venture capital flows between Silicon Valley and Tel Aviv. The U.S. already benefits from Israeli-founded companies listing on American exchanges and establishing U.S. operations. A larger AI backbone in Israel increases the scale of these ventures.

Moreover, by reinforcing an allied AI ecosystem, the United States reduces dependence on regions vulnerable to Chinese industrial influence. Every trusted data center built in Israel contributes to a broader Western computing network.

## **Strategic Signal to Adversaries**

Infrastructure signals commitment. When Israel invests at this level, it sends a message to adversaries that it intends to remain at the technological forefront. For Iran, which already faces economic strain and sanctions, this creates a widening technological gap.

For China, it signals that U.S. allies are not waiting passively. They are building compute power within secure political systems aligned with Washington.

AI leadership will shape defense, finance, healthcare, and communications. Allied capacity matters as much as domestic capacity.

# Conclusion

Israel's plan to build AI server farms and expand its power generation marks a strategic shift from startup culture to national-scale infrastructure. It reflects a recognition that artificial intelligence is an industrial and geopolitical asset, not just a commercial one.

For the United States, this development strengthens a trusted partner's computing capacity, expands joint defense innovation, diversifies allied infrastructure, and supports American technology companies. In an era defined by AI competition, allied computing power counts.

## Frequently Asked Questions on Israel's AI Influence

### What are the key components of Israel's AI infrastructure buildout?

Israel's AI infrastructure buildout (<https://innovascope.org/israel-is-emerging-as-a-global-leader-in-artificial-intelligence-and-why-it-matters-for-humanity/>) typically combines physical computing capacity with the practical building blocks needed to move AI from research into real-world use. Current trends indicate the focus is on dependable, **tested under pressure** systems that can support government services and private industry while protecting sensitive data.

Key components usually include:

- **Compute and data centers** (GPUs, storage, networking) to train and run models reliably.
- **Secure data foundations:** data governance, access controls, and privacy-by-design so agencies and companies can share data responsibly.
- **AI engineering platforms** (MLOps tools) for monitoring, updates, and audit trails...important for *critical infrastructure* and regulated sectors.
- **Cyber defense** (<https://innovascope.org/innovation-impact-on-america/enhancing-us-security/>) **layers** to reduce intrusion and model theft risks.
- **Talent and R&D pipelines** via universities, labs, and industry partnerships that shorten time from prototype to deployment.

For US stakeholders, these components matter because they support the broader **US-Israel innovation partnership** (<https://innovascope.org/>), helping validate tools faster and reduce deployment risk in areas like cyber defense, public safety, and resilient infrastructure.

### How does Israel's AI innovation impact US companies and local markets?

Israel's AI work often reaches Americans through the products and services US firms already use. Recent developments show deep commercial ties: American companies operate **more than 300 R&D centers in Israel**, and major firms such as **Intel, Google, Microsoft, Apple, and Nvidia** run research

teams there that feed improvements back into global products used in the US.

For local markets, the impact is practical...better reliability, lower downtime, and safer services. Current trends indicate AI-driven tools from Israeli teams and startups help US organizations:

- **Strengthen cyber defense** with earlier detection methods for banks, retailers, and other critical industries.
- **Improve supply chains** using logistics and inventory software that helps companies track goods and adjust schedules during disruptions.
- **Support manufacturing** with quality-control and predictive maintenance tools that reduce defects and unplanned stops.

Partnership matters because US companies can test and scale proven ideas faster...often via acquisitions or joint R&D...bringing the benefits to American workers, customers, and regional economies.

## What collaborations exist between the US and Israeli tech sectors in AI?

US-Israel AI collaboration shows up most clearly in **company R&D, joint research, and deployable tools** used across American industry and public services. Recent developments show major US firms expanding AI work in Israel...according to reports, Nvidia plans a large AI and research campus in northern Israel designed to support up to 3,000 employees.

On the public side, the two countries back **joint research programs** focused on data analysis, autonomous systems, and cyber defense. Israel is also building domestic compute capacity: the Israel Innovation Authority launched a national supercomputer as part of its AI program, supported by public and private investment exceeding 500 million shekels, which can speed collaborative research and reduce reliance on foreign infrastructure.

In day-to-day US use, examples include:

- **Cyber defense** tools used across government and critical infrastructure
- **Healthcare imaging AI** used in several US medical centers
- **Road safety systems** from Mobileye used by US automakers for collision avoidance

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# Iran Has Attacked Eight Muslim States in the Last Few Days: What It Means for Its Claim to Defend the Muslim World

In the recent conflict, Iran launched [attacks \(https://news.sky.com/story/where-has-been-hit-iran-retaliates-across-middle-east-after-us-israel-strikes-13513268\)](https://news.sky.com/story/where-has-been-hit-iran-retaliates-across-middle-east-after-us-israel-strikes-13513268) that struck multiple Arab and Muslim-majority countries within a matter of days. Tehran continues to frame its regional posture as a defense of Islam and Muslim rights. Yet when a self-described Islamic Republic directs force at fellow Muslim nations such as the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iraq, Bahrain, and Kuwait, the contradiction becomes difficult to ignore. Americans following these events should look beyond slogans and assess the record of actions, targets, and stated justifications.

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  - 8.2. What psychological factors contribute to the spread of radicalization in response to military actions?

## Key Takeaways

- Since February 27, 2026, Iran has carried out attacks (<https://www.iranintl.com/en/202603015147>) affecting several Arab and Muslim-majority states in the Gulf and Levant.
- The targeted countries include the UAE, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iraq, Bahrain, and Kuwait.
- Iran's leadership presents itself as a defender of Muslim rights, yet these states are overwhelmingly Muslim in population and leadership.
- Israel, despite decades of regional conflict, has not attacked this number of Arab states within a comparable multi-day window.
- The pattern raises questions about Tehran's claim to act in the name of Islamic solidarity.

## The Countries Targeted

The targets over the past several days include:

- **United Arab Emirates**
- **Oman**
- **Qatar**
- **Saudi Arabia**
- **Jordan**
- **Iraq**
- **Bahrain**
- **Kuwait**

Each of these nations is majority Muslim. Several host holy sites, major Islamic institutions, or long-standing religious communities central to the Muslim world. Many have publicly supported Palestinian statehood for decades and have no record of direct aggression against Iran.

When a government claims to defend Islam yet directs missiles or drones toward fellow Muslim capitals, the contradiction is not abstract. It is visible on the map.

## Iran's Claim to Islamic Leadership

Since 1979, the Islamic Republic has grounded its legitimacy in the concept of religious governance (<https://2017-2021.state.gov/the-islamic-republic-of-iran-a-dangerous-regime/>). Iranian leaders regularly speak of defending oppressed Muslims worldwide. This message resonates with segments of global audiences, including activists who view Tehran as a counterweight to Western power.

Yet Islamic solidarity traditionally emphasizes unity (<https://islamicvoice.com/muslim-world/ayatollah-khamenei-calls-for-islamic-solidarity-and-commitment-to-palestine-during-unity-week/>) among Muslim nations and the avoidance of fitna, or discord within the ummah. Military action against multiple Muslim-majority neighbors in a concentrated timeframe challenges that principle. Even when Iran argues that certain governments cooperate with Western states or Israel, the populations affected remain overwhelmingly Muslim.

The question is not whether governments may disagree. It is whether striking a wide array of Muslim states within days aligns with the moral claim of acting "in the name of Islam."

## **A Regional Contrast**

Israel has fought multiple wars since its founding in 1948, including defensive wars with Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and non-state actors. Those wars were intense and, at times, regional in scope. This comparison does not erase the complexity of Arab-Israeli history. It highlights a narrower point: Tehran's conduct appears to involve simultaneous confrontation with a wide swath of Muslim governments.

## **Silence at Overseas Rallies**

In Western capitals, rallies often feature slogans portraying Iran as a defender of Palestinian rights and Muslim dignity. When Iran faces a military response, these rallies amplify claims of aggression against Tehran. Yet reports of Iranian strikes on Gulf and Levant states have drawn far less public outcry from the same groups.

Selective protest shapes public perception. If activists condemn Israel or the United States for military action but remain quiet when Iran targets Muslim neighbors, the message shifts from universal human rights to bias and partisan alignment.

Americans observing these demonstrations should ask a basic question: are principles applied consistently, or only when they align with a preferred narrative?

## **The Broader Security Context**

The United States maintains defense partnerships with several of the countries reportedly targeted. Attacks on Gulf infrastructure, shipping lanes, or urban centers affect global energy markets and regional stability. They also threaten millions of Muslim civilians who have no role in geopolitical disputes.

Iran may argue that it is responding to threats or alliances it views as hostile. Yet expanding military action across numerous Muslim-majority states within days increases the risk of wider war and undercuts its own claim to moral leadership in the Islamic world.

## **Conclusion**

Iran's leadership asserts that it acts to defend Islam and Muslim rights. Actions taken since the start of the war show the hypocrisy of these statements. Striking the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iraq, Bahrain, and Kuwait within days positions Tehran in direct conflict with a large portion of the Muslim world.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### How are claims of defending the Muslim world politically utilized in conflict situations?

In many conflicts, leaders and armed movements invoke the idea of “defending the Muslim world” to frame their actions as moral duty rather than political choice. This can reduce public debate by turning complex [policy](https://cognitura.org/blog/category/policy-analysis) (<https://cognitura.org/blog/category/policy-analysis>) questions into tests of loyalty, where disagreement is painted as betrayal. These messages often rely on **propaganda**...selective stories, emotional imagery, and repeated slogans...to shape perception and justify escalation. This tactic mirrors broader strategies observed in various regions, where narratives are crafted to support recruitment efforts.

Common political uses include:

- **Legitimacy building:** presenting a group as the only “true” protector to win recruits and funding within a **recruitment pipeline**.
- **Blame shifting:** redirecting anger from local corruption or failures toward an external enemy.
- **Conformity pressure:** using community shame and **cognitive biases** (mental shortcuts) to discourage questions.

For readers, the practical step is *truth verification*: check who benefits, what evidence is offered, and whether civilians’ rights and **human dignity** are protected in practice...not just promised in slogans.

### What psychological factors contribute to the spread of radicalization in response to military actions?

Military actions can create strong emotions...fear, grief, anger, and humiliation...that make people more receptive to simple, certainty-heavy stories. Extremist recruiters often frame events as proof of a deliberate attack on an identity group, triggering **cognitive biases** (mental shortcuts) like **confirmation bias** (noticing only supporting evidence) and **availability bias** (overweighting vivid images and recent memories).

Radicalization also spreads through social dynamics. When communities feel threatened, **in-group/out-group thinking** can intensify, and **social pressure** may punish nuance as “disloyal.” Propaganda uses repetition and selective context to build a **recruitment pipeline** that moves people from outrage to identity-based belonging, and then to obedience.

Practical checks include:

- **Truth verification:** compare multiple credible sources and timelines
- **Media literacy:** ask what is omitted and who benefits
- **Critical thinking:** separate moral concern from claims that demand violence

### Research Areas

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