

Suha Arafat Under Attack by the PA for Supporting the UAE

by Hugh Fitzgerald



Suha Arafat, the widow of Yasser Arafat, has declared that she is under attack by the Palestinian Authority for having expressed her support for the move by the United Arab Emirates to “normalize relations with Israel.” Her story is [here](#).

The widow of late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat told an Israeli TV station that she is under attack by Palestinian Authority leaders for friendly comments she made to the United Arab Emirates, after it announced its normalization of ties with Israel, and has warned she could “open the gates of hell” on PA chiefs if those attacks do not stop, indicating she has dirt on top officials.

Suha Arafat, currently living in Malta, wrote an Instagram post on August 21, after the decision to normalize ties between Jerusalem and Abu Dhabi was announced. In it, she said she wished to apologize “in the name of the Palestinian people” for Palestinians’ burning of UAE flags and other insults made against the Emirates in the wake of the deal.

This is not of our morals, nor our customs, nor our traditions,” she wrote. She urged Palestinians to “study

history well to learn how the UAE, past and present, supported the Palestinian people and the cause."

She said the people of the Emirates were a "generous and kind people who have always welcomed us with every bit of graciousness."

This is surely an exaggeration, given that Palestinians in the UAE cannot become citizens, and are forbidden from practicing certain professions. But perhaps she was employing the royal We, and "welcomed us" referred not to all Palestinians but, rather, only to Suha Arafat (and her late husband).

Since writing that post, Arafat says she has been threatened and widely attacked on social media, a fact she blames squarely on the Palestinian leadership she believes is fanning the flames.

Suha Arafat does not offer an explanation as to why some in the Palestinian leadership would be so hellbent on attacking her. Is it that her comments on the UAE are seen not only as a betrayal of the Palestinian cause, by supporting "normalization," but that, just as bad, she is damaging the image of her late husband, seen by many as the father of the Palestinian cause? Or could the upper echelon in the Palestinian Authority be settling another score with Suha, for having abandoned "Palestine" by choosing to live luxuriously, first in Paris and now in Malta? Or could the PA's anger have to do with the vast sums "belonging to the Palestinian people" she is reported to have made off with after Arafat died? Yes, it would be hypocritical of the current crooks to be outraged at her own fortune, but hardly unthinkable. Any or all of these reasons could explain the fervor with which she has been denounced by PA leaders and those they lead.

In an interview with Israel's Kan TV news Thursday, Arafat decried the "thought police" she said were hounding her since

she wrote the post. "All of this just because I said not to burn flags?"

"There are instructions to turn me into a traitor and these instructions come from the head of the president's office," Arafat said, referring to PA President Mahmoud Abbas's private secretary Intisar Abu Amara, who she claimed was "feeding the president false information" and "is the one controlling Palestine through the president."

How plausible is Suha Arafat's claim that Abbas would have been "fed false information" by his private secretary and been unable to check on its accuracy? Is Abbas the prisoner of his private secretary? And what kind of "false information" could he have been fed about Suha? She is being pilloried for what she has quite publicly done: her tweets, congratulating the UAE for normalizing relations with Israel, and criticizing those Palestinians who, forgetting how much the UAE has done for the Palestinians over the years, had the gall to set fire to the UAE flag.

She also criticized the PA's official response to the UAE's move, which Ramallah deemed a "despicable decision" and a betrayal. For its part, the UAE says it compelled Israel to call off planned partial West Bank annexation plans as part of the normalization deal, and that this gives Israel and the Palestinians a new opportunity to negotiate...

These were all part of the PA's hysterical response to the UAE's move – calling it a "despicable decision" – when it might, in a more politic and effective manner, have simply said that "in our opinion, It was an unwise decision."

Arafat said instead of hurling accusations, the PA should have appealed to the UAE's crown prince and de facto leader Mohammed bin Zayed for understanding.

“If Yasser Arafat were alive he’d go to Mohammed bin Zayed and say ‘Come Mohammed Ben Zayed, help me with [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu, I can’t deal with them.’ But to go and say an Arab country is a betrayer? Enough with the slogans. We collaborate with Israel, with the Shin Bet and Mossad. Who are you kidding?”

She was apparently referring to the PA’s regular security coordination with Israel, which was halted in recent months over Israel’s annexation plans.

Arafat said her brother Ghabi al-Tawil was being harassed as well. Al-Tawil is currently the PA’s ambassador to Cyprus, but according to Kan he was summoned in recent days for questioning in Ramallah after refusing to organize action against the UAE at the embassy.

“They [the PA] think they’re a superpower. I demand of Abu Mazen protection,” she told Kan, using Abbas’s nom de guerre. “Protection from those who surround him. What do they want to do to my brother? Put him in jail?”

Her brother’s job is no doubt on the line, and I suspect he won’t be the PA’s ambassador to Cyprus for much longer – unless her threat to reveal embarrassing information about members of the PA’s upper echelon manages to save him. And the same goes for Suha herself: if her threat to go public with incriminating details about PA leaders – unless the campaign of vilification against her stops – is deemed credible, she will be protected. Presumably, she has already made arrangements for such information to be made public in case of her death.

She also appeared concerned by potential attempts to remove the monthly stipends she receives from the PA as Arafat’s widow, which she said stood at a sum of €10,000 (\$12,000).

Many in the Middle East believe that at Arafat's death, Suha Arafat was left with tens of millions of dollars. Certainly Arafat was known to have at one time had a fortune of three billion dollars, and at his death still had at least one billion dollars, all of which disappeared soon after his death. Was Suha among the lucky beneficiaries, or is she telling the truth when she claims that she lives only on her annual stipend of some \$144,000? Before Malta, she lived in Paris in an apartment only a millionaire could afford. Let's be charitable, and assume that as his widow she might have been left a few million dollars which she has now spent (those Parisian luxury flats can be expensive), and she is managing to make do, in lower-cost Malta – on her stipend from the PA of just under \$150,000. A goodly sum, but nothing like the billions her husband managed to steal, or the \$400 million fortune that Mahmoud Abbas has similarly amassed.

“If [someone] harms a hair upon our head, I will hold the PA fully responsible,” she said.

Arafat stressed she did not believe Abbas was responsible but rather a cadre of politicians and advisers surrounding him.

Suha Arafat wants to exempt Mahmoud Abbas from her charges, to leave him a way out, by deliberately ascribing the campaign against her not to him but to the wicked political courtiers who surround him, have poisoned his mind against her, and whom he now should punish.

“He has nothing to do with this, but they're leading him on. I love Abu Mazen but those around him want to destroy the Arafat family,” she said.

Arafat ended the interview with a threat.

“We are strong. The Arafat family is strong,” she said. “If they want to open the gates of hell on me, I'll open the gates of hell on them too. And I have Yasser's personal

diary. He wrote about every one of them. If I publish a tiny piece of paper [fraction]of what Yasser wrote about them, it will expose them to their people."

She's threatening to bring the whole PA edifice crashing down, if the attacks on her and her brother Ghabi al-Tawil do not stop. What must she have on them? What is in Arafat's "personal diary" she claims to possess that would "open the gates of hell"? No doubt Arafat, with his own scandalous behavior (his blond German bodyguards who doubled as catamites, the pitiful Rumanian orphans he sexually abused) kept well-concealed, made careful records of all the hushed-up financial and sexual scandals involving his henchmen, in order to ensure their loyalty.

If Suha Arafat now wants to help remove the grasping and ruinous political class that runs the PA, and has done such damage to the lives of ordinary Palestinians, she should make public what is in Arafat's Diary about those leaders. With the downfall of this incompetent and corrupt group, there would be a chance for those PA leaders to be replaced by honest technocrats. And Suha, rather than Yasser, would in the end be the Arafat who could claim she "did the state some service" when it mattered most.

First published in